

Press Release

New Gas and Oil Drilling Zone Proposed

Local Residents Opposed

Newtown Township, July 3, 2015: Local residents Marguerite Chandler and Richmond Shreve became concerned when they learned that Newtown Township, Upper Makefield, and Wrightstown were contemplating creating a new “**G-17 Gas and Oil Drilling**” zone. The proposed ordinance appears to open the door to hydraulic fracturing (fracking) in the municipalities. Upper Makefield has already reviewed and incorporated changes in the ordinance language and the other two members of the jointure that shares zoning regulations were given copies for review on May 4, 2015.

Chandler contacted Adam Garber at PennEnvironment and attorney Dan Raichel at the National Resource Defense Council to ask if there was cause for concern. What she learned was disturbing, and prompted her to dig deeper into the risks and benefits of fracking. “We are new to Pennsylvania and didn’t know about all the controversy over the reckless disregard and exploitation by gas drillers in the state,” Chandler said. “I’d heard of Dimock, PA, and I’d seen the film Gasland. That tragedy seemed very remote from our new home in Bucks.”

Shreve began doing research on the topic and soon realized that with the powerful business forces at work any action to permit drilling could have far reaching impacts. “It was important for others to know what I was learning, so I set up a website [**NoFrackingBucks.net**] to share my information and encourage communication” said Shreve. “Bottom line – any such drilling is a regional health and safety problem, and it tears up roads and degrades property values. There’s almost nothing to justify it.”

Shreve and Chandler are concerned that municipal officials are treating this as a routine neighborhood zoning matter and not looking into its wider implications and costs. “This unease is reinforced by the lack of opportunity for

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public review and comment,” Shreve said. “The way I see it, all the benefits of gas extraction go elsewhere and the locals suffer permanent impact as individuals and as a region.”

A State imposed moratorium on drilling in the Delaware River Basin has temporarily shielded Bucks from drilling pressures, but that respite will expire in 2018. “There should be no rush to enact a new drilling ordinance at this moment, but rather a slower deliberate process with full public participation to become aware of all the collateral risks and damage drilling creates. Our website gives a pretty good overview,” Chandler says.

Shreve and Chandler will moderate a briefing for concerned residents at the Newtown Friends Meeting, July 7th at 6PM. Short presentations will be made by Shreve and others with special knowledge. At 7PM all will go directly to the Newtown Township Planning Board Meeting. The Newtown Township Supervisors have been notified and invited to attend the briefing.

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