

Environmental Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

March 7th, 2023

Members in Attendance:

Lisa Brown, Co-Chair

Mark Schafer, Co-Chair

Rea Monaghan

Maureen Nunn

Marianne Grey

Brenda Doll

Steve Saffier (via Zoom)

Associate Members: Rich Valiga

Board of Supervisors Liaison: Tessie McNeely

Staff In Attendance: Sandi Feight

Not in Attendance:

Mike Twersky, Suzanne Smith-Oscilowski

1. **Call to order.** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm
2. **Minutes.** February meeting minutes were approved.
3. **Request to move items from Consent Agenda to Regular agenda, and any other items to be considered as part of the Regular Agenda**
4. **Approval of Regular Agenda.** Agenda approved
5. **Consent Agenda.**
6. **Old Business -**
 - a. Staff Liaison report (Sandi)
 - i. The battery and techno trash collection is scheduled for Saturday, 3/11. It was noted for future battery collections it would be best if we had 4 battery tubs, instead of 2. Moving forward, anyone who volunteers to help with activities and events will be considered “at risk” and waivers will be provided to fill out, per the township’s insurance. A PDF form will be provided to all EAC members to send out electronically so that the forms can be filled out prior to the event or activity but there will be paper copies on hand. EAC will be mindful of who is volunteering in terms of age. Under 18 will need a separate waiver.

- b. Calendar: Review of current calendar item: Brenda sent out a link for access to the Google calendar. It was noted that some members were not able to access the calendar via the link sent, they will work on getting access through their Google accounts and Outlook calendars.
- c. Volunteer needs: Rather than solicit volunteers for individual activities as they arise, the EAC could put out a general call for volunteers who might be interested in learning about and participating in the EAC events. With a general call, the EAC calendar could be attached so volunteers can see the upcoming events. Tessie suggested that the EAC contemplate establishing a group like Upper Dublin Cares, a standing group of township volunteers who can be tapped for clean-ups, plantings, garden maintenance, etc. Sandi also noted that such a group could be invited to help with other Township events. Guidelines would need to be created for these volunteers. Sandi will reach out to Upper Dublin who see who manages the CARES group. As a starting point, the EAC could look through volunteer forms that have been submitted to them, reach out to these people and ask if they would like to be on EAC sponsored volunteer committee and/or start attending EAC meetings. The EAC would also like to receive the list that the BOS receives of people interested in joining the EAC. Even if there are no slots for regular members, these interested people could be a great help as associate members.
- d. Review of other support requirements for EAC activities: Tessie inquired about reaching out to Penn DOT about a permanent solution/fix to the litter on the ramps. Maureen noted we would need members and possibly volunteers to weigh in for the Green Award. Maureen and Brenda met before the meeting to discuss the Green Award.
- e. Review of "in lieu" of proposals for waiver requests by developers; discussion of next steps: EAC will continue to work on their short list of alternative /additional options for the Township to present to developers. Maureen noted that the Planning Commission has been asking for additional sustainability/energy-related information from developers. Rich noted that the Planning Commission has been asking for additional information from developers during his time on the Planning Commission, but this hasn't been recorded and that the list of actions developed by EAC has been helpful for the commission to go down and ask. Rea proposed that the list of energy efficiency and sustainability recommendations be displayed in the Building and Zoning department for developers to see upfront.
- f. Monies collected for the tree waiver: The EAC discussed recommending to the BOS that the funds collected be applied to sustainability-related projects that could benefit the township, rather than being added to the general fund.

7. New Business

- a. Community Choice Aggregation (CCA): CCA is a strategy that allows municipalities to negotiate (typically via a broker) with electricity providers to get preferential pricing for the municipalities' residents. The municipality becomes the default electricity provider, rather than PECO, and purchases electricity at a contracted rate. (Residents can opt out if they want to shop around themselves.) While the CCA can obtain better prices for regular "dirty energy," it also has the advantage of potentially getting better prices for solar/wind energy, which currently is much higher than the PECO regular rate. That is what makes it attractive from an environmental/RF100 perspective. The EAC agreed to invite someone to speak about CCA with the group in order to decide whether to propose any action to the BOS.

- b. Turf replacement work with Public Works Department: Tessie met with Fred and Santino to discuss the replacement of turf on a ½ acre lot the township currently mows on the Welsh Road sewer pump station. EAC will help guide the public works staff with preparing the area and then seeding it. Public Works staff agreed to look into other naturalization opportunities as well as the maintenance contract with our outside contractor responsible for maintenance at the township properties.
- c. Trail maintenance: The township maintains 26 miles of trails. Tessie has spoken with the Township Manager about volunteer groups' use of power tools and hand tools. The Township Manager was not in favor of allowing volunteers to go out unsupervised to do work on the trails. Sandi noted that she would reach out to Upper Dublin Township for more information on the UDCARES program and report back next month.
- d. Journeywork: Lisa has been in contact with Paige Menton who is the Executive Director of Journeywork. Paige was not able to be at the meeting this month.
- e. Lisa heard from a resident asking for help in dealing with the trash that collects along Bethlehem Pike in front of the Giant and north along the road. It is unclear what can be done about litter that is not on township property and when the source of the litter can't be traced. Still, it is a non-trivial issue within the township and might warrant further attention.

8. Standing Items

- a. Planning Commission – Maureen reported that there are no projects being considered at the upcoming Planning Commission meeting. She did distribute to all members a list of sustainable strategies Gwynedd Mercy High School are implementing during their expansion. She is thinking of nominating them for the Green Award.
- b. Others – On 2/10, “Your Backyard Birds Talk” by Steve Saffier took place at the township building and had a good turnout. The talk coincided with the promotion of the Great Backyard Bird Count, a citizen science program that encourages people to count birds on their property. The bird walk that was scheduled for 2/17 was rained out so it was rescheduled for 2/24 with limited promotion. As of now, there are 15 people on the “bird walk” notice list. The Bird Town program is vibrant and growing.

9. Points of interest/General comments

Meeting concluded @ 8:23 pm
Next meeting: Wednesday, April 12th