

**Abington Township
Environmental Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes & Engagement Report
April 12, 2023**

Call to Order: 7:01 pm

Attendees:

Members: Cakky Evans (CE), 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), Jim Webb (JW)

Others Present: Robin Lieberman (RL, resident), Nathan Vasserman (Technology Officer, Abington Township)

1. **Approval of Minutes:** March 2023 minutes were approved
2. **Amendments to the Agenda** – None
3. **Reports:**
 - A. Engagement – Shown with minutes and approved.
4. **Active Business**
 - A. **Energy and Climate Action Planning (CAP)** – Nothing to report.
 - B. **Water quality (PFAS) update** – JSO reported that (per the latest PA Bulletin) that the health advisory level (HAL) is 70 ng/L or ppt (divided by PFOA and PFOS), MCL = 18 mg/L, MCLG = 14 mg/L. Hatboro station received funding to remove PFAS. Drexel University did a study that evaluated how to further decrease the levels to below the EPA level to reduce health risks and showed a cost-benefit analysis. RL shared her findings on in-home PFAS treatment systems and NV mentioned a reverse osmosis system that can be installed under a kitchen sink to remove PFAS. JSO will continue to research the nature and extent of the PFAS contamination in our region and report back in our next meeting.
 - C. **Vision2035 Comprehensive Plan Development** – SM summarized the CP Consistency Meeting on 3/29. During the first half of the meeting, STC presented a detailed assessment of their urban tree canopy study and Master Tree Plan to help strengthen our existing tree protection ordinance. EAC members, SM, JSh, AS, and many others attended and voiced their support during the meeting. At the conclusion, the BOC allowed the STC to move through the process that should result in its adoption by the Township.
 - D. **Stormwater Study Update** – During the second half of the CP Consistency Meeting on 3/29, a stormwater feasibility study was presented which included:
 - Recommendations to add more green infrastructure to maximize stormwater capture.
 - Project priority areas that are more vulnerable to stormwater issues.
 - Amending ordinances to help facilitate green infrastructure systems.
 - Proposed financing.
 - E. **Bird Town Events** – Keswick Ave Underpass Garden cleanup on 3/26 was successful with ~30 volunteers. Upcoming events include: 4/14 Meadowbrook Bird Sanctuary cleanup. 4/18 Abington Bird Town bird walk at Lorimer Park, 4/22 Abington Library native plant sale, and 4/29 native plant garden planting at Abington Library (*this was later postponed due to rain*). SM also mentioned TTFWP will be leading an event this Sunday (4/16, 10 am to 1 pm) at Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel for planting rain gardens and bioswales in the parking lot if anyone is interested in volunteering.
 - F. **Composting update** – AS summarized the last composting meeting on 3/27 that included a Q&A with special guest, Craig Frey, who is the Sanitation Project Coordinator in Upper Dublin Township. He described their current process handling selected kitchen food waste in their normal yard waste stream and invited anyone interested in a tour of their waste facility in May (date TBD).
 - G. **Montgomery Award** – Nothing new to report.
 - H. **Township Recreation, Parks and Open Space Board update** – KMR announced that Elena Jadach is now a student member of the Open Space Board (endorsed by Commissioner Vahey) to provide a teen perspective on issues being discussed. KMR summarized the 3/22 meeting and shared the measurable scale used to prioritize tasks by timeline, type, geographic area, age group, abilities, available resources, etc. The plan is expected to be finalized by June or July 2023. Next meeting is scheduled to be on 4/19.

5. New Business:

- A. **Request for Review (Sisters of St. Basil, 711 Fox Chase Rd – Land Development Plan)** – SM introduced the development plan which is a major subdivision/land development plan at Sisters of St. Basil which is proposed to be ~150 age-restricted units. The site plan was updated to reflect community input and concerns. The development includes a large new subdivision with a series of attached town-home style units surrounded by a wide expanse of grass. The proposed development seems isolated and not well integrated with the street patterns of the adjacent neighborhood. Fox Chase Manor Park is the area in the northeast corner where a tributary to Pennypack Creek is located. The western portion of the site drains to the Tookany Creek watershed. The northern and southern neighborhoods both dead end to this property. The current plan also does not include natural connectivity (e.g. walking trails) between the existing neighborhoods and the new development. SM requested that EAC members help review this land development plan since it is such a large proposal and has many different components. JSh and AS have offered support. EAC/STC will plan a joint review at Grove Park house later this month. May 12 is the due date for comments.
 - B. **ASD's April 19 community leadership invitation** – SM reminded us that there will be a Community Leadership Meeting on 4/19 from 6-7:30 pm at ASHS to discuss the increase in youth violence and crime within our community. CE sent the invitation from the Superintendent of Schools which requires an RSVP. PC will be participating in the meeting and will report back what was discussed in our next EAC meeting.
 - C. **EAC vacancy nominations** – Nothing new to report. SM/KMR will be re-appointed at the next BOC meeting (tomorrow, 4/13). For the EAC vacancy, EAC will need to discuss next steps and how to reach out and advertise to the public. KMR sent a reminder email to AM/GS on its status. JSh mentioned that, in the past, the EAC would write a job description that commissioners would distribute via newsletter. EAC candidates would then be invited to an EAC meeting for a group interview and evaluation before EAC recommends a candidate to the BOC.
 - D. **Annual Report Preparation** – SM will be preparing a 2022 Annual Report slide deck and will be asking other EAC members for relevant data and info on our achievements, as needed.
 - E. **April and May volunteer opportunities** – JSh shared the following March and April events and asked for volunteers:
 - a. 4/14 – Meadowbrook Bird Sanctuary cleanup
 - b. 4/18 (8-10 am) – Abington Bird Town bird walk at Lorimer Park
 - c. 4/22 (9 am - 3 pm) – PA Bird Town native plant sale and STC tree give-away at Abington Library
 - d. 4/22 (9 am -12 pm) – Paper shred event at Florey Lane
 - e. 4/22 (1-4 pm) – Briar Bush Earth Fest
 - f. 4/29 – Native garden planting at Abington Library (*this was later postponed due to rain*)
 - g. 5/16 (8-10 am) – Abington Bird Town bird walk at Lorimer Park
6. **Citizens' Comments and Responses** –
- **Robin Lieberman** – Glenside resident asked how we can elevate this issue to the Township and what they plan to do about it and how we can prevent PFAS contamination from threatening our drinking water resources. For example, where is our water coming from, where are the intakes, how are we impacted by PFAS? EAC will follow up with the Township on what the status is and respond back to the group and RL.

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 pm

Next meeting – May 10, 2023 ([Virtual](#)) at 7 PM

Acronym Key:

ASHS – Abington Senior High School

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

MCL – Maximum Contaminant Level

MCLG - Maximum Contaminant Level Goal

ng/L – nanograms/liter

PFAS - per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances
PFOA – perfluorooctanoic acid
PFOS – perfluorooctane sulfonate
ppt – parts per trillion
STC – Shade Tree Commission
TTFWP – Tookany-Tacony Frankford Watershed Partnership

Engagement Report – May 2023

1. Township events, meetings, & programs:

- A. 4/14 – Meadowbrook Bird Sanctuary cleanup, JSH attended.
- B. 4/18 – Abington Bird Town bird walk at Lorimer Park, JSH attended.
- C. 4/19 – Open Space public meeting was attended by K. McGarry-Rosen, E. Jadach, A. Soo.
- D. 4/22 – PA Bird Town native plant sale and STC tree give-away at Abington Library was organized and attended by J. Sherwood, M. Kaczalek, K. McGarry-Rosen, S. Myerov, P. Cooper, A. Soo, and E. Jadach, STC members, and other dedicated local volunteers. Total native plant sales netted \$1,365 with 25% (or \$341) going to Abington Library per our agreement. Total net profit for EAC was \$1,024.
- E. 4/22 – Briar Bush Earth Fest was attended by K. McGarry-Rosen, P. Cooper, and A. Soo.
- F. 4/22 – Paper Shred Event at Florey Ln. No EAC members attended.
- G. 4/24 – PA Composting Coalition meeting was attended by A. Soo, J. Sorrentino, and E. Jadach.
- H. 4/26 – EAC/STC St. Basil development plan joint review at Grove Park house attended by S. Myerov, J. Sherwood, A. Soo, and STC members, J. Ascenzi, and J. Kennedy.
- I. 4/29 – Glenside-Weldon tree planting hosted by STC, attended by Krystn Kuckelman (Greater Glenside Civic Association), A. Soo (EAC), STC members, A. Nicholaides, S. Sacavage, and J. Kennedy, and over 20 local volunteers. A total of 9 native trees were planted in the park, including Swamp White Oak and Sycamore. Several dead trees were also removed from previous tree planting efforts.

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 **1268** likes and **1377** followers. We have **601** 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>	<u>Meetings</u>
5/3/23, 10-11 AM: Upper Dublin Waste Facility Tour for PA Composting Coalition group	BOC * (second Thursday) SM BOC Working Committee (second Thursday)
5/7/23, 9 AM: Abington Bird Town native garden planting at Abington Library (previously 4/29, but canceled due to rain).	Zoning** (third Tuesday) __ Planning** (fourth Tuesday) __ Shade Tree Commission (STC)** (second Tuesday) __
5/12/23, 11 AM: SPS/Friends of Hallowell Park meeting to introduce stakeholders and discuss future plans for Hallowell Park	Friends of Hallowell Park meetings* AS
5/13/23, 10 AM -12 PM: Ethel Jordan Park Creek Care Day (TTF) (347 Cadwalader Ave #301, Elkins Park, PA 19027). Please contact Ryan@TTFWatershed.org to RSVP.	ACT meetings __ Rydal Meadowbrook Civic Association __ Redeemer Valley Farm and Community Garden meetings JSh
5/16/23, 8-10 AM: Abington Bird Town Bird Walk at Lorimer Park, 183 Moredon Road lot	
5/24/23, 5:30-7:00 PM: Appreciation Picnic for Appointed Boards, Commissions, Committees, and Councils at Alverthorpe Park Pavilion on Fox Chase Road.	