

**Abington Township
Environmental Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes & Engagement Report
September 13, 2023**

Call to Order: 7:01 pm

Attendees:

Members: Cakky Evans (CE), Michele Kaczalek (MK), Karin McGarry-Rosen (KMR), Mike Melchiorre (MM), Sue Myerov (SM), Andrea Soo (AS), John Sorrentino (JSO)

Associate Members: Peaches Cooper (PC), Mitch Gertz (MG), Elena Jadach (EJ), Nancy O'Neill (NO), Jennifer Sherwood (JSH), Jim Webb (JW)

Others Present: Aina Renwick, David Cinque (DC), Lora Lehman (LL), Grace Sekelewski (GS, Abington Township Communications Manager)

1. **Approval of Minutes:** August 2023 minutes were approved.

2. **Amendments to the Agenda**

- A. Energy-related Budget Request to the Township
- B. CE appointed as Associate Member
- C. LL Discussion of 1209 Rydal Rd.
- D. David Cinque (DC) on Deale Park
- E. Aina Renwick on Doral Rd. Proposed Development

3. **Reports:**

- A. Engagement – Shown with minutes.

4. **Active Business**

- A. **Mitch Gertz approved as EAC Member** – MG was unanimously approved as he received the second highest ranking by the *ad hoc* Search Committee.
- B. **STC/EAC Budget Request for Tree Planting and Maintenance** – already approved; will be sent to the Ab Board of Commissioners (BoC).
- C. **IRA Clean Energy Incentives on EAC Website** – NO reported that she & CE are adding energy incentives from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) to the Ab EAC website.
- D. **Composting Coalition** – JS noted that he & AS met with two Cheltenham folks about applying for a PA Recycling Technical Assistance Grant with approval of each EAC & each Township
- E. **Plastics Coalition** – KMR reported that the Township wants a public information session on the Single-Use Plastics Ban Ordinance before the BoC voted on it. KMR asked GS about possible dates, & M 10/16, W 10/18, M 10/23, & W 10/25 were mentioned. LL proposed making sure that the meeting is designated as “public” so that it may be recorded.
- F. **Community Solar** – MM noted that Community Solar is not legal in PA as yet. There is one bill in the PA Senate (S230) & one in the PA House (H1476) on this issue.
- G. **Township Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Board** – KMR declared that this should not be on the Agenda as the Plan had been approved.

5. **New Business:** SM decided that the added Agenda items involving meeting guests would be dealt with at this time.

- A. **1209 Rydal Rd.** – LL prompted the group to view the issue on <https://abingtoncitizens.com/>. She declared the site proposal as an “abomination.” The proposed Senior Facility, Assisted Living & Memory Care Unit ignores steep-slopes, floodplain & traffic issues. The proposal should be going to the Ab Planning Commission. SM will pursue this issue. KMR reminded the group that EAC members were previously assigned BoC committees to “monitor.” JS reminded all that they are usually listed in the Engagement document, now appended to the monthly Minutes. LL also mentioned that the Noble site has been sold, & that Walgreen’s Old York Rd. is dead.

- B. **Deale Park Flooding/Invasives** – Guest, David Cinque (DC), discussed his training as PA Master Naturalist. He is worried that although Deale Park is slated to be a “natural area,” invasive plants (e.g., Japanese Barberry, Porcelain Berry & Bamboo) are abundant, & Sandy Run has virtually no riparian buffer. The latter often comes close to overflowing. DC noted that he interacts with the Upper Dublin EAC b/c he officially lives in Upper Dublin. He wondered whether an Ab EAC member can be assigned to invasive removal. KMR mentioned that part of the Parks & Recreation Plan is to upgrade parks, including Deale. JSH noted that two past projects were aimed at the riparian buffer in Deale Park, but one problem is that Bamboo is on private property. She also added that the riparian buffer is part of Abington’s MS4 Stormwater Plan. SM agreed that Ab EAC should help with Deale Park, including turning lawns into meadows. She reached out to Wissahickon Trails & hopes to get the local community involved. David offered that the PA Master Naturalists (PAMN) might help as they often seek projects of the sort. JSH suggested invoking the Bamboo Ordinance on the private property owners. JSH wondered whether Deale Park has a master plan. SM noted that the shortfall for meadow conversion at Deale Park is about \$5000. She suggested that Ab EAC might contribute. CE & JSH volunteered to investigate the issue with SM.
- C. **Dorel Rd.** – Aina Renwick asked for the Ab EAC’s help by observing the proposed development site, & attending the next Ab Planning Commission’s meeting to advocate against the development. SM volunteered to learn more about the issues & report to the EAC. CE suggested linking with the Rydal-Meadowbrook Civic Association. Aina mentioned that she already has.
- D. **R4 willow Grove Development** – SM declared that she will review the plan she received, & will share her comments with the EAC. LL mentioned that there is an issue with the next-door property.
- E. **September and October Volunteer Opportunities and Events**
9/22 – 7:00 pm - Wyncote/Audubon September Meeting – Upper Dublin Public Library
9/23 - EAC/Audubon Bird Town Native Plant Sale at Library
8:00 am – 9:00 am
9:00 am – 12 noon
12:00 – 3:00 pm
10/18 – 5:30 – 7:30 – TTF Annual Milestones Award & Reception – Globe Dye Works
10/21 – 8:00 am - Noon STC Free Tree Giveaway www.abingtonpa.gov/treegiveaway
10/21 – 9:00 am – 4:00 pm – EAC Network Fall Gathering - West Chester Univ
<https://weconservepa.org/eac/eac-network-fall-gathering/>
- F. **Girl Scout Rain Garden at Briar Bush** – Andrew Christy (AC) informed the group that Girl Scouts would like to start the work on 9/30/23. The cost would be \$300. AC asked whether the EAC would reimburse the Scouts for the \$300. KMR made a motion that was seconded by CE & unanimously approved.
a. **MOTION:** That \$300 from EAC’s Green Fund be used to reimburse the Girl Scouts for building the Briar Bush Rain Garden.
- G. **Birdtown Grants** – JSH announced that grant applications for up to \$500 can be applied for until 10/31/23. Some discussion occurred on whether BoC approval is needed to apply. JS made a motion, CE seconded it, & it was approved unanimously.
a. **MOTION:** The EAC will submit an application for a Birdtown Grant, subject to any necessary Township approvals.
- H. **Energy-related Budget Request to the Township** – SM has met with Ashley McIlvaine on the spreadsheet items for Township energy efficiency, some of which CE shared & explained. JS made a motion, seconded by CE, & unanimously approved.
a. **MOTION:** To submit a finalized energy-related budget request.
- I. **CE appointed as Associate Member:** JS made a motion, seconded by KMR, & unanimously approved.
a. **MOTION:** To appoint CE as an Associate Member.
6. **Citizens’ Comments and Responses** – LL mentioned that the Township needs to set aside a decent amount of budget for the parks.

The meeting adjourned at 9:14 PM. JS made a motion, seconded by KMR, & unanimously approved.

7.

Next meeting – **October 11, 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

CDP – Climate Disclosure Project

CP – Comprehensive Plan

DEP - Department of Environmental Protection

EAC – Environmental Advisory Council

EV – Electric vehicle

PFAS - Polyfluoroalkyl substances

Rf100 – Ready for 100

STC – Shade Tree Commission

TTFWP – Tookany-Tacony Frankford Watershed Partnership

Engagement Report – September 2023

1. Township events, meetings, & programs:

A. ???

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. WTs [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 **665** 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

8/9/23 (7 pm) – Abington EAC monthly meeting
 8/9/23 (6:30 pm) – Abington Library EAC mini workshop. JSH, PC, and EJ participating
 9/18/23 (7 pm) – PA Single-Use Plastics meeting
 9/23/23 – Upper Dublin regional EAC gathering
 9/23/23 (10 am to 3 pm) – Native plant sale at Abington Library
 10/21/23 (9 am to 4 pm) – EAC Network Fall Gathering in West Chester, PA
 10/21/23 (8 am to noon) – STC tree giveaway at Crestmont Park

Meetings

BOC * (second Thursday) SM
 BOC Working Committee
 (second Thursday)
 Zoning** (third Tuesday) __
 Planning** (fourth Tuesday)
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 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
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