

# Pipeline, sewer talk gets heated



Workers clear trees in Aston as they start work on Sunoco Logistics' Mariner East 2 pipeline. DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE PHOTO

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WEST GOSHEN >> Supervisors engaged in heated discussion Wednesday night on two big issues in the township – sewers and pipelines.

Talk concerning both pipelines and the sewer system was heated at times, during Wednesday's Board of Supervisor's meeting.

Democrat Tom Casey and Republican Margie Swart, who are both running for seats on the board, battled with supervisors and staff prior to the borough's vote to borrow from \$20 million to \$27 million through a bond issue.

Discussion also centered on a township lawsuit with Sunoco Logistics and its Mariner 2 pipeline.

The township filed a two-part lawsuit asking Sunoco to abide by what David Brooman, township special council, said were terms of a May 2015 settlement agreement.

The suit alleged that Sunoco did not build an emergency safety valve, as was agreed to, and has moved the location of proposed above-ground infrastructure improvements, at Route 202 and Boot Road.

The municipal authority serves West Whiteland, East Goshen, Thornbury and part of Westtown townships. The proposed Mariner East 2 pipeline would stretch from Ship Road to Wilson Drive in the township.

The proposed pipeline, which would carry Marcellus Shale products such as butane, ethane and propane, would zig-zag 23.6 miles through Chester County and 11.4 miles in Delaware County where it would impact Thornbury, Edgmont, Middletown, Aston and Upper Chichester before reaching its final destination in Marcus Hook.

Brooman said the township was successful after Sunoco installed an emergency safety valve in the existing 8-inch Mariner East 1 Pipeline. He said Sunoco complied within 30 days of receiving the lawsuit.

“We filed a complaint requesting that Sunoco put in a fully automated safety valve (in Thornbury Township) and they did that,” Brooman said. “It’s moot, there’s nothing left to litigate.”

Casey believes that pipeline companies are bidding out another 5-7 pipelines to cross through the state, which will eventually deliver Marcellus Shale products to the refinery in Marcus Hook.

“We could be setting a very dangerous precedent with future pipelines,” Casey said. “The pipeline companies consider their existing right-of-ways, which often cross residential zones, as highways.”

The township will continue to battle Sunoco.

An over-55 community was planned for the site on the south side of Route 202. The township was slated to receive \$2 million in storm water and other improvements from Traditions of America, Brooman said.

Sunoco plans to place two automated valves on the south side of Route 202 at the Janiec property, near the West Goshen firehouse, rather than what the township contends was supposed to be the north side of Route 202.

The board also gave the OK for the sewer authority to sell from \$20 to \$27 million of bonds for sewer system improvements. The deal has not yet been finalized.

The board voted 3-1 to authorize seeking the bond issue for the sewer authority. Supervisor Chris Pielli was opposed and Raymond Halvorsen was absent.

The authority is seeking bonds through RBC Capital.

Township Solicitor Kristin S. Camp said that income from customers would pay for both operation of the system and the bond issue.

Supervisors voted to guarantee the bonds.

Several audience members and Pielli were concerned that the authority had seemingly not fully considered seeking a bank loan or other forms of long-term financing.

“The authority is ineffectual at this point,” Casey said. “It cannot continue this way. It’s not how it’s supposed to work out.”

Pielli questioned whether the township had used all “due diligence” and whether the township was “haphazardly” operating.

“I’m yet to see any proof of a competitive process,” Pielli said. “We haven’t looked into other options. We’re diving into this head first.”

Pielli also said the township might consider selling the authority, which he valued at approximately \$70 million.

“I want to reap the maximum value for our township,” he said. “It can be run efficiently by the private sector.”