

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF VAN BUREN**  
**Environmental Commission**  
**Wednesday-April 17, 2019 – 7:00 PM**  
**MINUTES**

The meeting was call to order at 7:10 pm in the Denton Room by Chairman Brownlee

**ROLL CALL:**

Present: Chairman Brownlee, Commissioner Ross, Commissioner DeBuck, Commissioner Merritt  
Staff: Director Best, Recording Secretary McGuire  
Absent Excused: Commission Emekpe, Board Representative White and Director Akers  
Audience: 4

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Motion Commissioner Ross, seconded Commissioner DeBuck. Motion Carried

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:**

Motion Commissioner Ross, seconded Commissioner DeBuck. Motion Carried

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**Status of the Drawdown:** No new information on the drawdown. But the Township is getting ready for a table top exercises for emergency preparedness for the damn. We are putting this together for all people involved. So, if something terrible happens at the damn we are prepared to follow the emergency action plan. This is not in related to the drawdown but is in relation to our permit. In April we should hear something from Eagle Creek, the state government and federal government about the drawdown. The company is participating in the pre-application process and we are waiting to hear back to see what additional information required.

**Recycling in the Township and how several municipalities are not collecting recycling:**

Chairman Brownlee talked to Waste Management who confirmed that they are firmly committed to recycling. They think that once the Chinese quit taking recycling a lot of municipalities will be asking what do with their recycling. Waste Management believes this will force markets to develop in the United States.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Presentation:** Mr. Daniel Brown is leading the charge on the PFAs issue. The intent of the presentation is to educate the commission on what they should know and the status of PFAs on the Huron River Watershed.

### **Slide 1:**

What is interesting about this topic is that it continues to move rapidly. This issue is moving quickly in terms of policy, action plans and how different sources and efforts are changing. When Chairmen Brownlee first contacted Mr. Brown things have shifted methodically in terms of what the Watershed looks at and how we are moving forward.

PFAs was rediscovered in 2012 following a DEQ report. For several political and social reasons that don't have anything to do with water issues. PFAs became an issue in 2016 to 2018 when Governor Snyder, post Flint, decided to take a proactive action in chasing after PFAs. So, Governor Snyder issued an executive order which allowed MDEQ to produce follow up procedures from clean up from waste water discharges and to drinking water sources. There is no drinking standard in the state of MI. The Huron River Watershed is a great test case to shine all the light on all the loopholes that that creates.

### **Slide 2: Key takeaways:**

- To date, all drinking water in the watershed falls below the EPA's maximum advisory level at 70 ppt (Parts per Trillion)
- A do not eat fish advisory was issued by DHHS, MDEQ and DNR. So, until further notice do not eat the fish from the Huron River. Catch and release is expectable
- Another advisor: avoid eating the foam. Recommended to keep kids and animals away from the foam. Be conscious and aware where the foam avoiding the area.
- Based on the research standard recreational activities (swimming, kayaking, etc.) are ok. There is no evidence that PFAs exposure to the skin is harmful.

### **Slide 3: What is PFAS:**

- PFAs is a family of chemical that estimates between 3000 to 5000 different chemicals
- PFAs is a chemical which is one of the strongest bonds in all organic chemistry.
- Items connected to PFAS Teflon and waterproof clothing or various things like these.
- Designed for extremely smooth surfaces, water proofing and things that shed the water e.g. clothing.
- Extremely toxic in small doses when measured at parts per trillion (ppt). Other chemicals are measured parts per million (ppm) or parts per billion (ppb). An analogy to PFAs is that it is not like a bus wreck that will kill you instantly, it's the smoking over time. These chemicals accumulate in the body over time.

**Slide 4: Health Outcomes (PFAs and PFOA):**

- Research focuses on two specifically chemicals PFAs and PFOA
- The advisor levels have different standards in different states but focus on PFAs and PFOA and could cause:
  - Alter Cholesterol
  - Thyroid disease
  - Ulcerative colitis
  - Testicular and kidney cancers
  - Infertility especially in men

**Slide 5: Where do they come from:**

PFAs is found in anything that a person can think of. These chemicals are engrained in our life style, our technology and how we operate a lot of our systems. Everything from airplane paint coatings, fleece clothing, cosmetics, dental floss specifically Oral B glide (swap out to a wax-based floss) have PFAs and/or PFOAs. It is also in firefighting foam to extinguish flames which has brought a lot of attention on Air Force Bases and other places that discharge the foam. Good news Washanaw and Livingston county are no longer using fire retardant foam in their fire departments. The HRWC is trying to contact other communities to see where they stand on eliminating fire retardant foam in area fire departments. Important to note these are rust belt chemicals they were common in chrome plating facilities or machine manufacturing facilities. These chemicals were used to coat suites to facilitate a safe working environment in the manufacturing industries.

**Slide 6: PFAs in Public Water Supplies:**

Michigan is leading by example; Michigan has engaged in more monitoring of PFAs than any other chemical or contamination monitoring effort. HRWC have really mobilized around this family of contaminates and understanding them. HRWC has finished their first wave of surveys of all public wells and all tier one schools or larger public schools. They have really covered all the public water supplies of substantial size or service in the state. Great Lakes Water Authority is not a concern because dilution is so powerful. It has shown up in the Ann Arbor water system at 52 ppt that is below the 70 ppt that the EPA recommends, but well above what Harvard and other research institutions have recommended. More recent research including some state and local research believe that we need to shoot to something below 5 ppt. Some researchers believe there is no safe health level. Natural Resource Defense Council report states that the levels should be 1 ppt or less. The good thing about Ann Arbor it's the only hot spot in our water shed. PFAs have shown up in other areas but the results appear false positives or transient and could not be replicated.

**Slide 7: Fishing Advisory:**

Ann Arbor has been monitoring PFAs levels in our drinking water supply for years. In 2016 PFAs was being monitored more regularly. Monitoring ramped up at the state level and more attention was made toward PFAs in 2018 there was a noticeable increase in PFAs levels. It was realized that PFAs had a source in the Huron River Watershed. This mobilized DEQ to monitor

the whole watershed to try and track down the source. This was a novel approach by looking it as a detective saying that we know that there is PFAs in our system, where did it come from. It was identified that the source from Trimer Manufacturing in Wixom. Through that process it led to surface testing of the water at different impoundments and ponds. Kent Lake is the current hot spot at 1134 ppb this is higher than acceptable. As you go down river you can see PFAs are decreasing with an occasional hot spot. The testing is by fish muscle tissue testing. PFAs accumulates in fish over time. 300 ppb is considered a healthy level for regular consumption. Because levels are so high and found in some early harvested fish. Therefore, DEQ and Huron River Water Shed posted fish advisories for the entire water shed. It recommends that connected waterways and other areas where fish are mobile. Important point please do not eat the fish in the foreseeable future. The fish advisory can last 2 years but likely longer. They require there be two clean tests but not in the same season. The testing will continue until the criteria is met. Likely Downriver and Flat Rock will be the first to have the advisory lifted.

**Slide 8: What the Rules and Regulations Say:**

There is no drinking water standard for PFAs in Michigan. The standards change depending on where the water is coming from.

**For drinking Water**

- The EPA Lifetime Health Advisory Level has established 70 ppt level as acceptable.
- PFOA and PFOS is evaluated either combined or individually
- Not enforceable

**For ground water (well water)**

- 70 ppt is the EPA Lifetime Health Advisory Level
- PFOA and PFOS is evaluate either combined or individually
- Enforceable by an executive order from Governor Snyder. This measure is under Part 201 Cleanup Criteria

**Slide 9: What the Rules and Regulations Say about Surface water:**

- There is no drinking water standard for PFAs in MI
- Rule 57 applies to PFAs this is for discharging to a drinking water source.
- The Huron Water Shed is the only surface water source contaminate with PFAs in the state of Michigan for Ann Arbor in the Huron River. This for discharging two water bodies that is not at the drinking water standards listed below.
- There is a need for standards for drinking water example: Imagine that Wixom emitting contaminates into the Huron River. Ann Arbor is taking that water and trying to treat the water contaminates to acceptable levels but are only getting down to 15ppt to 20ppt after treatment. This water is going back into the tap water going right to through human bodies and everything else and being discharged. This waste is going back into the lake for Ann Arbor waste treatment facility to treat and discharging water at levels above the DEQ Standard. So, the contaminated water hits from the river twice one from where the contaminates coming from and contaminates from sources down the Huron River. Therefore, there is a need for a standard for drinking water to finding the sources that are emitting contaminates into the water

**Rule 57 applies to PFAs and PFOA discharged into a drinking water source.**

**PFAs:**

- 11 ppt (for sources used as drinking water, applies to the Huron River)
- 12 ppt (non-drinking water)

**PFOA:**

- 420 ppt (for sources used as drinking water)
- 12000 ppt (non-drinking water)

**Slide 10: Compare Drinking Water Standards:**

Different agencies have different acceptable safe levels for a no drinking water standard. Michigan is operating at the 70ppt level. Numerous studies show that these levels are too high. The current administration did not want to release the report but due to pressure from the media the administration to release the report. The CDC recommends the standards to be 7-11ppt depending on the chemical. Winnies Brink proposed bill would reduce ppt to 5 and 5ppt for each and a combined level of 10ppt. Minnesota, Vermont and New Jersey have levels lower than the Huron River Watershed. Harvard recommends levels less than 1ppt or virtually non-detectable. Since many systems measure 2 to 3ppt as lowest level detectable. Environmental groups would like to see the levels down to 5ppt for each is what a medium size community can do.

|   | <b>PFOA ppt</b> | <b>PFOA ppt</b> |            |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| • EPA Lifetime Health Advisory Levels     | 70 ppt          | 70 ppt          | Cumulative |
| • CDC ATSDR Recommended Level             | 7 ppt           | 11 ppt          | Individual |
| • Winnies Brinks Proposed Bill (Michigan) | 5 ppt           | 5 ppt           | Individual |
| • Minnesota                               | 27ppt           | 35 ppt          | Individual |
| • Vermont                                 | 20 ppt          | 20 ppt          | Cumulative |
| • New Jersey                              | 20 ppt          | 14 ppt          | Individual |
| • Harvard Recommended Level               | ≤1 ppt          | ≤1 ppt          | Cumulative |

**Slide 11: Wixom Wastewater Treatment Plant:**

This shows where things have gone with Tribar. In late August of last year Wixom Waste Water Treatment Plant shows that they were at 4800 ppt was detected. What was coming right out of Tribar pipe 28,000ppt. After it goes through 2 miles of sewer pipe and after Wixom Waste Water Treatment plant. So, they're discharging 4800 ppt into the river. They have an IPP permit. So, they can tract back to an industrial source which was Tribar. They then started working with Tribar to reduce their discharge levels. Tribar installed granular activated carbon (GAC) filters which are portable, the largest most powerful British filter and look like bat wings. Which is connected to the discharge pipes and ran the contaminated water through the filters reducing the PFAs levels to 130ppt in January 2019. So, these filters are effective at the source.

**Slide 12: Ann Arbor Drinking water PFAs + PFOA:**

Shows the PFAs and PFOA levels from 2016 to 2018 and where there was a spike in 2018. A sample was taken and considered contaminated. A lot of elements can contaminate the testing giving non-detectable results. Encouraged based on the research that the levels in the watershed will not be wide spread. But some of the other PFAs contributors could be firefighting foam, another hot spot are dry cleaners. Agriculture areas are probably safer unless sludges from water exported from a waste treatment plant.

**Slide 13: Water Resources Division Surface Water PFOs Samples Collected 9/28 & 10/30/2018 (Collected 10/29/2018)**

This map reflects the levels of PFOs in various places along the Huron River Watershed. There is a belief that some of this water level is because of storm water runoff. But some of the other PFAs contributors could be firefighting foam; another hot spot are dry cleaners. Agriculture areas are probably safer unless sludges from water exported from a waste treatment plant.

**What is the State doing?**

There has been a lot of movement within the last month or two so Governor Whitmer is continuing Governor Snyder's PAFs response team. This is the group that is doing all PAFs testing. So, we are looking at local governments and commissions to voicing their support to continuing monitoring. The Governor is asking DEQ to present a maximum contaminate level so that a standard can be written. There are some issues with this; do we want a bill that just covers PFAs or expands the testing for other contaminants into our drinking water. This shows that DEQ is taking a real interest into the watershed and contaminants polluting the water.

**Slide 14: What you can do?**

- Beware of home solutions.
- Continue monitoring the PFAs site on the DEQ website for updated information.
- As we are entering the water recreation time. It is safe to go swimming and boating. Just do not drink the water and do not eat any fish caught. Catch and release is acceptable. The do not eat the fish signs should be multilingual
- There is an increase PFAs and PFOAs there has been decrease of PFAs in human blood levels
- These chemicals have been our water sources since the Second World War
- Several published presentations on YouTube with some good questions.

**Q&A's:**

**Commissioner Merritt:** Is eating fish out of Lake Erie safe?

**Mr. Brown:** The fish advisory only goes to the mouth of the Huron River. If fishing, go further out into the lake.

**Chairmen Brownlee:** My understanding is that we cannot establish an environmental standard more stringent than the federal standard. I'm seeing the Michigan standard more stringent. That may be a good target but doesn't it conflict with the law?

**Mr. Brown:** It is no stricter than federal unless you can really justify why it should be stricter than federal standards. What is also confusing about applying this law to PFAs is an advisory not a set standard.

**Commissioner Debuck:** Would a filter like a Britta filter out the contaminated water work the same as the GAC filters?

**Mr. Brown:** So, some of the filters are NSF certified. There is no know home or retail filters certified below 70ppt.

**Commissioner Merritt:** I have a very large filter in my house will this help prevent PFAS from entering my house? The filter is a rain soft this system cleans the elements of the filters with salt.

**Mr. Brown:** Not familiar with this filter works. To my knowledge there is no filter that will reduce the PFAs to below 70ppt.

**Commissioner Debuck:** So, people on well water are safe?

**Mr. Brown:** Not sure because there is no standard for well water

**Commissioner Merritt:** Where can a resident go to purchase a kit to test for PFAs in our home?

**Mr. Brown:** Skeptical of any place that will sell you a kit that will allow a resident to test for yourself. Because the test must measure ppt. There organizations partnering with labs that well sell test kit at a cost off \$300-\$600 and can go as high as \$1,800. Ask to County officials to have the direct you to a testing organization. Ask your HOA to see if they would be willing to pay for the testing.

**Commissioner Merritt:** Is there some informational sources to disseminate residents?

**Mr. Brown:** Have constantly providing presentations to schools and other communities. Federal Congress people have been reaching out are interested in having town hall meetings concerning these issues

**Director Best:** Van Buren and Wayne Count are working the state Mental Health are working with state Health and Human Services. Signs for the Do Not Eat the Fish have been placed in recreational areas.

**Mr. Brown:** Another issue is Teflon pans if they start flaking it is recommended that it is disposed of. It is recommended that these pans be replace with ceramic or steel pans.

**Chairman Brownlee:** Is PFAs something that stays in suspension or does it accumulate in sediments

**Mr. Brown:** PFAs is a surfactant that is why it stays in found in foam. It tends to stay at the top of the water. However; it is very hard to identify which foam is PFAs contaminated so to be careful of any foams.

**Commission Debuck:** Does PFAs biodegradable over time?

**Mr. Brown:** It does not biodegradable. The half-life is very omg time. For all practical purposes it will be here for a very long time. Animal species it also lingers in their flesh.

**Chairman Brownlee:** How the state of Michigan compares to other states levels?

**Mr. Brown:** We probably we know more about PFAs, because of the extensive monitoring the state Michigan has been doing. However; this issue will affect every state

**Ms. Otzman:** You said that bottled water can't be depended on not to PFAs

**Mr. Brown:** Bottle water is not checked for PFAs. So, it is difficult to say whether there is PFAs in bottled water. It is possible that company producing bottle doesn't what levels of PFAs is in their water.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMENTS:**

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion Commissioner Merritt, seconded by Commissioner Debuck, to adjourn at 8:30 pm.

Motion Carried

Respectfully submitted,

Laura McGuire, Recording Secretary