

**Abington Township
Environmental Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes & Engagement Report
June 14, 2023**

Call to Order: 7:03 pm

Attendees:

Members: Cakky Evans (CE), Michele Kaczalek (MK), Andrea Soo (AS), John Sorrentino (JSO)

Associate Members: Elena Jadach (EJ), Peaches Cooper (PC), Jennifer Sherwood (JSH), Jim Webb (JW)

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

1. **Approval of Minutes:** May 2023 minutes were approved.
2. **Amendments to the Agenda** – None
3. **Reports:**
 - A. Engagement – Shown with minutes.
4. **Active Business**
 - A. **EAC vacancy nominations** – AS reported that the review committee, consisting of AS, JSO, KMR, have interviewed the six applicants for the EAC open position and would like to recommend Michael Melchiorre to be appointed by the BOC. AS made a motion for the recommendation which was approved by the EAC members present. AS will notify the township to add this recommendation to the July BOC agenda. AS also noted that one other candidate will remain in the applicant pool for a future open position (per their agreement) and all remaining candidates were open to becoming associate members.
 - B. **Rain Barrel Program Updates** – Nothing to report; KMR not present.
 - C. **Energy and Climate Action Planning (CAP)** – Nothing to report.
 - D. **Water quality (PFAS) update** – JSO reported that he connected with Aqua PA who would not provide a schematic of water distribution by geographic area. However, Aqua PA was willing to provide specific water quality and supply source info confidentially to the concerned resident who attended our EAC meeting in March 2023 if a home address was provided.
 - E. **Vision2035 Comprehensive Plan Development** – Nothing to report.
 - F. **Bird Town Events/Updates** – JSH reported that most spring activities have concluded. Monthly Bird Town walks at Lorimer Park will continue. Wyncote Audubon will be hosting one more presentation at the Upper Dublin Library on Tuesday, 6/27, 7-8 pm, to present a new book, “A Wing and a Prayer” about saving birds from extinction.
 - G. **Composting update** – No new updates. However, JSO reported that he will be completing a short course on municipal composting which is administered by the Institute for Local Self Reliance which was offered for free. He will share what he learned in the next EAC meeting.
 - H. **Plastics Update** – No new updates. Please refer to May 2023 minutes. EJ added that she will email the EAC an article about the statistics of where “recycled” plastics actually go.
 - I. **Township Recreation, Parks and Open Space Board update** – EJ reported that the Open Space Committee held their last meeting on Monday, 6/12, to continue to discuss the Draft Plan which is currently open for public comment via an online form on the township website until June 30. KMR sent this form out to the EAC on June 5.
 - J. **Keystone 10 million trees order (JSH)** – JSH reported that the Keystone 10 Million Trees partnership is an effort to plant 10 million trees in 10 years (1 million trees per year). The campaign is offering free trees with deer protection and stakes to anyone who wants them. STC and EAC both received an allotment of trees (EAC received 100) which are 6-15” seedlings that are best suited for riparian zones. JSH is taking care of the allotment which is available to anyone who wants them for a public or private project.
5. **New Business:**
 - A. **June and July volunteer opportunities** – JSh shared the following June (and beyond) events and asked for volunteers:
 - a. **June 22** – Community Organization Open House at ASHS; AS and PC will participate to introduce who the EAC is and what volunteer opportunities there are for youth. Parents, school officials, and other community members are expected to attend.
 - b. **June 24** – Household Hazardous Waste Drop Off for Abington residents will be at the Abington Middle School. Registration is required.

- c. **July 31** – Abington Pre-Night Out; EAC discussed themes and activities we did last year. Activities included bean barrel toss, light switch decorating, bird conservation education, but no giveaways. CE suggested offering information to the public on energy conservation and green energy opportunities (e.g. tax incentives for EVs, upgrading your home to conserve energy, etc.). AS suggested offering information on negative impacts of single-use plastics and how to connect with their commissioners on this issue. General theme of “Did you know...?” will potentially cover all discussed topics.
 - d. **August 2023** – Abington Library has requested EAC to present a mini workshop from 6:30-7:30 pm, 6/14, 7/12, 8/9. JSH suggested 8/9. JSH, PC, and EJ plan to participate.
6. **Citizens’ Comments and Responses** – None, but EJ mentioned she will be earning an Environmental Stewardship Certificate as part of a research project at her school. EAC members offered some project ideas that she may consider.

The meeting adjourned at 7:58 pm

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

Acronym Key:

ACT – Abington Community Task Force

ASHS – Abington Senior High School

BOC – Board of Commissioners

CAP – Climate Action Plan

CP – Comprehensive Plan

EAC – Environmental Advisory Council

EV – Electric vehicle

STC – Shade Tree Commission

TTFWP – Tookany-Tacony Frankford Watershed Partnership

Engagement Report – July 2023

1. Township events, meetings, & programs:

- A. 6/19/23, 7 pm, Southeastern PA Single-Use Plastic Coalition Meeting: AS, KMR attended and provided an Abington Township update.
- B. 6/22/23, 6-7 pm, Community Organization Open House: AS and PC attended and advertised EAC mission and volunteer opportunities for youth and families.

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. 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 **1.2K** likes and **1.3K** followers. We have **637** 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

7/14/23 – EAC monthly meeting

7/31/23 – Abington Pre-Night Out

8/9/23, Abington Library EAC mini workshop (6:30-7:30 pm), 6/14, 7/12, 8/9. JSH suggested

8/9. JSH, PC, and EJ plan to participate.

Meetings

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