

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

Call to Order: 7:02 pm

Attendees:

Members: Mitch Gertz (MG), Michele Kaczalek (MK), Karin McGarry-Rosen (KMR), Mike Melchiorre (MM), Sue 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: Seth Cooley (SC, resident), Boris Kerzner (BK, Cheltenham EAC), Lora Lehman (LL, resident), Grace Sekelewski (GS, Abington Township Communications Manager)

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

2. **Amendments to the Agenda**

Seth Cooley added the Abington-Jenkintown Connections project to the 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 John Spiegelman (Ward 11 Commissioner) provided an update that the BOC will not vote on the SUP ordinance until 2024. JSO mentioned anti-SUP bag ban sentiment from Bill Bole and suggested doing more research and cost analysis on the ordinance's impact to the community. CE suggested we do more outreach with commissioners, educate the public, connect with other organizations (e.g. NAACP, Economic Development Committee, Easter Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, Roslyn and Keswick business associations) for additional support.
- B. **Composting Coalition Update (John/Andrea)** – Boris Kerzner (Cheltenham EAC member) presented his township's draft proposal for a composting initiative for a DEP technical assistance grant application. Abington Township will also be submitting their own proposal and will likely nominate Mark Maxwell (AT Superintendent of Refuse) as our point-of-contact.
- C. **Energy Procurement Support (Mitch/Mike)** – MM reported no new updates since last meeting. Ashley McIlvaine shared energy assessments/audits, a shared energy manager opportunity, and other resources with MM/MG. KMR suggested MM/MG inquire about alternative fuel options for township vehicles (school buses, township vehicles) in their next meeting.
- D. **LD-23-01 – 711 Fox Chase Road (Resubmission/Request for Review)** – SM reported a resubmission by the developer (Toll Brothers), but they did not address improving the natural areas as we suggested. EAC will attend the planning commission meeting this week to see what is discussed.
- E. **LD-23-04 - 640 Cedar Rd (Hopewell Veterinary Hospital/Request for Review)** – No further comments. STC will comment on the tree plan.
- F. **Activities Update**
 - **Recycling Program Outreach** – EJ participated in Abington Library's annual Winterfest where she distributed her four draft surveys to attendees. She will review the results of the preliminary surveys to determine the most effective approach to educating and collecting information from residents about recycling. John Spiegelman has also offered to help distribute EJ's survey when finalized.
 - **BOC working session – Introduction of SUP Bag Ordinance** – No activity.
 - **1209 Rydal Rd (continuation of Conditional Use hearing)** – No update yet on next meeting; no meeting in January.

5. New Business

A. **EAC Election of Officers for 2024** – KMR, SM, and AS previously discussed officer positions and reviewed the process for electing officers. Here was the summary:

- SM will step down as Chair and offered to be **Vice Chair**.
- KMR was nominated to step up to be **Chair**.
- MK will step down as **Treasurer**. MG and JSO were nominated to replace her. EAC members conducted an anonymous vote and chose JSO.
- AS offered to continue to be **Secretary**.
- MM made a motion to appoint all four officers, MG seconded, and all EAC members voted in favor.

B. **Hallowell Park Improvement Project Update** – AS provided a brief summary and timeline of the latest developments at Hallowell Park. A draft proposal for park improvements and a potential partnership with SPS Technologies was sent to Matt Vahey (Ward 12 commissioner) and Karl Lukens (Parks and Rec Director) in October 2023. Fall cleanup and tree-plantings occurred in November 2023.

6. Citizens' Comments and Responses –

- LL asked EAC/STC to revisit their comment letter for 1583 Rothley which she stated did not address inappropriate redevelopment proposed.
- SC summarized the Abington-Jenkintown Connections project which is a pedestrian and stormwater improvement project that seeks to improve connectivity and stormwater management along Washington Ln, Jenkintown Rd, Greenwood Ave, and Meetinghouse Rd. SC is bringing this project to EAC's attention because he and area residents are against the project as many mature trees will be destroyed and will negatively impact their properties and the aesthetics of the neighborhood. SC will send the arborist report to the EAC for review and we will discuss what support we can provide even though physical work is due to begin this month (Dec 2023).

7. Next meeting – **January 10, 2024** ([Virtual](#)) at 7 PM

8. Meeting adjourned at 9:07 PM.

Acronym Key:

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

Rf100 – Ready for 100

STC – Shade Tree Commission

TTF – Tookany-Tacony Frankford

Engagement Report – January 2023

1. Township events, meetings, & programs:

12/14 – BOC meeting and working session, 7 pm and 7:30 pm
12/20 – Planning Commission meeting, 7:30 pm

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 **1.3K** likes and **1.3K** followers. We have **686** 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.

<u>Events and meetings</u> 1/10 – EAC monthly meeting, 7 pm 1/11 – BOC meeting and working session, 7 pm and 7:30 pm	<u>Meetings</u> 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
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