

Abington Township Environmental Advisory Council (EAC)
Meeting Minutes

Date: June 17, 2025

Attendees:

Members: Karin McGarry-Rosen (KMR), Ian Costello (IC), Mike Melchiorre (MM), Mitch Gertz (MG), John Sorrentino (JSO)

Associate Members: Jennifer Sherwood (JSH) and Cakky Evans (CE)

Others Present: Nathan Vasserman (NV), Abington Township Technology Officer

Call to Order: 7:02 pm

Approval of the minutes: Minutes from the April meeting were approved with no edits. May's meeting minutes were approved with small edits provided by CE and JSH.

Treasurer's report: JSO shared the treasurer's report.

Amendments to the Agenda: None

Active Business Topic:	Discussion points:	Action Items/Follow-Ups:
Recycling Program Outreach - (KMR presenting John Jadach's update)	KMR presented John's update: Elena and John Jadach will host a table Abington Library's Pop-Up in the Park Event on 7/1. A recycling quiz will be provided and a craft for the small children to color signs for their families to keep in their car to bring their reusable bags into the stores.	N/A
Composting Coalition Update (JSO)	JSO requested that this item be removed from the agenda. Sites for a community wide composting fell through. Redeemer Valley and St. Thomas' Church stopped responding.	KMR will remove from the agenda
Energy Initiatives (CE)	CE reported that 7/8 will be the Energy Star Portfolio Manager training course for 6 people. CE reported not heard back from the assistant Township manager about adding Community Solar initiative on the BOC agenda. CE reported the Solar Intake Form needs to be completed for an assessment. Ken Kress and CE agree that the best candidate for the solar assessment is the wastewater treatment plant as it is the best candidate for approval. The township wanted to take the library and the township building off of the list as there are plans to create a new library and they are looking at alternatives for the township building. CE mentioned the municipalities have to the end of next year to 2027 to get the 30% rebate for solar. A motion was made by JSO for CE to complete the solar intake form which was approved.	CE will complete the Solar Intake form. CE will reach out to the EDC about solar communications to AT businesses.

	ICLEI update: CE said that IC was on the call and wanted to be a contact person for them, CE emailed them about funding sources, has not received a response yet. CE mentioned that she would like IC's work in Keswick Village to be included in this year's annual CDP assessment. JSO mentioned that he attended a webinar hosted by the Philadelphia Energy Authority and discussed the 7/4 deadline for projects and power purchasing agreements. They wanted names of businesses in AT who have good solar rooftops. CE mentioned that she will reach out to the EDC if they could reach out to make businesses aware of solar opportunities.	
Climate Action Plan (CE)	CE mentioned that the Climate Action Plan and IC can really help with completing the disaster and hazard mitigation plan. IC has a meeting scheduled with his FEMA contacts and will report it out next month.	N/A
Bird Town Updates (JSH)	JSH reported that the Bird Town Pennsylvania merged with the Bird City Network which is an international organization. Website: BirdCity.org, JSH went to the training and updated Abington's profile on the Bird City network. There are several sections on the profile including About Us, Events and Tourism—uploaded bird hot spots. IC asked about a sister cities program. JSH did say that there are sister cities that exist and BirdCity in the US, the cities are connected by bird species who winter in one site and move north to breed in the spring. JSH mentioned that the Woodthrush species breed in Abington, JSH will ask other birding folks if they know where this species winters. IC mentioned that perhaps the ASD or BBNC could have a pen pal program with a nature center in that sister city. IC mentioned that we may be able to build on that educational opportunity for grant funding. JSH mentioned that the high school does have a birding club who may want to be involved. JSH reported that the first grant was received and awarded to BBNC for plant management and reforestation. The grant is a Montco 40 Grant for \$132,000 and there is a 20K match, and the work will be happening this year. Volunteers will be needed to help with the work—if interested, contact JSH or Andrew Christy from the STC. JSO asked if the money could be used to hire someone to assist, JSH said that the grant was not for the purpose. JSH reported that BBNC is looking into hiring someone to assist with the project. IC asked if there was any outreach to scouts looking for Eagle Scout projects, JSH said that BBNC has a lot of scout involvement.	JSH said she investigate where the Woodthrush bird species winters to perhaps set up a sister city program.

	JSH had 3 native plant sales in the Spring raised around \$2000 in total. Sold out of all the plants. Date for fall native plant sale will be at the library on 9/26.	
Land Development (MG)	MG reported a letter came through that we submitted to Pennoni about comments about the Taco Bell development across from Willow Grove mall. Only recommendation that was made was instead of an asphalt island, consider adding something green instead.	N/A
ASD Collaboration (KMR presenting Peaches Cooper's update)	KMR presented Peaches' update: Board meeting on 6/9 announced another community wide survey for the Middle School project was sent out on 6/16. KMR asked about the last meeting's discussion with the presentation at last month's meeting. CE is disappointed that ASD is using natural gas for the project. CE mentioned that the design plans aren't for energy efficiency, but the pod design is a setback for solar. ASD has been done with geo-thermal in some of the schools. There is field space installation that is preventing geo-thermal as an option. KMR mentioned ASD did not get the ROI on geo-thermal because the schools are not open 12 months a year. CE mentioned that they are relying on one source and there are many sources of electricity. IC mentioned that geo-thermal was not an option because they will be having 2 buildings operating at the same time, they can't build the geo-thermal until they demolish the old middle school and they need a power source in September 2029 when the new building will be completed. IC mentioned that solar is still an option as it is too far out. CE has been reaching out to other municipalities about the Solar Intake form. CE would like to propose sending a follow-up letter to the ASD asking if they would consider completing a Solar Intake form with the other buildings and looking at possibilities including paying the \$200 if required. A motion was made by JSO and was approved.	CE will follow-up with PC and NO about the letter to ASD to complete the Solar Intake form.
New Business Topic:	Discussion points:	Action Items/Follow-Ups:
SPS Update (MG)	MG reported that there was a groundbreaking ceremony a few weeks ago on the SPS site. Joint meeting was held with the STC and the landscaping plan is getting finalized. Susan Myerov and MG looked over their most recent submission and SPS is living up to what they committed to. MG mentioned there was a letter was submitted in collaboration with the STC that SPS is doing a good job and there will be continued meetings to ensure SPS is living up to their commitments that were in the resolution passed by the BOC related to EAC's concern relating to stormwater management. CE mentioned that SPS doesn't have a community design charet. CE mentioned that there are LEED credits available and SPS is going to 4.0 certification. MG mentioned that the letter went out last week, let's give SPS an opportunity to	MG will follow-up about the design charet.

	respond but feels that SPS might feel that they already had their design charet and unsure if they would consider completing another one.	
Status of Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations (CE)	CE mentioned at the last BOC meeting, the RFP went out for the EV charging stations and the bids came back to high. There will be a rebidding at AT has decreased the number of locations that were sent out with the original RFP. The EV stations need to be installed by the end of the year. CE mentioned perhaps we can pay for some of the cost. MG suggested waiting until the revised bids come in.	N/A
2026-2027 Budget and Initiatives	KMR mentioned that this should be a larger discussion when more members are on the call to discussion how we want to use the money for initiatives such as a Salt Management program, supporting the installation of the EV charging stations, EarthRite money, etc. MG agreed and stated that it should be an agenda item for the next meeting. CE would like grant money to be leveraged with matching money. IC mentioned that he has ideas on what initiatives the EAC can focus on.	KMR will add this as an agenda item for the next meeting.
Growing Greener Grant (MG)	MG mentioned that a support letter from the grant manager at the township that was sent out to the team for comments.	N/A
Webinar and Sustainability Summit (CE)	CE reported being on a Climate Check webinar talking about physical climate challenges for housing. CE will circulate the information. IC mentioned that he wanted to take a look and perhaps we could have a joint statement with the KCRC and the impact on housing. CE attended the Green Building United Sustainability Summit. There was a presentation regarding municipalities best practices, included Bill Sabey and Ready for 100 and Upper Dublin has a net zero township building which was wiped out in the tornado. IC mentioned that AT needs to prepare for disasters ahead of time if they do occur.	IC will review the webinar first and report back about a joint statement.
Pre-Night Out	KMR asked if JSO received the email about the Pre-Night out which he did. Date this year is 8/3 with a rain date of 8/4. KMR said that we should finalize at the next meeting what the theme will be. JSH mentioned that her son bought a portable solar panel set up for camping and offered to bring it to Pre-Night Out. IC mentioned that perhaps we could have free cell phone charging station. MG mentioned that his garage is available for staging. IC asked about rainwater runoff tables, JSH mentioned that BBNC has one that we could borrow for the event.	JSO will respond and ask for a table.
EAC Responsibilities	KMR mentioned that she would like someone to be responsible to review emails in the EAC inbox and respond to citizen's comments and that newsletters from various organizations should not be going to that email address.	MM and MG will coordinate reviewing the inbox.

Citizens' Comments & Responses:	Discussion points:	Action Items/Follow-Ups:
No citizens on the call.		

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 8:38 pm

Next Meeting: September 16, 2025 @ 7:00 pm - VIRTUAL

Acronym Key:

AT – Abington Township

ASD – Abington School District

BBNC – Briar Bush Nature Center

BOC – Board of Commissioners

EDC – Economic Development Committee

ICLEI - International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives

KCRC - Keswick Village Community Resilience Coalition

RFP – Request for Proposals

STC – Shade Tree Commission