

Tinicum continues hearing on Main Street Developers plan

Elizabeth Bowman

They gathered in the parking lot and discussed the anticipated testimony of Walter Smerconish from Main Street Developers.

Residents said that all the expert witnesses have had their day in court and Tinicum is waiting to question those in charge. Their main concern was water, both quantity and quality.

One man commented that when the developers dug test wells in the area, the level in the well at the Lutheran church on Durham Road dropped and failed to recover for several months.

They came, united under ECO-Bucks, an organization of concerned citizens that is educat-

ing the populace about development and encouraging participation in the democratic process of representation.

The group is also concerned about the quality of water, especially as it relates to a proposed sewage system made to serve 192 residences and empty into local streams. Some of those gathering, apparently aware of new concerns about pharmaceutical pollution of waterways, mentioned that concern regarding the sewage system and the current pristine waters of Tinicum.

The meeting room was filled as Nick Forte called the hearing on the proposed development near Route 611 to order asking the attorney for the developer,

Robert Gundlach, if his witness would be present as expected. Gundlach replied in the negative and Forte chastised him for failing two times in a row to produce Smerconish. The board deserves to know who and what they are preparing to hear, Forte said.

Instead of producing his witness, Gundlach rehashed previous testimony with John Theilacker of the Brandywine Conservancy who has acted as consultant to Tinicum in land preservation issues.

Referring to the more than 1,100 pages of previous testimony, Gundlach attempted to elicit information from the witness about counties and roles he is not involved with.

Gundlach asked the represen-

tative if he thought the land being considered for development was more productive financially as farmland or as development. He bemoaned the lot of homebuyers who would not be able to afford the multi-acre homesteads of Tinicum but could manage to afford the high-density development his client seeks to build.

Gundlach repeatedly referenced a preserved parcel of land in the middle of the tract zoned "non-committed," which was defined as land suitable for development. He attacked Tinicum's policy of requiring 75 percent of good farmland in any tract to be preserved, saying that other townships do not have this restriction.

Steve Harris, Tinicum's attor-

ney in this matter, finally began to object to the line of questioning as irrelevant. Gundlach's questions regarding a meeting with Bucks County land use officials to which the applicant was not invited, also gained objection from council. This hearing was supposed to be strictly a conditional use hearing for the Carr tract.

At no point in the first hour and a half of the meeting were the concerns of the citizens addressed and people began to filter out. Some remarked that the supervisors, volunteers having just returned from long days of their own, deserve great appreciation from their constituents for sitting through the hearings.