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From The Morning Call -- April 6, 2004

# Palmer opposes spreading sludge on land

## Supervisor worry that septic material could pollute groundwater.

By Fred Walter  
 Special to The Morning Call

Palmer Township supervisors unanimously opposed plans to apply septic sludge on 80 acres of farmland owned by the Nazareth Borough Municipal Authority.

The site is on the southwest corner of the Tatamy and VanBuren intersection, east of the Essroc Italcementi Group cement plant complex. Most of the land south of the 80-acre tract is undeveloped and was once part of the farm complex owned by the late George Seiple.

The Nazareth authority has applied to the state Department of Environmental Protection for a permit to haul sludge from the borough's sewage treatment plant and spread the material on the 80 acres, where it could be covered with soil after each application.

Supervisors don't object to that practice but will tell the DEP that the proposed site is unsuitable for the sludge applications. The DEP is expected to schedule a public hearing on the application before deciding.

"Personally, I have no objections if it's in the right place," Supervisor Robert Lammi said. "We don't want them to do it there."

Lammi said the area is known to be prone to sinkholes. If the sludge drops into a sinkhole, supervisors fear it could contaminate groundwater sources, and surface storm water from the site could run off and pollute the nearby Schoeneck Creek. He said it's also a public land use issue for the township, noting that septic sludge application is not an appropriate use for the growing township.

Although much of the surrounding land is zoned for agricultural use, the

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township's comprehensive plan recommends the inactive farmland area be rezoned for industrial uses. Land south of the 80-acre Nazareth authority tract is owned by the Charles Chrin Companies and Prologis, a distribution warehouse complex.

In other business, supervisors agreed to create a public sewer district in the northwestern end of the township to include the Chrin and Prologis properties. They said the Nazareth authority has agreed to extend a public sewer line from adjacent Lower Nazareth Township to Palmer. An ordinance will be written by township solicitor Charles Bruno to create the sewer district and a separate agreement will be drawn up to first provide sewer service to the Prologis site. The company has plans to build a warehouse. No plans have been submitted on use of the Chrin property.

At the recommendation of Township Manager Robert Anckaitis, supervisors agreed to buy a \$7,000 computerized document management system from the General Code Co. He said meeting minutes, resolutions, ordinances and other official documents can be filed in the system and retrieved much faster and at less cost than having staff take time out from other duties to search through records for specific items.

Fred Walter is a freelance writer.

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