

**Abington Township
Environmental Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
June 12, 2024**

Call to Order: 7:02 pm

Attendees:

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

Associate Members: Peaches Cooper (PC), Cakky Evans (CE), Jennifer Sherwood (JSH), Jim Webb (JW)

Others Present: Lora Lehman (LL), Grace Sekelewski (GS, Abington Township Communications Manager)

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

2. **Amendments to the Agenda:** None.

3. **Active Business**

- A. **Single-Use Plastic (SUP) Ban Ordinance Public Info Session (Karin/Andrea)** – Need business champion. Commissioner Spiegelman would like the EAC to contact small businesses in every ward. LL suggested asking the BOC to name the list of businesses to contact that are of concern. MG suggested picking a subset of businesses (10% targeted list but randomly selected) for each ward and engage them. The township will support sending mailers, but the EAC is responsible for paying for delivery. CE called Jay Blumenthal and he said to call his assistant, Carol, to work with us to help us narrow down the list.
- B. **Composting Coalition Update (John/Andrea)** – SRC Engineers requested more info from township and wants to know size of composting operation. They want to know if food waste composting could be incorporated into it. After 10 days of no response, we will look at curbside pickup option as alternative.
- C. **Energy Procurement Support (Mitch/Mike)** – Natural gas contract will be signed by the township (30% reduction in cost for 2 years). Supply went up, usage went down overall. The township approved 2 eV and 10 charging stations in the township.
- D. **Recycling Program Outreach** – No new updates.
- E. **Deal Park** – Decided on organic treatment, but after posting notices in the park, some residents did not wish to have entire park lawn to be converted to meadow. Project has stalled, but work could continue with funding in the fall.
- F. **Climate Action Plan Draft and ICLEI Membership** – Same as previously reported. CE said the draft was not finished, but we included CAP in Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) application which is due in October. Our shared energy manager will use our CAP to help fund initiatives.
- G. **365 Cedar Rd plan (across from McKinley Elementary School)** – Previous joint letter with STC is outdated, so drafting updated letter to reflect new concerns regarding steep slopes, canopy trees, energy efficiency. LL said there were no committee meetings to inform neighbors of the development plan and it never went to Land Development committee for review. SM will try to get more info and find out where we are in the process.
- H. **LEED for Cities update (Cakky)** – No new updates.
- I. **Bird Town updates (Jenn)** – Three gardens planted; native plant garden at Abington Library on 5/28 (staff maintaining, BT grant, PA native plant society) and Roslyn Park (STC got grant funding) has 2 gardens with maintenance. STC/JSH will install educational signs for the park.

4. **New Business**

- A. **50th Anniversary of the EAC** – Proposing to commemorate on Aug 5 during Pre Night Out and have an essay contest for scholarship. We should celebrate 50 years of EAC staying relevant. Subcommittee formed with CE, KMR, MM, JSH, JSO, PC for Sept/Oct timeframe.
- B. **Montgomery Award** – It was reported that AM said she will ask Rich Manfredi and BOC about their opinion on giving this award. We haven't celebrated it in several years. The township would like to continue this award

but at the volunteer appreciation picnic. It recognizes a person or organization who contributed significantly, not necessarily volunteers.

- C. **NAACP** – The NAACP Willow Grove branch is inviting the EAC for an appreciation dinner - \$40-60 pp to be honored. Date TBD.
- D. **Sustainable Development Best Practices DRAFT Checklist (Cakky)** – CE suggested a committee or group to further develop a sustainability checklist with energy efficiency, LEED cert, stormwater, transportation, materials/resources, water efficiency, etc. for any new construction or add-ons in township. Good start for best practices and includes county-level goals. Do we want to do a bonus-point system or make it a requirement? Promote it to STC and Planning Commission on how we can integrate or pilot this into future development. ASD would be a good place to start.
- E. **DVRPC Regional Benchmarking Program (Cakky)** – Five municipalities received a grant to do a regional benchmarking program. West Chester/Green Bldg United/DVRPC presented program and Philly participates. AM will reach out to see what's involved (time commitment, cost, personnel). The township can do the benchmarking for businesses over 50K square feet.
- F. **Working with Abington School District (e.g. sustainable funding opportunities)** – Largest real estate owner, ReImagine Appalachia, DirectPay which gives tax credits for nonprofits, faith organizations, state and local government agencies for switching to clean energy. 6% tax break, leverage tax incentives for clean energy projects (nonprofits and commercialbiz). CE will work with PC on this.

5. **Citizens' Comments and Responses:**

MG – SEPTA is planning to do a slope stabilization project with rip-rap and remove vegetation and sound barrier between Crestmont Station to Welsh Rd. Resident on NW corner of Rockwell and Welsh Rd. (where bridge is) concerned about tree removal and no replacements. MG will reach out to SEPTA to find out what the plan is and what its impact is.

LL:

- Accessory dwelling units – Only need zoning hearing board to double/triple square feet of lots.
- EDC – Appointed 3 ppl, structuring at 9 am meeting.
- 1368 Valley Rd – 100 trees felled, but following DEP plan.
- Fox Chase Rd – Spot zoning is a major issue.
- Township Manager – EAC and the community need to develop a list of traits we want in a manager.
- Budget – None of the public's comments are factored in.

6. Meeting adjourned at 9:11 PM.

Next meeting – **July 10, 2024 ([Virtual](#)) at 7 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

STC – Shade Tree Commission

SUP – Single-Use Plastics

TTFWP – Tookany-Tacony Frankford Watershed Partnership

USGBC – U.S. Green Building Council

WT – Wissahickon Trails