

**Abington Township
Environmental Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes & Engagement Report
March 8, 2023**

Call to Order: 7:03 pm

Attendees:

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

Associate Members: Peaches Cooper (PC), Elena Jadach (EJ, student/Co-President of Science Club at Penn Charter), Jennifer Sherwood (JSh)

Others Present: Lora Lehmann (LL, resident), Robin Lieberman (RL, resident), Ryan Neuman (RN, TTFWP), Grace Sekelewski (GS, Digital Media & Communications Coordinator, Abington Township)

1. **Approval of Minutes:** February 2023 minutes were approved
2. **Amendments to the Agenda** – Ryan Neuman will present TTFWP findings on chloride levels in local streams before active business discussions.
3. **Reports:**
 - A. Chairperson – Not discussed
 - B. Treasurer – No changes
 - C. Policy – None
 - D. Programs – None
 - E. Engagement – Discussed, to be added to agenda/minutes
4. **Active Business**
 - A. **Climate Action Draft Plan (CAP) and Shared Energy Manager Program** – Nothing new to report.
 - B. **Shared Energy Manager Survey** – Nothing new to report.
 - C. **Other Energy and Climate Action Initiatives**
 1. LEED for Cities Certification – Nothing new to report.
 2. Climate Change Legislation/Strategies – Nothing new to report.
 3. Ready for 100 Abington Clean Energy Plan Team (ACEPT) Update and PACleanEnergy.com website – Nothing new to report.
 4. Level 2 EV Charging Stations Rebate Program – Nothing new to report.
 5. Municipal Energy Procurement and Efficiency Next Steps – Nothing new to report.
 - D. **Vision2035 Comprehensive Plan Development** – LL says once CP passes, we will not be able to stop the volume of residential units that will be developed (dense combination of apartments, commercial establishments) which will negatively impact our environment.
 - E. **Rain Barrel program** – KMR said EAC will be ending the RB program when supplies run out. The Township's permit application form will be updated so that we are no longer included for RB requests. We have enough supplies to make approximately 30 more RBs.
 - F. **Bird Town Events** – See item 5D below.
 - G. **Composting update** – Composting Coalition met on 2/21 to further discuss economics and logistics/permitting for a viable composting program. DEP will be present and provide input at the next meeting on 3/27. AS developed and publicly shared a [Draft Composting Survey](#) (adapted for Abington Township) with the Composting Coalition which can be copied and used for other townships, if desired.
 - H. **Montgomery Award** – Nothing new to report.
 - I. **Township Recreation, Parks and Open Space Board update** – KMR said no meeting to report. Next meeting is 3/22.
 - J. **Plastic Bag Ban Update** – Township Manager R. Manfredi indicated to the EAC that the Township is prioritizing their strategic and other plans and will consider our draft plastic bag ban ordinance at a later time (TBD). KMR will help continue to push this initiative forward and recommended starting with public education.
5. **New Business:**
 - A. **TTFWP presentation by Ryan Neuman** – RN presented TTFWP findings on their analysis of road salt and streams in Philadelphia and Montgomery County (MontCo). In MontCo, TTFWP generally focuses on restoration, monitoring, volunteering, and programs/education. In Philadelphia, TTFWP focuses on Tacony Creek, parks, trails, and education.

- Quarterly sampling of selected stream locations have been analyzed by the Academy of Natural Sciences since 2014.
- Increased electrical conductivity suggests higher chloride (salt) content in streams (200 µS/cm is normal, but detecting readings as high as 1,250 µS/cm) and higher baseflow conditions. TTFWP partnered with Stroud Water Research Center to install stream sensors.
- Volunteers use chloride test strips to sample streams in winter and beyond.
- Chloride blitz – Volunteers grab water samples throughout region at once, analyze them, use test strips, measure conductivity to get a snapshot of conditions of baseflow.
- Objective – TTFWP has asked if EAC can support this effort by educating the public on minimizing or eliminating winter-salting on roads to reduce impact to streams and wildlife. Promote topic with flyers, newsletters, social media.

B. EAC Bylaw changes –

- a. KMR made motion to approve adding virtual meeting format and increasing time to produce meeting minutes to 14 days (from 10 days).
- b. Succession planning in bylaws will still need to be discussed with the Township.

C. EAC vacancy nominations and reappointments – Members concur that SM and KMR will be recommended for re-appointment. BOC said they will help advertise the open seat and EAC would set up an internal process for interviewing people and making recommendations to the BOC. Candidates will be asked to join an EAC meeting to engage and be interviewed by members. SM will share updates on a timeline when possible.

D. March and April volunteer opportunities – JSh shared the following March and April events and asked for volunteers:

- a. 3/11 - Abington Middle School watershed cleanup
- b. Meadowbrook Bird Sanctuary spring cleanups - 3/18, 3/25, 4/1
- c. 3/25 – Keswick Underpass cleanup
- d. 4/1 - Wissahickon Trails block party at Roychester Park
- e. 4/8 – Abington Library Garden Festival
- f. 4/22 – PA Bird Town native plant sale and STC tree give-away at Abington Library
- g. 4/22 – Briar Bush Earth Fest
- h. 4/29 – Native planting at the garden at Abington Library
- i. SM mentioned through Andrew Christy of a Volgistics/volunteer management system, a platform to coordinate volunteers for every event and to help recruit and retain volunteers.

E. Annual Report – At the end of April, SM will record annual report video and will reach out to all members for content updates.

F. Committee reports – EAC members agreed, from this point forward, to abandon the Chairperson, Programs, and Policy Reports, maintain the Treasurer's Report (when there are updates), and add the Engagement Report to the agenda and meeting minutes. Any program or policy topics in the future will be discussed during the EAC meeting and recorded in the minutes.

6. Citizens' Comments and Responses –

- **Robin Lieberman** – Glenside resident who expressed concern about PFAS (per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances) in our local water supply and its detrimental health effects. RL asked if EAC has been engaged with the public on its impact and what the recent discussion has been locally. RL alerted us of new information from Representative Ben Sanchez about local uptick in concentrations. JSO will follow up with the Township on the latest news and report back in our next EAC meeting.
- **Lora Lehmann** – First comment reported under Item 4D for Comprehensive Plan. LL also added that PFAS contamination from the former Willow Grove Air Force Base has migrated to the North Hills well and was shut down. LL believes that an alternate source from North Wales has replaced the North Hills water supply.

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 pm

Next meeting – April 12, 2023 ([Virtual](#)) at 7 PM

Acronym Key:

ACEPT – Abington Clean Energy Plan Team

BOC – Board of Commissioners

CAP – Climate Action Plan

CP – Comprehensive Plan

EAC – Environmental Advisory Council
EV – Electric vehicle
LCAP – Local Climate Action Program
LEED – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
LFC&C – LEED for Cities and Communities
PFAS - per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances
RB – rain barrel
STC – Shade Tree Commission
TTFWP – Tookany-Tacony Frankford Watershed Partnership
μS/cm – microSiemens per centimeter, a unit of measurement for electrical conductivity

Engagement Report – April 2023

1. Township events, meetings, & programs:

- A. 3/11/23 - Abington Middle School watershed cleanup, TTFWP event with Ryan Neuman.
- B. Meadowbrook Bird Sanctuary spring cleanups (3/18, 3/25, 4/1) - On 3/18, 3 adults and 4 youth volunteered for a total of 21 hours. 3/25 and 4/1 events were cancelled due to rain.
- C. 3/22/23, 7 pm – Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Advisory Committee. K. McGarry-Rosen. E. Jadach attended.
- D. 3/26/23, 1-4 pm – Keswick Underpass Spring Cleanup - J. Sherwood, C. Parkinson and S. Myerov attended and organized. 7 adults and 26 youth volunteered a total of 99 hours and cleaned-up the garden, mulched, and planted 60 perennials and flowers.
- E. 3/27/23, 7 pm – PA Composting Coalition Meeting - J. Sorrentino, A. Soo attended.
- F. 3/29/23, 7 pm – Comprehensive Plan Consistency Committee Meeting - Shade Tree Commission Master Tree Action Plan adoption discussion. STC members, S. Myerov, J. Sherwood, A. Soo attended.

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. WT’s [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. Glassman (15 hours) and J. Sherwood (4 hours) volunteered to plant 10 native trees and install deer protection, funded by WAS.
- 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 (volunteered 6 hours this month).
- 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 **1266** likes and **1375** followers. We have **567** 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.

<u>Events and meetings</u> 4/18/22– 8-10 AM: Abington Bird Town Bird Walk at Lorimer Park, 798 Welsh Road lot Abington Recreation, Parks and Open Space Plan meetings, www.abingtonpa.gov/agendas : Public Meeting #3: Wednesday, April 19, 2023 at 7 PM - Draft Plan https://www.abingtonpa.gov/Home/Components/Calendar/Event/6883/18?curm=4&cury=2023 4/22/23 – 9:00-12:00, Paper shredding event at Florey Lane, https://www.abingtonpa.gov/Home/Components/Calendar/Event/7023/18 4/22/23 – 9:00-3:00, Abington Bird Town Native Plant Sale at the Abington Free Library Book and Plant Sale event 4/22/23 – 1:00-4:00 pm, Earth Fest at Briar Bush Nature Center: https://www.abingtonpa.gov/Home/Components/Calendar/Event/7115/18?curm=4&cury=2023 4/23/23 – 11:00-2:00, “Hooves and Heels” barn fundraiser at Redeemer Valley Farm https://www.facebook.com/events/201566132476328 4/29/23 – Abington Bird Town Native Plant Garden installation at Abington Free Library 5/16/23– 8-10 AM: Abington Bird Town Bird Walk at Lorimer Park, 183 Moredon Road lot	<u>Meetings</u> BOC * (second Thursday) SM BOC Working Committee (second Thursday) Zoning** (third Tuesday) __ Planning** (fourth Tuesday) __ Shade Tree Commission (STC)** (second Tuesday) __ Friends of Hallowell Park meetings* AS ACT meetings __ Rydal Meadowbrook Civic Association __ Redeemer Valley Farm and Community Garden meetings JSh
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