

## Democrats call for release of township septic records

By CHRISTINA KRISTOFIC

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The Republican supervisor said their statement was a political ploy.

Two [Doylestown Township](#) supervisors have called on the other supervisors, the public water and sewer advisory committee members and township staff to release all information related to failing septic systems.

Barb Eisenhardt and Cynthia Philo released a statement Thursday saying, "The taxpayers of Doylestown Township have the right to know if anyone involved in the decision-making concerning the proposed expansion of public sewers in Doylestown has a vested interest in the outcome. We believe transparency is essential to build confidence in any political process."

They offered to share their own water and septic system records, though Eisenhardt already has public sewer.

Vice chairman Tom Scarborough said he thinks Eisenhardt and Philo's statement is a political ploy. Eisenhardt and Philo are Democrats; Scarborough and the other three supervisors are Republicans.

"It's making people look bad, making the township look bad," he said. "I don't really think this is something that warrants a lot of time. I think what warrants a lot of time is to find solutions to our problems. This is not a solution to our problems."

The township's public water and sewer committee has said there are enough failing septic systems — 78 were reported between 2003 and 2006 — to pose a significant health threat to township residents and that expanding the municipality's public sewer system would eliminate that problem.

The proposed \$59 million sewer expansion would cost each of the approximately 1,800 households about \$22,000, regardless of whether they connect to the sewer. Households that connect will have to pay an additional \$4,700 and private plumbing costs. That could add up to \$30,000 or more, but it could still be cheaper than replacing a septic system so homeowners with failing septic systems would see the greatest benefit.

The township has forwarded records of failing septic systems to the [Bucks County Health Department](#). Township solicitor Jeff Garton said earlier this week that the municipality cannot release its records because that could interfere with the county's investigation of the failing systems.

The health department has refused to release the records because officials say they are still investigating.

But municipal officials had no problem with posting a map showing the locations of the failing systems at the township's public meeting last week, Eisenhardt pointed out.

"We've already essentially released the information," Eisenhardt said. "So I think it's counterproductive now not to give out the rest of the information and make it complete."

Eisenhardt said the statement she released with Philo is not political because she is not seeking re-election. Philo is seeking election as [Bucks County's Clerk of Courts](#), a position that could require her to give up her supervisor seat.

Eisenhardt said the township needs to have open government and the supervisors need to lead by example.

"I don't have an on-lot septic system," she said. "But if I did, I'd have no problem sharing the information."

Philo's records were not attached to the statement, and she could not be reached by phone Thursday afternoon. Supervisor Chairwoman Barbara Lyons and Supervisor Walter Berry could not be reached for comment.

Scarborough said he'll release his septic records if people want to make an issue of it, but he doesn't understand why it would be an issue.

Asked for the records, he said he didn't have them and would have to get them from the township office.

"I've passed every time that I've (been) inspected," he said. "I've done everything I had to do every three years."

As for releasing the records related to failing septic systems, Scarborough said the supervisors have to rely on the township solicitor's legal opinion.

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