

Date: January 27, 2026

To: Springfield Township Supervisor Ric Davis
Springfield Township Board of Trustees
Springfield Township Planning Commission
Members of the Fact-Finding Committee
Springfield Township Residents

From: Kara Okonewski, Springfield Township Resident, Member of the Fact-Finding Committee, Founder of Oko Environmental, LLC.

To the Officials and Residents of Springfield Township,

I am writing to formally resign from the Springfield Township Fact-Finding Committee, effective immediately.

I have made a sustained, good-faith effort to participate constructively in this process, despite serious concerns, in the hope that it would ultimately function as intended. However, there is a point at which continued silence becomes indistinguishable from acquiescence. I can no longer remain silent in the face of a process I cannot ethically defend.

I have more than a decade of training in environmental science, and I understand that rigorous scientific discussion requires recognizing potential sources of bias and understanding their consequences, even when all parties believe they are acting with good intentions. I have also spent many years working with nonprofit organizations and government agencies to promote environmental literacy and to support productive, good-faith dialogue between the public and decision-makers.

Despite repeated efforts on my part to engage constructively with Township leadership and to foster productive dialogue throughout this fact-finding process, I have experienced an environment in which disagreement has been personalized, professional contributions have been publicly mischaracterized, and participation has not been inclusive or transparent. Under these conditions, I can no longer participate in a process that does not respect professional integrity or independent judgment.

The integrity of the process is further undermined by the handling of Fact-Finding Committee meeting minutes. The minutes are not comprehensive and, at times, are inaccurate. There is no formal process for committee members or experts to review, correct, or approve the record. As a result, statements and positions attributed to me and others have been misrepresented or

misquoted, with no opportunity for correction. An unverified and inaccurate official record is incompatible with any process that claims to be factual, transparent, or accountable.

I am further concerned by the participation of a Levy representative in Township matters beyond the scope of the pending Special Land Use Permit application for a proposed sand and gravel mining operation. Even when informal or advisory in nature, such involvement raises serious questions about independence, transparency, and the appropriate separation between an applicant and Township governance.

Equally concerning, I have not been provided consistent or timely visibility into the Township's actions, intentions, or decision-making related to this review. Information has been shared selectively or introduced without clear explanation of its purpose, status, or how it is being advanced within the process, including through informal communications outside the committee's proceedings. This lack of transparency prevents committee members from understanding the full scope of the review and undermines any claim of independent or objective evaluation.

During my time as a Fact-Finding Committee member, and as an attendee at related meetings, my participation was significantly constrained. Opportunities to ask questions or seek clarification were limited, and it was made clear—both explicitly and implicitly—that questioning beyond narrow bounds could be viewed as interference with the process. In this environment, meaningful engagement and independent inquiry were not supported.

It is also important to note that the Fact-Finding Committee had no role in shaping the content, structure, or intent of the recent survey, nor were committee members informed that such a survey would be the outcome of the interviews being conducted. As a result, the survey does not reflect committee deliberation, review, or consensus. This disconnect between the stated purpose of the committee and how the process has been carried out is both significant and troubling.

The survey itself further illustrates this breakdown. As designed, it is not a realistic or meaningful mechanism for incorporating community input on complex scientific and technical matters. Asking residents to review extensive technical documentation and respond within a matter of weeks with a framework of legal and scientific questions (without adequate synthesis, context, or explanation) places an unreasonable burden on the public and fails to respect the seriousness of the decisions being contemplated. This attempt at 'community involvement' has shifted the responsibilities of the township officials onto its tax-paying residents. More broadly, residents have not been treated with respect through either the structure of this process or the conduct of public meetings.

I agreed to serve on this committee in good faith, believing that it would operate with transparency, respect for professional expertise, and a shared commitment to integrity. I no

longer believe those conditions exist. Remaining on this committee would require me to implicitly endorse a process I cannot ethically defend.

Accordingly, I must step away.

This decision is not made lightly. I remain deeply concerned about the environmental, scientific, and procedural implications of the proposed BMC/Levy sand and gravel mining operation. Although I will no longer participate as a member of this committee, I will continue, as a private citizen, to independently support residents in understanding the scientific and technical materials being circulated. I will acknowledge resident concerns while remaining grounded in objective analysis of the data. I will continue to review information as it is released and to share questions, comments, and concerns with both Township officials and residents as appropriate.

Building public trust requires openness, respect, and a shared willingness to engage with complexity. Meaningful decision-making depends on working together to understand the difficult balance between progress, environmental protection, societal needs, and the responsibilities of governing bodies. Supporting that shared understanding is work I remain committed to doing.

Please accept this notice as my formal resignation.

Sincerely,

Kara Okonewski
