

Minutes for the July 12th Environmental Advisory Council meeting

In attendance:

J. Baldassarre, Chair	L. Hahn, intern
H. Shiver, Vice-Chair	Ryan Kelly , intern
J. Herring, Supervisor	J. Schumacher, Assoc. member
S. Crandell, Asst. Township Manager	A. Woodbury, note taker
E. Neal	C. Smirga, resident
C. Sawyer	J. Wylie, guest speaker

Minutes: June meeting minutes were approved.

Budget: \$64 was spent on shirts for new members. \$2300 remain in the budget for this year.

New Business:

Light pollution. Erich Neal brought up the issue of light disturbing night-flying creatures--specifically moths, bats, and nocturnal birds. White LED light disrupts their night vision and/or confuses them. A solution would be to cover the lenses of the current outdoor lighting with red filters (we do not need to replace the light bulbs). Red is not seen by the nocturnal animals and insects. There is still plenty of light for humans. Erich Neal will write up something for the newsletter and further discussion will be entertained by EAC.

On-going Activities and Updates:

There are two candidates for the open position on EAC. They will be interviewed next week.

Ready for 100

Jim Baldassarre gave EAC an update on solar energy regarding the new Rec building. In Scenario #3, more than the 100% of electric could be generated (plus heating and cooling) with the proposed solar arrays. In addition, about 30% of the administration building could be powered. Using solar would save the Township over \$500,000 in the next 25 years.

Local action includes the Climate Action Program, in which we hope to be included. Warrington has a 5-person committee meeting regularly. Our EAC

would like to do the same. A committee including, Jim Baldassarre, Curt Sawyer and Tanya Casas can be formed.

We heard from guest speaker Jim Wylie. He has developed a new website, Clean Energy Solutions for PA. This will help communities in transitioning to renewable energy adopt best practices. The site will post updates from local municipalities on their achievements. Jim Wylie would like to include our EAC on the site. We can post successes on the website after they are approved by either Stephanie Mason or Stacy Crandell, as well as general approval from our Board of Supervisors.

Butler Pike Medians

Assistant Township Manager Stacy Crandell was able to contact PennDOT to understand what their parameters are for the median strips. They do not want plants taller than 30". Other than that, they were noncommittal.

Erich Neal has offered to prepare and seed the medians.

EAC Associate member Jeff Schumacher suggested a few alternatives. We could have a "recipe" made up of warm-season short grasses and drought-tolerant flowering plants. He suggested using David Hughes of Weatherwood Designs for that option. We could also seed in annual rye grass or use plugs. Plugs would be expensive for 5100 square feet.

Jim Baldassarre charged EAC members to consider three options in the next month.

- 1). Do nothing. Allow the medians to stay grass.
- 2). Do a cover crop followed by seeding—making a multi-year commitment.
- 3). Prepare and seed as a one-time project—regard it as an experiment.

Single-Use Plastic

Intern Lauren Hahn tallied survey results from 15 businesses in the Township. While there was interest in reducing the use of plastic bags, business owners (especially restaurants) do not feel there are very good options.

Alternatives are generally more expensive, are not as efficient, and more difficult to pack. There would need to be a push for people to bring their own bags. Businesses could charge a fee for paper bags as a short-term incentive.

Coordination with Doylestown Borough

Heidi Shiver has been meeting with Grant Alger of Doylestown Borough's EAC. The Borough is developing a community engagement plan. They hope to roll that out in Q1 of 2023. They are catching up to what we have done in the Township.

Heidi suggested involving the schools to have a poster creating contest.

Our goal is to align with the Borough and eventually the region to have consistent single-use plastic policies.

Regional EAC Summit

We will continue our history of hosting an annual EAC Summit for all interested EAC committees in Bucks and Montgomery Counties. The Summit will be held October 12th.

Jim Baldassarre has suggested four topics: renewable energy, single-use plastics, deer management, and watershed-friendly properties.

We would establish a moderator who would introduce each subject and then guide a round-table discussion. We would prefer to do the Summit "in person" but we may have to do a Zoom option.

Native Plant Demonstration Garden

The next workday in the garden is July 30th.

Bat Habitat

Intern Lauren Hahn gave an enthusiastic presentation about bats and the possibility of adding bat houses to the basin area of Central Park. Bats are threatened by habitat loss, fragmented habitat, and a disease called White-nose Syndrome. The bat boxes could provide safe places to raise their pups. Sauerman Park was suggested for bat boxes as well.

Watershed-Friendly Properties

The next step is prioritizing the list of Township-owned properties for their inclusion in the Watershed-Friendly properties program. Jeannine Mitchell is heading that project.

Bird Town Updates

Heidi Shiver reported many updates. Bluebird boxes that need repair or replacing have been identified. There is a need for volunteers in the Bluebird Box mission.

Jane Neal and Anne Woodbury will join Heidi to make up identifying tags for bird-friendly plants.

Heidi is working with Marjan Shirzad at Fonthill. Fonthill has agreed to add nesting boxes. They will also be the venue for a Bird Walk on September 25th. The walks will be from 8:30-10:30 am. This is an active partnership. There will be outreach to Doylestown Borough's Bird Town as well as to Doylestown Nature Club for future collaboration.

Heidi is pursuing a partnership (potential discount?) with Wild Birds Unlimited.

There is a planned Bio-Blitz in 2023 and 2024. A lecture or two held at the Mercer Museum prior will help to inspire interest.

There is a planned native plant pop-up garden in 2023 will be at the Mercer Museum with possible partnership with the library, as well as Doylestown Borough Bird Town. New Britain Borough is having a sale this year which may help guide the efforts for the 2023 event.

The meeting was adjourned.