

**Abington Township
Environmental Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes & Engagement Report
November 8, 2023**

Call to Order: 7:02 pm

Attendees:

Members: Mitch Gertz (MG), Michele Kaczalek (MK), Karin McGarry-Rosen (KMR), Mike Melchiorre (MM), Andrea Soo (AS), John Sorrentino (JSO)

Associate Members: Cakky Evans (CE), Elena Jadach (EJ), Jennifer Sherwood (JSH)

Others Present: Cathie Driscoll (CD, resident), Lora Lehman (LL, resident), Aina Renwick (AR, resident), Nathan Vasserman (NV, Abington Township Technology Officer)

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

2. **Amendments to the Agenda**

LL added 1583 Rothley property to agenda.

3. **Reports:**

A. Engagement – Shown with minutes.

4. **Active Business**

A. **Single-Use Plastic Ban Ordinance Public Info Session (Karin/Andrea)** – KMR reported that the public info session went well with all attendees participating virtually. Tentatively aiming for November working session vote to advertise ordinance, then December BOC meeting to vote to approve ordinance with spring enactment.

B. **Composting Coalition Update (John/Andrea)** – JSO is working with the Township on a DEP technical assistance grant to support a composting initiative. Currently trying to identify a point-of-contact at the Township who will champion the effort (e.g. Mark Maxwell, Superintendent/Refuse Dept). Grant may help fund research to identify an appropriate location for a possible in-vessel composter. Meeting with Cheltenham Township on 11/14 for a potential collaboration on the grant.

C. **Energy Procurement Support (Mitch/Mike)** – MG reported that MG/MM met with Ashley McIlvaine last week to prioritize green energy options for the township for next year as the current contract expires in January 2024. Next steps for the team will include discussing the natural gas contract.

D. **LD-23-01 – 711 Fox Chase Road (Resubmission/Request for Review)** – SM will prepare a summary for discussion and will draft a comment letter for final review afterwards.

E. **LD-23-04 - 640 Cedar Rd (Hopewell Veterinary Hospital/Request for Review)** – Same as above. KMR reported that Hopewell Veterinary Hospital is proposing to add an extension to their existing building. EAC will be reviewing the proposed stormwater infrastructure and evaluating tree plan (e.g. need to include native species).

F. **1209 Rydal Rd Conditional Use Hearing Update (jointly with STC)** – LL asked the EAC to address the stormwater management and flooding issues that will arise from the proposed lifecare facility/nursing home development. Residents, including A. Renwick and C. Driscoll, attended the EAC meeting to echo the flooding concerns on the neighboring residential properties. They stated that there are plans to clear-cut 82 trees which will destroy the mature habitat that exists and cause major soil erosion issues. LL and residents made an appeal for EAC/STC to be present during the meeting when residents present their case and to voice their support for the residents.

G. **Activities Update**

- **Recycling Program Outreach** – EJ spoke with Mark Maxwell (Superintendent/Refuse Dept) who gave her the contact at Republic (recycling contractor). EJ reported that plastics #1-7 are recycled, but #1-5 are preferred. Contamination rates are measured once per year. EJ will develop a residential survey that will quiz responders about their knowledge of recycling facts.
- **Abington Paper Shredding** – EJ confirmed that paper collected for the paper shredding events is also recycled.

- **TTF Municipal Task Force Meeting (MG)** – MG attended the meeting and reported that the Township does possess an individual stormwater management permit since we discharge to the Wissahickon watershed. MG summarized potential funding and grant opportunities presented during meeting, including grants for Jenkintown Creek and an underground stormwater management system at Alverthorpe Park.
- **Bird Town Grant update and meeting (JSH)** – JSH reported the following updates:
 - EAC received funding for a native plant garden at the Abington Library.
 - Bird Town hosted a webinar along with Faran Savitz (Penn Environment), Richard Metz (Springfield Township EAC member), and Bird Town leader who each presented their findings, regional efforts, and resources to reduce single-use plastics.
 - EAC/STC hosted a successful 400-tree giveaway in October and will plan to do this twice a year (next event will be spring 2024).
 - A webinar hosted by the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) and Green Home Institute offered residents a Certified Wildlife Habitat designation for their property if they meet selected LEED criteria. CE attended the webinar and suggested we promote and educate residents about the Infrastructure Improvement Act for sustainable development.

5. New Business

- A. **Washington Lane** – Nothing to report, pending discussion with the STC.
- B. **EAC member renewals** – No discussion.
- C. **EAC Leadership discussion for 2024** – No discussion or naming members, but will be voting in December.
- D. **November/December Volunteer Opportunities and Events**
 - 11/09 – BOC working session – introduction of Single-Use Plastic Ordinance (expected)
 - 11/17 – Wyncote Audubon monthly program, 7 pm, [Nature in our Backyard](#)
 - 11/18 – Anything with a Plug Event, 9 am to noon, discussed volunteers
 - 11/29 – 1209 Rydal Rd, continuation of hearing – PSU Sutherland Bldg.
 - 12/03 – Wyncote Audubon [Annual Luncheon](#), 12-3pm
- E. **1583 Rothley** – LL asked for a copy of the comment letter that EAC/STC jointly sent to Nicholas Brown (AT Planning Commission) in October so that she can share it with a concerned neighbor who may be impacted by the proposed development. EAC will send letter to LL.
- 6. **Citizens' Comments and Responses** – See 4F and 5E for citizens' comments on selected development proposals.
- 7. Next meeting – **December 13, 2023** ([Virtual](#)) at **7 PM**
- 8. Meeting adjourned at 8:32 PM.

Acronym Key:

ACT – Abington Community Task Force
 ASHS – Abington Senior High School
 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
 LEED – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
 NWF – National Wildlife Federation
 PSU – Penn State University
 Rf100 – Ready for 100
 STC – Shade Tree Commission
 TTF – Tookany-Tacony Frankford

Engagement Report – December 2023

1. Township events, meetings, & programs:

- 11/09 – BOC working session – introduction of Single-Use Plastic Ordinance (expected)
- 11/17 – Wyncote Audubon monthly program, 7 pm, [Nature in our Backyard](#)
- 11/18 – Anything with a Plug Event, 9 am to noon, discussed volunteers
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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 **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

12/03 – Wyncote Audubon [Annual Luncheon](#), 12-3pm
 12/13 – EAC monthly meeting, 7 pm
 12/14 – BOC meeting and working session, 7 pm and 7:30 pm

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