



Lower Gwynedd Township

Board of Supervisors and Environmental Advisory Council

Joint Meeting

Thursday, February 29, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

Virtual Viewing Option Through Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84593263940?pwd=bEhzem03MHIKaUNvTFFqeDgzVGVpUT09>

Meeting ID: 845 9326 3940

Passcode: 007126

Call In # 646 931 3860

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance
2. Introduction of Environmental Advisory Council Members
3. Review of Function of the Environmental Advisory Council
4. 2023 Year in Review
5. 2024 Long Range Plan
6. Public Comment for any issues not addressed on the agenda
7. Adjournment

I. The Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) seeks input and approval for its 2024 activities, both established and newly proposed. The activities are arranged according to our stated areas of interest and according to whether they are continuing/recurring or new initiatives.

II. The EAC presents our collective recommendations for new long range strategic environmental efforts. These multi-year activities reflect the EAC's thinking about environmentally related **long-term goals** that would benefit the Township. These include larger-scale projects for which the Township would take the lead, with input, collaboration, and consultation with the EAC, especially regarding community education and outreach. They also include projects that the EAC could implement in conjunction with other township entities (staff and committees).

III. The EAC presents a draft 2024 activities calendar.

LAND STEWARDSHIP - Efforts to promote diverse habitat and healthy trees, soils, and woodlands.

Continuing/recurring:

- Native Tree Giveaway (October). This popular EAC-led event, with the backing and support of township staff and Board of Supervisors, can help offset declines in the Township's tree canopy year after year.
- Public education and demonstrations. Through EAC workshops, newsletter articles, speakers, giveaways, the EAC will continue to educate residents about establishing and maintaining healthy habitat. (See Communications/Outreach and Calendar.)
- Support Arbor Day, Tree City, and Earth Day objectives. Coordinate an Arbor Day proclamation with the Board of Supervisors (April), which will help us comply with requirements for maintaining Tree City certification. Develop Earth Day programming, in coordination with the Parks & Recreation Board, to supplement the planned April trail clean-up event on Saturday, April 13.

New/ Long Range:

- **Survey township lands** as needed to ensure open space is available for all residents to enjoy.
 - Working with the Parks & Recreation Board and township staff and supervisors to suggest open areas where space is available and appropriate to preserve.
 - Employ conservation easements to ensure property surrounding conserved land remains preserved. Partner with non-profits and the Montgomery County Planning Commission.
- **Develop a long-range working plan to address net loss of trees and tree canopy** due to land development and redevelopment and due to disease. Implement new ways to increase tree canopy, such as a tree bank.
- **Provide eco positive stewardship of our township land.** Work with Township Public Works staff and Parks & Rec staff to develop a plan for maintaining our public lands in a manner that restores native flora and fauna and reduces the carbon footprint of land management. Aspects to include:
 - establish no-mow areas;
 - convert lawn mowers and lawn equipment to battery operated (including especially contractors);
 - add new native plantings per long range plans (e.g., Parks MP);

- develop plans for trail-side tree maintenance - to manage dead and dying trees.
- identify and map locations of invasive species on Township properties/trails with goal of removing/replacing with natives.
- **Establish new demonstration gardens.** Provide recurring environmental education through demonstration gardens. Work with the Parks & Recreation Board, liaisons from the Board of Supervisors, and Township staff to identify opportunities for locations where environmental education projects may be undertaken. This can be done in coordination with the Parks & Recreation Master Plan. The goal is to have small, manageable volunteer projects that are accessible to residents so that they may serve as educational opportunities. These projects are to include:
 - pollinator pathways;
 - rain gardens;
 - small plot native planting plans;
 - planting/cleanup projects along trails or other township property;
 - educating residents on how to identify invasives including use of various phone apps.
- **Address issues of deer damage in the Township.** Given ongoing property damage and accidents caused by deer, we recommend initiating a project gathering information on deer management, experts, the appropriate government agencies, and levels of government involved for LG participation or monitoring. Educate the community about deer resistant plants, movement patterns of deer, and rutting season implications for drivers.

WATER STEWARDSHIP - efforts to conserve water, reduce runoff, and promote clean, healthy waterways.

Continuing/recurring:

- Storm drain marking;
- Work with Township staff to complete installation of stream signs.
- Conduct rain barrel giveaway (OR composting bins giveaway, alternate years)

New/Long Range:

- **Continuous storm water management:** Work with the Township Engineers to establish projects/areas where water quality improvement projects need to be implemented and develop long-term plans to address these systems. Efforts include:
 - basin retrofits;
 - streambank stabilization;
 - riparian buffer restoration;
 - establishment of low/no mow areas.
- **Outreach/Best practices/cooperation:** Water stewardship efforts may be executed through partnering with other organizations including other EACs, Wissahickon Trails, Montgomery County Conservation District, and other NGOs, to support specific project/volunteer days.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION: efforts to reduce waste and promote a smaller carbon footprint.

Continuing/recurring:

- Food waste and composting focus throughout the year with articles, workshops, etc.
- Single use plastics, fast fashion, improper recycling, energy conservation: increase public awareness through news articles, social media posts, movies/presentations, etc.

- Battery and Techno Trash Recycling drives; tree lights collection; other initiatives where possible.
- Promote e-waste and hazardous waste events.

New/Long Range:

- **Transition to 100 clean energy:** The Board of Supervisors has signed a pledge to take the township to 100% clean energy by the year 2035 for electricity and 2050 for heating, transportation, and public works equipment. This is an ambitious goal and will require upgrades to energy sources for township operations as well as supporting residents in conservation and utilizing renewable energy. Current thinking on specific initiatives includes:
 - **Taskforce for energy transition.** Create a small nimble task force of highly interested individuals to facilitate township energy transition. Task force to determine resource needs, timing, and methods for path forward.
 - **Determine current baseline energy use by township properties and monitor annually so that improvements in efficiency can be evaluated.** The most recent PECO energy assessments (from 2021) might serve the purpose of providing a baseline, especially if any improvements recommended by PECO at that time have been implemented and we can compare. Consider periodic benchmarking studies (like the one conducted in 2013 by Practical Energy Solutions) to ensure our energy use remains in line with developing expectations for buildings of comparable size and usage.
 - **Installation of multiple level 2-3 charging stations throughout the Township** that are available for public use.
 - **Conversion of Township vehicles to 100% EV by 2030** (where appropriate vehicles are available).
 - **Conversion of all Township buildings to clean electricity by 2030:** Multiple approaches to achieving this goal would need to be researched, including purchasing from green power supplier; ensuring new construction meets LEED guidelines; installing solar canopy on Township property; join a regional CCA when available to second class townships; sign on with DVRPC multi-county consortium.
 - **Coordinate with the Wissahickon School District** to install solar panels for school power needs.
- **EAC: Inform residents of current status of green energy options (e.g., IRA, Infrastructure, CHIPS).** Produce series of presentations/seminars for residents on various options to conserve energy, including presentation by PECO; expert tips on how to benefit from the Inflation Reduction Act rebates; subject-area-expert presentation on options for renewable energy use by residents.
- **Enhance township walkways to promote reduced car travel.** Research options to improve walkability and bike ability throughout the township.

COMMUNICATION/OUTREACH: ensuring accurate, timely communication with Township residents about EAC activities & environmental developments of interest.

Continuing/recurring:

- **Going Green Award** - Continue to recognize exemplary sustainability initiatives with the Going Green Award.

- **Environmental education** – Continue to offer our annual series (3-5) of interactive environmental presentations with subject matter and format to be determined; examples include:
 - movie nights;
 - outside speakers (as specified above for energy-related presentations in 2024);
 - composting/rain barrel/pollinator garden/ rain garden demonstrations with or without giveaways;
- **Bird Town** - Hold bird walks and bird-related events throughout the year in keeping with Lower Gwynedd’s status as a Bird Town.
- **Wider-community education offerings** - Participate in tabling events at local festivals and fairs to promote LG EAC activities.
- **EAC education** - Participate in networking and other environmental events and meetings including EAC Networking Conferences; online seminars from Penn State Extension, DCNR, Sierra Club; RF100 groups; Montgomery County Single-use Plastics Coalition; and others.

New/Long Range (EAC):

- **Expand and improve communication strategies**
 - Social media. Increase social media presence through new platforms (e.g., Instagram) and more frequent posts. Coordinate the release of social media posts with activities and special days of recognition. Information for the posts may be drafted by subject matter experts in the EAC, and then passed along to Township staff for posting.
 - Calendar. Create a quarterly internal planning calendar for EAC members and Township staff. Post on internal web site.
 - Website. Work with Township staff to reorganize the public facing EAC website to make it easier to navigate and find information and to promote upcoming activities where the public can get involved. Township staff and the EAC will review website statistics to determine which pages are not utilized and use the information to restructure the website.
- **Engagement of volunteers: Strengthen** efforts to expand volunteer base and increase number of associate members. Enhance EAC branding to push public awareness of EAC-led work. Generate enthusiasm through enhanced communication. Encourage new members via outreach.
- **Mobile apps.** Inform volunteers and residents of several citizen science mobile apps they can utilize to document our natural environment, tree canopy, wildlife, birds, plants, insects, tree canopy, etc. These may be useful resources to include on the website and in social media posts for events as the various applications apply – for example, during an invasive species removal event, highlight an app that helps to identify several types of vegetation
- Create LG EAC handbook regarding timeline, procedures by project/program and resources available to the EAC and volunteers.

DRAFT Event and Social Media Calendar:

	Events	Possible Social Media OR E-news Post(s)
January	Battery/Techno Trash Recycling Bird Event/Walk Holiday Tree Recycling @ Ingersoll Park Holiday Lights Recycling @ Ingersoll Park	Prior year EAC highlights Radon month Holiday tree recycling
February		Great backyard bird count Winter tips for healthy birds
March	Battery/Techno Trash Recycling Speaker: residential energy conservation; possible giveaway. (PECO rep)	Leave no trace fishing Reasons to leave dandelions Butterflies' day info
April	Arbor Day / Earth Day/Tree City programming Bird Event/Walk Speaker: rebates available through the IRA (Sierra Club speaker?) Electronics Recycling & Shredding Event Table at Ambler Earth Fest (if it takes place)	Arbor Day Earth Day Plant this, not that Pollinator garden tips Health benefits of trees
May	Battery/Techno Trash Recycling Interactive event: Plant rain/pollinator garden ?? or rain barrel talk/giveaway or composting giveaway Bird Event/Walk	Invasive species awareness Tips to help pollinators and lesser-known pollinators
June	Speaker: Renewable energy options for residents (Community Advocates for Clean Energy?) Solicit Green Award nominations Movie	Health benefits of walking in nature Tips to help fireflies Plastic Free July
July	Battery/Techno Trash Recycling - EAC movie night and/or intro to mobile apps	Night sky watching tips Monarch monitoring Moth week
August	Interactive event: Storm drain marking	Do not haul firewood Tips to reduce light pollution
September	Battery/Techno Trash Recycling Table at Fall Fest Speaker: "Trees for Birds" talk? (Steve S) or movie night	PA trails month

October	Native Tree Giveaway	Fall yard tips for conservation Lead Awareness
November	Battery/Techno Trash Recycling	Pumpkin Recycling
December	Holiday Tree Recycling @ Ingersoll Park Holiday Lights Recycling @ Ingersoll Park	Holiday tree recycling Green shopping (forest certified)