

**Abington Township
Environmental Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes & Engagement Report
February 14, 2024**

Call to Order: 7:02 pm

Attendees:

Members: Michele Kaczalek (MK), Karin McGarry-Rosen (KMR), Mike Melchiorre (MM), Sue Myerov (SM), Andrea Soo (AS), John Sorrentino (JSO)

Associate Members: Cakky Evans (CE), Nancy O'Neill (NO), Jennifer Sherwood (JSH)

Others Present: Nathan Vasserman (NV, Abington Township Technology Officer), Jacob Wilfred (resident)

1. **Approval of Minutes:** January 2024 minutes were approved.

2. **Amendments to the Agenda:**

- Abington-Jenkintown Connections Project update
- Letter of support for Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary
- Deal Park status
- E-cycling update

3. **Reports:**

A. Engagement – Shown with minutes.

4. **Active Business**

- A. **Single-Use Plastic (SUP) Ban Ordinance Public Info Session (Karin/Andrea)** – KMR/AS attended the January BOC working session to respond to previous BOC comments to the SUP Draft Ordinance and answer new questions. KMR also shared written comments from Faran Savitz (PennEnvironment Zero Waste Advocate) and preliminary survey results from local businesses. BOC stated that we need more education and communication to the public first. **Action item: Seek guidance from Township Manager/commissioners on next steps and logistics to connect with all relevant local businesses.**
- B. **Composting Coalition Update (John/Andrea)** – JSO/AM met with Brent Dielman (Program Coordinator, SCS Engineers) on Jan 31 who will draft a work plan for a private composting contractor to perform work with limited Township support.
- C. **Energy Procurement Support (Mitch/Mike)** – No new updates, but MM received access to PECO/Energy Star accounts through Assistant Township Manager, Ashley McIlvaine (AM).
- D. **Recycling Program Outreach** – KMR reported for EJ that she is still working on project and presented her current findings on Wed (1/29) to earn her Environmental Sustainability Certificate.
- E. **Deal Park** – EAC/SM have initiated contact with the Township on proposed park improvements, but no response yet.

Action items from Jan 2024:

- Erin Landis will share Wissahickon Trails (WT) recent trail accessibility survey that provided guidance on trail accessibility practices.
- EAC/Andrea Soo will investigate interpretative signage for the project including the available EAC budget to design and fabricate signage (PEC will provide the example of sign we created).
- EAC will request that Abington Township Manager's office reach out to Deal Memorial Park District's Commissioner (Dennis Zappone) about the project, so that Dennis has the option to inform people living around the park and others in the community about the project. PEC and WT are available to provide additional information on the project to Mr. Zappone.
- Erin Landis noted that Wissahickon Trails can schedule/conduct a spring 2024 clean-up at the park, providing an opportunity to have a public event both doing the litter clean-up and informing people about the meadow project. Erin also noted that WT can also do blogs and/or other social media announcements about the project.
- The contractor installing the meadow (ArcheWild/Wildlawn) anticipates initiating meadow preparation activities in March of this year.

- F. **Development Plan for Penn State Abington** – EAC will review plan and provide comments. SM is seeking support from other EAC members to review and help provide comments. **Action item: EAC/SM to review recording plans and provide comments.**
- G. **Climate Action Plan draft completion and ICLEI membership/technical assistance** – CE reported that MM, MG, CE and possibly JSO will be working together with AM who will work to draw in Township staff, as needed, to update the latest Draft CAP. The biggest need is to complete the adaptation and resiliency sections prior to our ICLEI zoom meeting.
- H. **LEED for Cities** – AM submitted the LfC recertification application. CE hopes we will get innovation credits with STAR certification and aims for LEED Gold status, if possible.

5. New Business

- A. **Road salt in streams** – SM shared that citizens are monitoring local streams and found elevated levels of road salt. Snowstorms contribute to significant spikes in road salt concentrations in streams. AT and other municipalities are currently discussing how we can reduce salt application and educate the public on not oversalting their properties.
- B. **Shared Energy Manager priorities** – CE provided a recap of the Shared Energy Manager program to everyone and noted these priorities:
- Identify an AT Energy Advocate and develop a transition plan.
 - Seek support and input from Public Works on the SEM program.
 - Focus on transitioning fleet vehicles to electric and construction to be carbon-neutral.
- C. **Abington School District (ASD) priorities** – CE reported that Shade Tree Commission (STC) was encountering obstacles with the school district facilities department and seeking help from the EAC to bridge communication on future plans on school properties. Need to determine how ASD is prioritizing energy efficiency, indoor air quality, and green practices for their facilities.
- D. **Street cleaning** – EAC received a resident complaint about persistent trash along the curb cutouts in Abington
- E. and asked what kind of street cleaning the Township does.

6. Citizens' Comments and Responses –

7. Next meeting – **February 14, 2024** ([Virtual](#)) at **7 PM**
8. Meeting adjourned at 9:34 PM.

Acronym Key:

AM – Ashley McIlvaine
AT – Abington Township
BOC – Board of Commissioners
CAP – Climate Action Plan
CDP – Climate Disclosure Project
CP – Comprehensive Plan
DEP - Department of Environmental Protection
EAC – Environmental Advisory Council
EDC – Economic Development Committee
LEED – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
MLK – Martin Luther King, Jr.
PEC – Pennsylvania Environmental Council
Rf100 – Ready for 100
STC – Shade Tree Commission
SUP – Single-Use Plastics
TTFWP – Tookany-Tacony Frankford Watershed Partnership
USGBC – U.S. Green Building Council
WT – Wissahickon Trails

Engagement Report – February 2023

1. Township events, meetings, & programs:

- 1/11 – BOC meeting and working session, 7 pm and 7:30 pm
- 1/23 – Planning Commission meeting canceled
- 1/30 – Conditional Use Hearing for 1209 Rydal Rd

2. Community Partnerships:

- A. [Montgomery County Parks, Trails & Historic Sites](#) Advisory Board: J. Webb is supporting as a member.
- B. [Tookany-Tacony/Frankford Watershed Partnership](#) (TTFWP): S. Myerov is supporting TTFWP as a board member D. Bell and J. Sherwood are monitoring water quality as “Streamkeepers” once a month. [Stream Smart program](#) continues and residents can inquire about program guidelines [here](#). Please contact Ryan Neuman: 215-744-1853 if interested in home audit ryan@ttfwatershed.org.
- C. [Pennypack Watershed](#): As part of the Upstream Suburban Philadelphia Cluster in the Delaware River Watershed Initiative (DRWI), [Delaware River Watershed Initiative \(DRWI\)](#). J. Sherwood is monitoring water quality as a “Streamkeeper” once a month.
- D. [Wissahickon Watershed \(Wissahickon Trails\)](#): EAC will support WT’s outreach in the Sandy Run headwaters focus area. WTs [Stream Smart program](#) continues to provide Roychester Park neighbors with free stormwater consultations, free rain barrels and other support. If you are a resident near Roychester Park and Overlook Elementary School interested in participating in this program, please contact Erin Landis at Erin@wissahickontrails.org
- E. Boy Scouts: J. Webb is serving as liaison.
- F. [Wyncote Audubon Society](#) (WAS) and [Audubon Mid-Atlantic](#): J. Sherwood is supporting
- G. [Abington Community Taskforce](#) (ACT): a volunteer is needed to support future meetings.
- H. Penn State Abington – J. Sorrentino is supporting as liaison on sustainability issues.
- I. [Rydal Meadowbrook Civic Association](#) (RMCA): C. Evans is supporting as a board member.
- J. [Briar Bush Nature Center](#): M. Kaczalek is supporting as a board member.
- K. [Redeemer Valley Community Garden](#): J. Sherwood is supporting.
- L. [AT Shade Tree Commission](#) – Trish Gallagher serves on the AT comprehensive plan board.
- M. [Family Promise Montco Food Pantry](#) – EAC will continue to collect donations.
- N. [Penn State Extension Master Watershed Stewards](#): S. Myerov serves on statewide committee
- O. [Willow Grove NAACP](#): C. Evans is supporting as a member and EAC liaison.
- P. [Salem Baptist Church](#): C. Evans is serving as the EAC liaison.
- Q. [Bird Town Pennsylvania](#) J. Sherwood and A. Christy are supporting Abington Bird Town events shown below.
- R. Abington Township Stream Salt Management: Dave Bell has been monitoring (since 2019) and continues to monitor 2 AT sites year-round for the Izaak Walton League Winter Salt Watch. <https://www.iwla.org/water/stream-monitoring/winter-salt-watch>

3. School partnerships

- A. Abington School District –liaison needed.
- B. ASHS Service Learning: submit volunteer requests online: <https://www.abington.k12.pa.us/resources/service-learning/service-learning-opportunities/>
- C. Bryn Mawr College – C. Evans is liaison

4. Public space project maintenance:

- A. Crosswicks Wildlife Sanctuary: J. Sherwood and J. Glassman are volunteering.
- B. Edge Hill Woods Preserve – R. Eisman is coordinating a friends group effort with EAC, STC and Wyncote Audubon.
- C. Ethel Jordan Park: TTFWP is maintaining the riparian buffer, rain garden and 2015 trees.
- D. Hallowell Park: A. Soo is liaison. STC, Friends of Hallowell Park, and neighborhood volunteers support cleanups, tree-plantings, and monitor park and stream conditions.
- E. Jackson Park: C. Evans is plan liaison. A. Christy (STC) is monitoring the 21 EAC trees.
- F. [Keswick Ave Train Underpass Garden](#): EAC to coordinate with C. Parkinson.
- G. Roslyn Park: A volunteer is needed to monitor, & support riparian buffer & rain garden maintenance as needed.

- H. Roychester Park: J. Sorrentino and J. Webb will work with WT & monitor & organize riparian buffer maintenance, as needed.
- I. Iris's Triangle Garden: Garden volunteers are needed, please contact J. Sherwood.
- J. Boy Scout Preserve: STC is monitoring.

5. Social Media

- A. EAC newsletters: K. McGarry-Rosen will continue to send out e-newsletters.
- B. Website: Please review and send content and comments to A. McIlvaine and A. Soo.
- C. Facebook: Reached **1.3K** likes and **1.4K** followers. We have **692** followers on [Instagram](#). Please post or send content to one of the FB administrators: K. McGarry-Rosen.
- D. Twitter: please use "AbingtonEAC" account.
- E. Township website and email blast is available for announcements.
- F. Press: Events may be posted to Abington Patch.

Events and meetings

2/7 – [Human Relations Commission](#), 7 pm (CE)
 2/8 – [BOC meeting](#) and [working session](#), 7 pm & 7:30 pm (KMR)
 2/13 – [Shade Tree Commission](#), 7:30 pm (SM, AS)
 2/14 - [EAC monthly meeting](#), 7 pm (AS)
 2/20 – [Zoning Hearing Board](#), 7 pm (SM)
 2/27 – [Planning Commission](#), 7:30 pm (SM)

Administrative Duties

ACT meetings - ?
 BOC * (2nd Thu) - KMR
 BOC Working Committee (2nd Thu) – KMR
 Comprehensive Plan Committee- AS
 EAC Email Account – AS
 Economic Development Committee - JSO
 Friends of Hallowell Park meetings – AS
 Human Relations Commission – CE
 Infrastructure Committee - MG
 Planning Commission (4th Tue) - SM
 Redeemer Valley Farm & Community Garden meetings - JSH
 Rydal Meadowbrook Civic Association - ?
 Shade Tree Commission (STC) (2nd Tue) – SM/AS
 Strategic Plan Committee - MM
 Zoning Hearing Board (3rd Tue) - SM