

SOLEBURY TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
VIRTUAL MEETING
MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 10TH, 2020

PRESENT: Eric Allen (Chair), Christy Cheever (Vice Chair), Hope Blaythorne, Doug Shaw, Jim Mansfield, Barry Fetterolf, William Birnes, Joe Kubiak (Associate), John Francis (Liaison) and Christine Terranova (Administrator)

I. OPENING OF MEETING

Chair Allen called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 13th, 2020

Upon a Motion by William Birnes, seconded by Hope Blaythorne, the meeting minutes for October 13th, 2020 were unanimously approved.

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS -- None

IV. NEW BUSINESS -- None

V. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Ready for 100 (Jim Mansfield)

Mr. Francis and Mr. Mansfield continue with their course and continue to work on their energy transition plan. The course will take a break next week and then resume in January, 2021 and run until May, 2021. The Township will be getting a new Electra City contract which will include the purchase of 100% renewable energy. Also, the Township will be having the Township electricity monitored through the Energy Star Portfolio Manager where you are able to gauge energy statistics. The Township will continue to explore more opportunities to trackability of energy for future needs and reference.

Tuscarora Oil Spill (John Francis, Liaison)

Mr. Francis stated a meeting was held with Shell Oil Company and their consultants (AECON), DEP and the Township. The AECON consultants gave a presentation on the

status of their investigations. They have found nothing that is detrimental to human health or the environment but have discovered a petrochemical chemical which they feel would be helpful when investigating this issue. The consultants are planning a 12-month investigation with more sites to monitor on a monthly basis in hopes to discover the chemical to resolving the problem with still a lot of open questions remaining.

Mr. Fetterolf asked who were the owners of the pipeline that went into the compromised tanks?

Mr. Francis stated that there were other oil companies, other than Shell, that were involved at that time with the tanks and the pipeline.

Rules & Regulations (Doug Shaw)

Mr. Shaw stated he had nothing to report, at this time, but may be meeting with HARB at their December meeting.

Wild Area Stewardship/Tree City/Birdtown (Hope Blaythorne)

Ms. Blaythorne attended the Bird Summit, which was informative to learn about Birdtown and what other towns/municipalities are doing around Birdtown. The Audubon Society is closing down Pennsylvania and Maryland operations and have been merged together (Atlantic Audubon) and relocated. Due to Covid, the Audubon has lost funding and have experienced some layoffs. One important fact mentioned was that the Delaware River Basin is one of the most important water sheds for bird migrations. Beth Brown, from the Audubon, offered to present to EAC updates on being a Birdtown community. Some of the things that we might consider getting involved with would be:

- Meadow management workshops
- Bluebird nesting boxes
- Native plants
- Bird garden workshops
- Birdtown walks
- Barrel gardens
- School outreach in alignment
- Climate change – pre-virtual

Ms. Blaythorne offered a link to view the update of the drone footage taken at the New Hope Solebury Quarry – <https://youtu.be/O-VRINEoBhc> and <https://youtu.be/B1jRvKr1Soo>

Ms. Blaythorne stated that there has been a significant sinkhole in Solebury that the Primrose Creek Watershed is monitoring and currently being remediated. Mr. Francis stated that the cost to do the remediation is approximately \$70,000.

Aquetong Watershed had their annual meeting a few weeks ago and continue to conduct water testing. Jeffery Charlesworth attended the meeting and did a presentation on "Work on a reclaimed quarry".

It was noted that Bowman's Hill will have their annual meeting on November 14th at 9:00 a.m.

Tree Revitalize Grant – Spring Creek Farm is hoping to receive a grant to plant trees on 2.44 acres in Spring, 2021. Ms. Blaythorne has reached out to the Bucks County Conservation District on this effort.

Tree Town – Arbor Day program would appoint Solebury Township as a "Tree Town" and every Arbor Day there would be a celebration of planting trees in the community. The next step would be for the township to create a "tree board" which would involve residents and business owners creating a wide awareness of what trees do for the community and provides broad support for better tree care.

Plastic Regulation and Recycling (Christy Cheever)

Ms. Cheever stated that the Bennington College course ended a few weeks ago. She did complete her one assignment to send a letter to the editor on the band of the plastic regulation. Ms. Cheever stated that she did not have any further updates at this time.

Ms. Cheever asked the Council if they would want to draft a letter and submit to Governor Wolfe on the preemption. Is there anything else the Council can do or want to do at this time?

Deer Management (Eric Allen)

The Township has offered three requests for bids for the infra-red drone survey but have only received two bids so far; three bids are required by the township. The USDA program, to date, has taken a total of 344 deer over fourteen months.

A posting to the website entitled, "Solebury Deer Management Shows Success Under USDA Guidance", dated November 6, 2020 described the following progress of the program:

Solebury's efforts to reduce the overpopulation of deer in the Township are showing success. The White-Tailed Deer Management Hunting Program, under the direction of the USDA's Nate Spence, recorded a 44 percent increase in the Red Tag harvests this year when compared to last season.

The program matches land owners with carefully screened hunters, who must meet Solebury's standards of safe and ethical hunting, as well as accurate reporting of deer harvests to aid in data collection. Hunters receive a "Red Tag" permit, operating under Pennsylvania's Agricultural Deer Control Program, which allows them to take antlerless deer from February through the end of September.

Despite a slight drop in the number of participating hunters and hunting acreage, productivity increased significantly over last season. The success rate for the 2020 Red Tag season was nearly 54 percent, as compared to 2019's 33 percent and the statewide average of 34 percent. Eighty percent of the deer taken this year were adult females, critical to controlling the overpopulated herds.

The true measure of success will be in fewer deer-vehicle collisions and a reduction of crop damage from deer. Last year, Solebury police recorded 79 vehicle incidents involving deer; as of mid-October this year, the number is down to 53, significantly lower than the recorded 110 collisions in 2018.

Program Director Spence has begun contacting farmers whose yields have been affected by deer damage, and encouraging them to apply for an agricultural damage depredation permit through the state Game Commission. As farmers join the program, in 2021, this will provide an additional layer of assistance beyond traditional sport hunting.

Since Spence began managing the Solebury program in September 2019, 21 new properties signed up, exceeding the Township's average of nine properties per year from when the program began in 2008. Spence says that he expects that this year's improvements in the Red Tag program will also be seen during the regular archery and firearms deer season, running from September to January.

Cold-Tar-Based Sealcoat (Barry Fetterolf)

Mr. Fetterolf met with the Township Manager, Dennis Carney, to discuss how to enforce the ban to control this situation. It was felt that educating the residents was a good first step. Mr. Carney offered to contact a national association for cold-tar-based sealcoats for further information.

A posting to the website entitled, “Detrimental Effects of Coal Tar-Based Sealants”, dated November 10, 2020 further explains the differences in the sealants:

Pavement sealants – the black, shiny substance sprayed or painted over asphalt – are manufactured from a variety of materials, many of which cause little harm to the environment. The exception is sealants made from coal tar, which can introduce dangerous chemicals into the water supply.

Coal-based sealant is a source of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) that are toxic to aquatic life and can potentially affect human development. Coal tar-based sealants are banned in several states and many counties, but efforts to ban them in Pennsylvania have so far failed.

Over time, the sealant begins to degrade, and enters the water supply through storm water runoff. The constant abrasion from tires, snow plows, and general wear-and-tear turns the material into a fine dust, rich in PAHs, which spreads through the air and is deposited into streams and ponds every time it rains.

There are many alternative products available that are just as effective. In fact, most chain retailers, like Home Depot and Ace Hardware, have banned the sale of coal tar-based sealants.

An [article from the Virginia Coastal Policy Center is available on the Township website](#) that goes into greater depth on the problems with coal tar-based sealants, to help homeowners make environmentally sensitive decisions about driveway and pavement care.

It was suggested to put an awareness article in The Messenger and the local paper (The Herald). Mr. Mansfield suggested sending a letter to the homeowners associations so that they can reach out to the residents in the developments.

Mr. Kubiak volunteered to create a draft letter to the property managers of the HOAs and have Mr. Fetterolf review the draft prior to mailing.

VI. Public Comment

None

VII. Adjournment

Chair Allen adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Christine Terranova
EAC Administrator
Solebury Township

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