

**Abington Township
Environmental Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes & Engagement Report
April 10, 2024**

Call to Order: 7:03 pm

Attendees:

Members: Mitch Gertz (MG), Karin McGarry-Rosen (KMR), Mike Melchiorre (MM), Sue Myerov (SM), Andrea Soo (AS), John Sorrentino (JSO)

Associate Members: Peaches Cooper (PC), Cakky Evans (CE), Elena Jadach (EJ), Nancy O'Neill (NO), Jennifer Sherwood (JSH), Jim Webb (JW)

Others Present: Lora Lehmann (LL, resident), Ethan Simon (ES, resident), Nathan Vasserman (NV, Abington Township Technology Officer)

1. **Approval of Minutes:** March 2024 minutes were approved with edits provided during meeting.

2. **Amendments to the Agenda:**

- Shared Energy Manager Program

3. **Active Business**

A. **Single-Use Plastic (SUP) Ban Ordinance Public Info Session (Karin/Andrea)** – KMR met with Ashley McIlvaine (AM, Asst. Township Manager/Rich Manfredi (RM, Township Manager) last week and will ask tax office/code enforcement if they have an electronic list of business contacts. RM proposes to give businesses the link to our site with 3-4 questions to see how a Single-Use Plastics ban would impact them. Faran Savtiz (Penn Environment) provided edits to the draft ordinance which EAC will update and send to BOC for review. SM suggested reaching out to the Chamber of Commerce.

Action item: KMR to connect with Township on list of businesses to contact about the proposed single-use plastics ban and to reach out to the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce for assistance.

B. **Composting Coalition Update (John/Andrea)** – JSO, AM, Mark Maxwell (MM, Refuse Superintendent), and Brent Dieleman (SCS Engineers) met to discuss a township composting initiative, but MM expressed concern that there is a lot of cross-contamination as it is with the yard waste and he does not want to create more work for his staff. AM will review legal ramifications of offering a curbside pickup service.

C. **Energy Procurement Support (Mitch/Mike)** – No new updates, but EAC will continue to work on CAP. MM will meet with AM on Friday to determine if there are updates.

D. **Recycling Program Outreach** – EJ will volunteer at the Junkluggers e-cycling event at the Upper Dublin library on 4/20.

E. **Deal Park** – On 3/23, PEC (Paul Racette) and ArcheWild (meadow contractor) hosted an onsite info session with area residents with support from Jessica Tholey (new Parks & Rec Director). SM reported that area residents were overall supportive of project, but had strong opposition to the use of planned herbicides. Need to discuss what other options there are before moving forward with plan. Meadow plan is on time-constrained funding.

Action item: SM will find out from PEC/WT if there are alternatives to using herbicides.

F. **Land Developments (SM):**

- a. **Old Welsh Road** – New development zoned R4 (mid-high density residential); SM reported zoning criteria were met, but some concerns on tree placement which will be communicated in STC comment letter. Permeable asphalt driveways are commendable, but there is concern about specialized maintenance for it.

Action item: SM will finalize comment letter and send to EAC for approval.

- b. **Hopewell Veterinary Hospital** – EAC has one minor comment about reducing light pollution by focusing parking lot lights downward/inward. NO said she will send info about Dark Sky International which will help with standard language for comment letter. CE commented on ensuring energy-

efficiency in construction.

- G. **Climate Action Plan draft completion and ICLEI membership/technical assistance** – MM is preparing for 4/30 deadline for Shared Energy Manager (SEM) program. MM/MG/CE will meet with AM on Friday to finalize CAP. MG summarized webinar by Hurricane Schwartz, CE attended STC meeting to confer on CAP goals.
- H. **LEED for Cities** – CE reported we received final review; Abington Township received LEED Gold status which will be publicized tomorrow via Township video.

4. New Business

- A. **Garden Festival** – Garden Festival on Sat, 3/23, attended by KMR/JSH/EJ, was well attended in spite of the rain.
- B. **Annual Report** – KMR said BOC preferred a recorded video of EAC annual report, but KMR suggested a live presentation at a BOC meeting. EAC concluded that a written report or presentation will suffice as our annual report. No video required.
- C. **Township updates** – MG reported that his wife, Christine Gertz, was appointed the new Ward 10 Commissioner in March 2024.

5. Citizens' Comments and Responses –

- LL stated the following:
 - Township residents were never informed about who the other Ward 10 Commissioner candidates were and could not comment.
 - 1209 Rydal Rd – Land is partially on a steep slope and a new life care/nursing home facility is proposed. Need to pay attention to upcoming meetings.
 - 1526/1528 Fairview – A variance to allow the construction of 6 townhouse units on 2 properties may come back for review.
 - 933 Fox Chase Rd – Wetland area is compromised by unkempt debris from resident.
- Township Manager, Rich Manfredi, will be retiring at the end of the year. LL strongly encouraged everyone to voice their opinion about what we want in Manfredi's successor.
- Native plant sale is 4/27. No Briar Bush Earthfest due to construction on site.
- CE mentioned Community Advocates for Clean Energy (network of schools) and invited PC and NO to participate, if available.
- Ethan Simon (resident) – Offered to help EAC with providing info on best practices for residents and township contractors on all matters related to the environment.
- SM will be hosting a retirement party for Julie Slavet on 4/28 and there will be an opportunity meet the new director, Justin DiBerardinis.
- KMR mentioned that a resident commented that EAC does not offer where to buy rain barrels (now that we have retired our program).
- AS made motion for EAC to reimburse Robin Eisman of STC up to \$300 for native plants expenses. Motion was unanimously approved.

6. Next meeting – **May 8, 2024** ([Virtual](#)) at 7 PM

7. Meeting adjourned at 9:46 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
PEC – Pennsylvania Environmental Council
Rf100 – Ready for 100
RM – Rich Manfredi
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 – April 2024

1. Township events, meetings, & programs:

- 3/14 – BOC meeting (only) 7 pm
- 3/26 – Planning Commission meeting canceled

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 **713** 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

4/3 - [Human Relations Commission](#), 7 pm (CE)
 4/9 – [Shade Tree Commission](#), 7:30 pm (SM, AS)
 4/10 – [EAC monthly meeting](#), 7 pm (AS)
 4/11 – [BOC meeting](#), 7 pm (KMR), working session canceled
 4/16 – [Zoning Hearing Board](#), 7 pm (SM)
 4/23 – [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