

**Abington Township
Environmental Advisory Council
Draft Meeting Minutes
September 11, 2024**

Call to Order: 7:04 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), Nancy O'Neill (NO), Jennifer Sherwood (JSH), Jim Webb (JW)

Others Present: Meryl Hyatt (MH, resident/volunteer), Mike Jones (MJ, Abington Township Foreman, Public Works), Ethan Simon (resident, TTFWP volunteer), Nathan Vasserman (NV, Abington Township Information Technology Officer)

1. **Approval of Minutes** – September 2024 minutes were approved with edits noted.
2. **Amendments to the Agenda:** Deal Park, Welsh Rd/Penn State development plans, ICLEI webinar, Boy Scout Preserve
3. **Active Business**
 - A. **Single-Use Plastic (SUP) Ban Ordinance (Karin)** – KMR continues to engage more local businesses and received a letter of support from Heirloom. Mike Jones is aware of our efforts and noted that plastic bottles are more problematic than plastic bags in our township. EAC is aiming to be included in the October BOC meeting. Action item: AS to summarize and collate list of questions from the February 2024 BOC meeting, letters of support, and do research on health impacts from single-use plastics.
 - B. **Composting Coalition Update (John)** – JSO reported that Brent Dieleman (Program Coordinator, SCS Engineers, Tech Assistance) will review township codes and do a 3-week community survey to determine if there are barriers to a residential composting program. JSO was selected to present an 8-10 minute presentation on the challenges of residential food scrap composting at the Statewide EAC Fall Gathering.
 - C. **Recycling Program Outreach (EJ)** – EJ reported that 25% of residents surveyed wanted a QR code on their trash cans to see township recycling rules. If AT has the funds, EAC would like to see if they can produce a sticker with a QR code. Some EAC members suggested Public Works or other volunteers do a fun, educational video on the recycling rules which can be advertised on our websites or social media. Action item: EJ to review current township website on recycling info and education and how we can improve it.
 - D. **Climate Action Plan Draft Completion, ICLEI Membership, and technical assistance (CE)** – CE is continuing to engage with ICLEI on status. No major updates.
 - E. **Bird Town updates (JSH)** – Same report as last month. Other items reported:
 - Bird Town/EAC/Library collaboration have planted natives on traffic islands with QR codes for education. JSH asked for \$60 + 3% cc fee for garden sign. SM made motion to reimburse for sign. Motion approved.
 - Monthly bird walks from Welsh Rd trailhead – posted on EAC web pages and Wyncote Audubon website.
 - Delaware Valley ornithological society also doing weekly bird walks at Lorimor Park at 7:30 am.
 - Native plant sale at AT Library on 9/28.
 - F. **Abington School District Collaboration (CE/Peaches/Nancy)** – Nothing to report.
 - G. **50th Anniversary of the EAC** – JSO shared the new 50th anniversary T-shirt design (already made) and the book bag.

4. New Business

- A. **Road Salt** – Mike Jones (AT foreman/Public Works) acknowledged road salt issue and summarized all the efforts they have made to mitigate unnecessary road salt through measured application and purchasing equipment/supplies to wash excess salt, capture runoff, and store salt in a safer manner. Equipment will include a truck wash containment building, runoff containment/conveyor system, and using salt substitutes that have less negative impact to the environment.
- B. **EAC Network Fall Gathering** – EAC encouraged members to register early and attend on October 5 at Temple University in Ambler.
- C. **EAC Membership** – Michele Kaczalek has resigned from the EAC. Nancy O'Neill expressed interest in becoming a member.
Action item: KMR to determine what the process is to invite an associate member to become a member.
- D. **Land Development** – SM summarized two development plans:
 - 2241 Old Welsh Rd – In addressing EAC concerns, the developer has agreed to replace pervious pavement driveways replaced with regular pavement and improved tree landscape.
 - Penn State building – Two rain gardens will be planned instead of one.
- E. **SEPTA slope project** – Work has begun and local residents are engaging with STC/AT/commissioner on progress. Most residents have allowed access to their properties for tree removal and an improved tree planting is scheduled for Spring 2025.
- F. **Unity Day** – CE will be hosting an EAC table and give out recycling magnets on Sat, 9/14.
- G. **NAACP banquet** – EAC will be honored (CE will do a write-up with photo this week) on Oct 20, Sun, 6 pm. Location TBD.
- H. **ICLEI webinar** – CE asking for another EAC member to participate in the online ICLEI USA Insights & Exchange Elective Pay Program to Fund Climate Projects webinar on 9/17 at 2 pm. NO volunteered to attend and report back.
- I. **Boy Scout Preserve** – AS reported that Peter Mimmo (resident) sent an email to AS and Tom Hecker (Ward commissioner) to inquire about activities at the Boy Scout Preserve. He reported that someone was making in-roads in the wildlife preserve area and wanted to understand why. TH responded back that he would find out and report back.
- J. **Deal Park** – SM reported that a new meeting with local residents is tentatively scheduled for 9/28 at 10:30 am to discuss the plan to preserve some lawn space instead of all meadow establishment.
- K. **AT volunteer appreciation picnic** – AT has invited all volunteer board members to come to a (tentative) picnic on 9/25 from 5:30-7 pm.

5. Citizens' Comments and Responses - None

6. Meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Next meeting – **October 9, 2024** ([Virtual](#)) at **7 PM**

Acronym Key:

AT – Abington Township
BOC – Board of Commissioners
BT – PA Bird Town
CAP – Climate Action Plan
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