

**Abington Township
Environmental Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes for April 14, 2021**

Call to Order: 7:32 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: David Bell (DB), Jennifer Sherwood (JSh), Kurt Wood (KW)

Others Present: Robin Eisman (resident), Kenneth Feinour (resident), Lora Lehmann (resident/Abington Citizen's Network), Ashley McIlvaine (AM, Special Assistant to the Township Manager)

1. **Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from the March 2021 meeting were approved.
2. **Amendments to the Agenda** – JW forwarded a draft US Army Corps of Engineers Environmental Assessment regarding Sandy Run Creek stream and habitat improvements for review and comment.
3. **Reports:**
 - A. Chairperson's Report – Approved
 - B. Treasurer's Report – Approved
4. **Committee Reports:**
 - A. Policy – Approved
 - B. Programs – Approved
 - C. Engagement – Approved
5. **Active Business**
 - A. **Energy and Climate Action Initiatives**
 1. Ready for 100 Abington Clean Energy Plan Team (ACEPT) Update
 - a) Strategic Energy Plan Survey - CE indicated that most recipients of the survey (BOC, selected township staff) agreed to be interviewed.
 - b) Township Priority Energy Opportunities – No discussion.
 - c) Bryn Mawr math modeling/sustainability students – CE reported that we are primarily focused on obtaining major data such as costs; acquiring demand data from PECO has been more challenging.
 - d) Rebate program – AM reported that the Township received two vouchers to install two Electric Vehicle Public Charging Stations at the township building within 180 days. CE mentioned that any costs associated using DVRPC or other municipalities are good resources to learn from.
 2. Climate Action Plan (CAP) Timeline
 - a) Earth Day (4/22) Kick-Off – Sent a letter to the President of the BOC (Spiegelman) to share with stakeholders our CAP timeline. Various stakeholders responded with positive feedback and willing participation. Aim to finalize CAP by June.
 - b) Abington Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment – No discussion.
 - c) Abington Township Climate Action Plan Collaborative engagement and STC Ask – No discussion.
 - d) CCGP Resolution with IPCC GHG emissions reductions – Township needs additional information from the EAC to determine best path forward (e.g. cost implications/level of effort associated with the CCGP). AM will send an agenda request form to the EAC to be completed with more details/clarification on costs (if any).
 3. 2021 CDP Cities Questionnaire Score – Submission deadline for CDP questionnaire is 7/29.
 - B. **Vision 2035 Comprehensive Plan Meeting** – SM will attend meeting at 4/20. No other updates.
 - C. **Development Plan Reviews** – SM summarized one new development plan:
 - Pickle Ball Court at Rydal Waters – SM summarized plan to build a pickle ball court near a Pennypack tributary within Rydal Waters where a riparian conservation corridor exists. SM will ask if this plan needs further review for stormwater management based on its proximity to the tributary. Otherwise, recreational use is acceptable for this zone.
 - D. **Rain Barrel program** – Three RB workshops are scheduled. JW will try to arrange a new RB pick-up from I. Rice soon. Approximately 56 rain barrel orders in progress. Several art barrels have also been requested, including two at local business, Penny's Flowers.

- E. **2020 Annual Report** – JW recorded a ppt presentation for the annual report for the township. A full written report will follow.
- F. **Montgomery Award** – Current deadline to submit nominees for this year's award is 4/30. EAC voted to award Pennoni Associates last year, but did not follow through with BOC/awardee notification or award ceremony due to the pandemic. AM will provide updates on how long township meetings will be virtual based on Governor's emergency declaration. EAC members suggested giving an award this year regardless if we have a virtual or in-person meeting, but no vote was cast.

6. New Business:

- A. Zoning Amendment Process – We need to collectively develop a more timely way to receive information on zoning amendments (and other items requiring review) in order to make informed decisions. AM said no concrete decisions were made.
- B. EAC Leadership of the CAP process:
 - CE proposed the use of live polling during our CAP public meetings (including upcoming 4/22 meeting) and asked for funding to purchase the basic plan of live polling app, Mentimeter (or similar tool), for EAC use, pending AM discussion with Mike Narcowich (MCPC Assistant Section Chief). Motion to provide funding was approved.
 - CE mentioned an online public mapping tool, Community Remarks, that the City of Bethlehem used for their civic engagement which we will present at our first CAP meeting as an example. AM said that the Township will be developing a similar online citizens' reporting tool that is GIS-based that will have similar functionality; collecting citizens' comments, locations of interest, and other crowd-sourced info to support our CAP.
- C. EAC Networking Conference follow-up – CE mentioned a FEMA training plan for green infrastructure which she will email to everyone after our meeting.
- D. PEC request for Township consideration of a resolution to support circuit trail development – JW sent an email to EAC members which we will review and discuss during next month's meeting.
- E. EAC support for 4/17 Paper Shred Event – AS and KW will support event.
- F. Public Notice/Draft Environmental Assessment for Abington Environmental Infrastructure Improvement Project – JW asked EAC members to review and provide comments before May 9 deadline.

7. Citizens' Comments and Responses:

- Edge Hill Woods funding request - Abington resident, Robin Eisman, presented details and asked EAC to provide \$225 to support GIS mapping by the Natural Lands Trust to help plan restoration for Edge Hill Woods. Motion to provide \$225 in funding support for GIS mapping of Edge Hill Woods was approved by the EAC.
 - Abington resident, Lora Lehmann (LL), objected to this proposal and EAC's funding support. She asked EAC to focus more on other areas whose vegetation/trees are distressed (e.g. Grove Park, the Boy Scout preserve, Valley Rd area, wetland area across from Alverthorpe Park).
- LL also commented on the following items:
 - Pickle ball court – LL objected to location and suggested moving it away from the tributary/stream.
 - 1278 Meadowbrook Rd – Two large trees were felled to build a bridge which she believes was not DEP-compliant.
 - Stormwater fee – Need to address this fee. It should come out of our taxes so that we have visibility on infrastructure spending. LL will share more details with SM.
 - Willow Grove Mall development – LL reminded EAC of her concern about the Willow Grove Mall development and asked EAC to take action at the next planning commission meeting. SM assured LL that EAC will be reviewing and providing comments and participating in the upcoming planning commission meeting for this development.

The meeting adjourned at 9:53 pm

Next meeting – May 12, 2021 ([virtual](#))

Acronym Key:

ACEPT – Abington Clean Energy Plan Team

AT – Abington Township

BOC – Board of Commissioners

CCGP - Climate Collaborative of Greater Philadelphia

CDP – Carbon Disclosure Project

CEP – Clean Energy Plan

CP – Comprehensive Plan

DEP – Department of Environmental Protection

EAC – Environmental Advisory Council

EV – Electric vehicle

GIS – Geographic Information Systems

LCAP – Local Climate Action Program

LEED – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design

MCPC – Montgomery County Planning Commission

RB – Rain barrel

Rf100 – Ready for 100

RGGI – Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative

STC – Shade Tree Commission

USGBC – U.S. Green Building Council