

**Abington Township
Environmental Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes for February 9, 2022**

Call to Order: 7:02 pm

Attendees:

Members: Cakky Evans (CE), Michele Kaczalek (MK), Karin McGarry-Rosen (KMR), Sue Myerov (SM), Andrea Soo (AS), John Sorrentino (JSO), Jim Webb (JW)

Associate Members: Peaches Cooper, (PC), Jennifer Sherwood (JSh)

Others Present: Arthur Baehr (resident), Tim Bennett (Bennett Compost), Mike Cameron (resident), Colleen Falicki (Back to Earth Compost Crew), Lora Lehmann (LL, resident), Ashley McIlvaine (AM, Special Assistant to the Township Manager), Anna Nicholaides (AN, resident), Mark Rebelo (AT Superintendent of Highways), Gabrielle Sellai (resident), Renee Winegrad (RW, resident), George Wrigley (GW, AT Director of Wastewater)

1. **Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from the January 2022 meeting were approved.

2. **Amendments to the Agenda:**

- LL asked the EAC to allow guest participation (open mic) throughout the meeting as well as availability of committee reports to the public.
- RW asked about a plastic bag ban in AT.

3. **Reports:**

A. Chairperson's Report – Approved

B. Treasurer's Report – Approved

4. **Committee Reports:**

A. Policy – Approved

B. Programs – Approved

C. Engagement – Approved

[After the reports, the meeting agenda was modified in order for AN to introduce guest speakers Tim Bennett (Bennett Compost) and Colleen Falicki (Back to Earth Compost Crew) to discuss composting opportunities which is described in item 6 – New Business below. The EAC is grateful to the Township's Mark Rebelo for representing the Public Works Department and George Wrigley of the Wastewater Treatment Plant for attending this discussion.]

5. **Active Business**

A. **Climate Action Draft Plan (CAP) and Shared Energy Manager Program Update** – Wilson Engineering Services (WES), the PADEP's contractor for the Shared Energy Manager (SEM) program, conducted a site visit at three of AT's buildings to complete an energy audit of the Ardsley Community Center (ACC), Township building HVAC system replacement option feasibility study, and a Roslyn Library energy assessment. Their findings will be forwarded soon.

B. **Other Energy and Climate Action Initiatives**

1. Ready for 100 Abington Clean Energy Plan Team (ACEPT) Update – CE introduced guests to the Rf100 program and who is involved.
 - Update on Level 2 EV Charging Stations Rebate Program application – Nothing new to report. CE noted that AT will need to reapply for a grant for Level 2 EV charging stations.
2. Municipal Energy Procurement and Efficiency Next Steps – Nothing reported. Please refer to Item B3 in [January 2022](#) minutes for a detailed summary.
3. Climate Change Legislation/Strategies
 - USGBC's Assess and Increase Onsite Carbon Sequestrations through Plantings LEED Pilot Credit – CE summarized to meeting guests that the USGBC has "pilot credits" which are new modifications that they want to pilot for new construction. Please refer to Item B4 in [January 2022](#) minutes for further details.
 - Proposed Land Use Checklist – CE presented an example Land Use and Development Sustainability Checklist that she has modified and updated from the Borough of West Chester Sustainable! program. This could help standardize environmental perspectives and streamline energy efficiency, site design, material resource, water efficiency, and climate action/resiliency for new development and additions. The checklist would serve to promote best practices by asking questions. CE is

seeking feedback from the EAC and STC at this time. Trish Gallagher of the STC is also engaged and next steps may include presenting the checklist to the Planning Commission.

- Expanding impervious requirements beyond rain barrels and rain gardens – CE suggested adding tree plantings as an option for residents who are planning construction that increases impervious surface on their property. The current options for residents include adding rain barrels (up to 250 sq. ft) or seepage pits/dry well/rain gardens (greater than 250 sq. ft).

4. LEED for Cities (LfC) Teamwork Project Plan – CE proposed scheduling a date for a special meeting to discuss a project plan and delegate tasks to EAC members in order to submit for recertification by first quarter 2022. CE briefly reviewed the various components of our “Crosswalk” project plan. This includes the Innovation and Regional Priorities categories that EAC members may be particularly helpful with as they were previously during the Township’s 2016 STAR certification. AS will retrieve the original GIS files used to develop STAR Communities maps to apply towards LfC. AM will help schedule and advertise, as appropriate.

C. Development Plan and Zoning Review and Coordination –

1. 02.15.2022 Vision2035 Comp Plan Meeting and Comp Plan Gantt Chart Timetable – Abington’s Comprehensive Plan Development Team will hold a public meeting on February 15 at 6 pm by webinar, teleconference, and in-person viewing room to discuss their work on the Township’s update to the Comprehensive Plan. CE mentioned over 500 residents previously responded to the transportation survey and encouraged continued public involvement, especially since there will be a future land use public survey coming soon.

- D. Rain Barrel program** – KMR contacted Diane Ehrich (Collins Nursery) who said she has not scheduled any open houses, but suggested that EAC conduct a RB workshop as a standalone event. JSh suggested doing a RB workshop during Briar Bush Earth Fest. KMR also proposed doing a virtual RB workshop for non-AT residents. Dates to be announced soon.

- E. Plastic Ban Options through MontCo EAC Joint Planning Update** – Nothing new to report. As mentioned in our Jan 2022 EAC meeting, KMR, AS, and JSO are continuing to work on the resident survey and will incorporate the sample survey questions that were recommended by PC. The next step will be to work with the Economic Development Committee on developing a business survey for distribution.

6. New Business:

- A. Composting discussion** – Thanks to resident Anna Nicholaides’ initiative, Tim Bennett (TB, Bennett Compost) and Colleen Falicki (CF, Back to Earth Compost Crew) both presented to the EAC on food waste composting and what their respective businesses can potentially offer AT. The businesses provide regular curbside pickup of residential food waste to compost for a fee. TB serves mainly the Philadelphia metro area and CF serves Montgomery County and partly in Chester County. AS/KMR/JSO will serve as liaisons to discuss a possible pilot composting program. Next steps will be determined with EAC and AN.

- B. Abington Bird Town Activities** – JSh mentioned Audubon Bird Town has been rebranded as Bird Town Pennsylvania. It is still sponsored by Audubon and its mission is essentially the same which is to promote bird habitats and environmentally friendly practices. However, the leadership/liaisons will now be volunteers. JSh was nominated to lead and is recruiting volunteers to assist. She is also working on passing a new resolution with the rebranded Bird Town.

- C. Clean Energy PA resource** – CE mentioned there is a Clean Energy PA website in development which will offer resources for renewable electric power solutions for all PA municipal governments who don’t have dedicated sustainability staff. CE also mentioned there is a deadline of Feb 13 to give comments on the PA Building Codes and what items we should be looking at.

7. Citizens’ Comments and Responses:

- Lora Lehmann (LL):
 - Asked EAC to provide open mic for all guests for the duration of EAC meetings.
 - Asked if committee reports can be made publicly available. Currently, the committee reports are internal, but all pertinent information from these reports are also discussed in our monthly EAC

- meetings and is reported in our minutes which are publicly available. CE agreed to send draft policy reports when prepared to LL in order for LL to be able to follow along or submit questions beforehand.
- Need to advertise Comprehensive Plan details, land use map, and all public meetings on TV
 - Boy Scout Preserve still needs attention
 - Need to be aware of potential backyard farms that are trending in the area which negatively impact properties and the environment

The meeting adjourned at 9:24 pm

Next meeting – March 9, 2022 ([Virtual](#)) at 7 PM

Acronym Key:

ACEPT – Abington Clean Energy Plan Team

AM – Ashley McIlvaine, Special Assistant to the Township Manager

AT – Abington Township

BOC – Board of Commissioners

CCPC - Comprehensive Plan Consistency Committee

CDP – Carbon Disclosure Project

CP – Comprehensive Plan

DEP – Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

EAC – Environmental Advisory Council

EV – Electric vehicle

GHG – Greenhouse Gas

LCAP – Local Climate Action Program

LEED – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design

LFC&C – LEED for Cities and Communities

PSEUDT - PECO Smart Energy Usage Data Tool

Rf100 – Ready for 100

SEM – Shared Energy Manager

STC – Shade Tree Commission

USGBC – U.S. Green Building Council

WES – Wilson Engineering Services