

**Abington Township
Environmental Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
August 14, 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), Elena Jadach (EJ), Jennifer Sherwood (JSH), Jim Webb (JW)

Others Present: Meryl Hyatt (MH, resident/volunteer), Nathan Vasserman (NV, Abington Township Information Technology Officer)

1. **Approval of Minutes** – August 2024 minutes were approved with edits noted.
2. **Amendments to the Agenda:** SEPTA slope project update, ICLEI membership, and STC meeting/sustainability checklist.

3. **Active Business**

- A. **Single-Use Plastic (SUP) Ban Ordinance (Karin)** – KMR continued active engagement with at least 69 local businesses of which 68% supported the ban. Curds and Whey sent a letter of support to the BOC. EAC is aiming to be included in the October BOC meeting. Here is the current business outreach/survey completion rate by ward:

CE suggested engaging more students/environmental clubs to support the EAC when we next meet with the BOC.

Action item: AS to collate list of questions from the February 2024 BOC meeting, draft a ppt presentation/regional map, letters of support, and do research on health impacts from single-use plastics.

- B. **Composting Coalition Update (John)** – JSO will be meeting with AM and Brent Dieleman (Program Coordinator, SCS) on 8/21 to further discuss how Abington Township can assist/monitor a composting initiative using the technical assistance grant.
- C. **Recycling Program Outreach (EJ)** – EJ did a pop-up event at the library in Roslyn last week which included a recycling quiz and seed-starter kits. She will do one for the Kids Camp at Abington Club next week.
- D. **Climate Action Plan Draft Completion, ICLEI Membership, and technical assistance (CE)** – CE reported that ICLEI has a program for municipalities to be a test community for a CAP planning tool (app due Sept 1) with the following focus areas:

- Community Engagement/Transparency
- Prioritizing Actions
- Funding/Financing
- Key Performance Indicator Assessment
- Improved Data
- Capacity/Internal Processes
- Comparison to Peer Cities
- Cost-Benefit Analysis

CE reviewed planning tool questions. Measurement tools are GHG inventory. CE asked if EAC would endorse this initiative. SM asked: cost (member exclusive, so free), expectations of benefits. JSO made a motion to recommend that AT applies for Future Climate Planning Tool (Climate View/Clear Planner) and CE will be the EAC representative. Motion was approved.

Action item: CE will send an email to AM early next week to outline how we will answer the questions, and copy relevant members.

- E. **Bird Town updates (JSH)** – JSH reported the following upcoming fall events:

- Native plant sale at AT Library – 9/28, JSH asked the EAC for reimbursement for plants purchased by STC. JSO made a motion to reimburse Andrew Christy (for purchasing of plants for 9/28 plant sale up to \$400). Motion was approved. JSH will request volunteers by email.
- AT free library native plant gardens – Dry spells caused some plants to die. AC has requested green/sustainability account funding to replace dead plants (in 3 areas; tree pit and 2 islands in the south). JSO made motion to provide up to \$700 to buy native plants to replace those that died. All approved.
- EAC/STC partnered on 2 native gardens @Roslyn – Both installed, thriving, maintained by landscaper who is paid by EAC/STC grant (paid for the year).
- Monthly bird walks at Lorimor/Welsh Rd trailhead – 3rd Tue of each month, go to BT page on EAC website.

Action item: CE asked about budget request (update the ones that were updated previously) for the year, considering we're getting a new Twp Manager.

- F. **Abington School District Collaboration (CE/Peaches/Nancy)** – CE/PC/NO met to discuss next steps for AT middle school. CE will reach out to facilities planning to get an update soon. Getting ready for solar meeting attended by (Liz Fiedler/State Rep). PA enacted Solar for Schools Act (\$25M dollar funding effort) from PA energy authority. Schools should try to apply for funding asap for funds released this fall for schools to install solar panels on buildings. Eligible schools may have up to 50% of their project covered. No time limit required and can be anywhere in the process. Any school is eligible for Federal credit.
- Action item – PC will share slide deck. CE said school will need to present proposal to BOC, so CE said it might be a good opportunity to present the Land Review Sustainable Design Checklist to the Planning Commission. CE will email EAC members for feedback.
- G. **50th Anniversary of the EAC** – JSO said we'll have a public celebration (Crestmont independently or possibly Fall Fest/Oct 5, Roslyn Car Show/Sept 21, Ardsley Community Day/Oct 19). KMR sent an email to Jessica Tholey to inquire about space/location, but she hasn't responded yet. EAC members voted for the EAC 50th Anniversary trapezoid/AT logo. May consider producing new shirts, hats, polos with 50th logo.

4. New Business

- A. **Treasurer's Report** – EAC members discussed what degree of frequency is needed by the treasurer and general management/accounting needs for various EAC accounts.
- B. **Pre-Night Out Recap (Aug 5)** – MG said well-attended event, good teamwork. AS said it may be better to have EAC members volunteer in shifts.
- C. **Township Calendar Page** – EAC members suggested adding donation numbers and LEED Gold certification status to website.
- D. **EAC By-law Review** - KMR reviewed updates to by-laws language. MG made motion to approve by-laws changes by KMR. All approved.
- E. **Associate Members' Renewal** - JW, NO, EJ, PC, JSH, CE are due for associate membership renewal. JSO made a motion to renew all associate members for another year. Motion approved.
- F. **SEPTA slope project** – STC responded and sent a letter to AT to recommend native trees instead of what SEPTA has proposed to plant for the slope stabilization project. MG addressed residents' concerns about contamination from construction activities; it will have little impact due to the work being performed downslope from residential properties.

5. Citizens' Comments and Responses - None

6. Meeting adjourned at 9:13 PM.

Next meeting – **September 11, 2024 (Virtual)** at 7 PM

Acronym Key:

AM – Ashley McIlvaine
 AT – Abington Township
 BOC – Board of Commissioners
 BT – PA Bird Town
 CAP – Climate Action Plan
 CDP – Climate Disclosure Project

CP – Comprehensive Plan
EAC – Environmental Advisory Council
EV – Electric vehicle
GHG – Greenhouse gas
LEED – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
STC – Shade Tree Commission
SUP – Single-Use Plastics
TTFWP – Tookany-Tacony Frankford Watershed Partnership
USGBC – U.S. Green Building Council
WT – Wissahickon Trails