

Environmental Advisory Committee

August 9, 2022 – 7:00 PM

Hybrid Meeting

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

- a. Eric Allen called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.
- b. The following persons were in attendance: Eric Allen (Chair), Christy Cheever (Vice Chair), Hope Blaythorne (Member), Barry Fetterolf (Member), Phil Getty (Member), C.L. Lindsay III (Member) Jim Mansfield (Member) Timothy Marsh (Associate Member), Shannon Pendleton (Associate Member), John Francis (Board Liaison), Debra McFadden (Administration), John DeAndrea (Planning Commission Member) and Jim McGowan (Buckingham Township Resident).

MOTION: Eric Allen made a motion to approve the July 12, 2022 minutes.

The motion was seconded by C.L. Lindsay III. The motion carried a unanimous vote.

II. Announcements

Eric Allen notified the members that he will be unable to attend the October 11, 2022 EAC meeting. Eric Allen informed the members that on October 12, 2022, the Doylestown EAC's Regional Annual meeting will be held at Delaware Valley College. He invited one or more members to attend the meeting in his absence and asked to let him know at the September meeting who will be attending.

III. Discussion Items

- a. Ready for 100 Clean Energy Initiative
 - i. Jim Mansfield has reviewed a number of cities websites and suggested that on the solar part of the website that there be a short summary of testimonials from residents who have installed solar, heat pumps, geothermal wells, electric cars, etc. Phil Getty mentioned a previous solar house tour and suggested this for the township and suggested that the Bucks County Audubon Society might host. Jim Mansfield said that he could add this to the solar part of the website.
 - ii. Jim Mansfield mentioned the Department of Energy Program called SolSmart, a two-part program that streamlines permitting, zoning and inspections for solar projects and offers technical consultations free of charge. Jim Mansfield sent an

email to Michele Blood with the website and suggested that staff take a look at the website and the program.

b. Wild Area Stewardship / Bird Town / Tree Town

- i. Hope Blaythorne informed the EAC members that Arbor Day is April 28, 2023 and there needs to have a way to recognize Bird Town. She asked for ideas to celebrate and to partnership with others to support the effort like Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve and Bucks County Audubon Society at Honey Hollow. Ideally, it would be a good time to kickoff plantings similar to Solebury School at Primrose Creek and asked to keep an eye out for tree planting grants. The document that she submitted included the Growing Greener Grant submission which needs to get to the watersheds so they have time to consider and prepare as the deadline is in April. It was added that recently she sent to Bowman's Hill and the Bucks County Audubon Society, the 2023 Environmental Education Grant Program from the DEP, the applications must be submitted by December. She explained advancing these types of programs helps us to continue to qualify as a Bird Town and a Tree Town.
- ii. Hope Blaythorne led a brief discussion on ash trees after discovering one behind the Giant that was almost 300 years old and 17 feet in circumference and possibly the oldest ash tree in PA. She stated Dave Benner listed it on the website, monumentaltrees.com. Phil Getty raised the question whether Solebury Township has an ordinance similar to Buckingham Township which requires a permit to cut any tree above 36" in diameter. Additionally, he found a box of old tree records at the Bucks County Audubon Society and this raised the idea of having citizens/scientists to document trees in the township to increase appreciation and protection. To that point, Hope Blaythorne added it might be a good Eagle Scout project.
- iii. Hope Blaythorne will send the Bird Town Municipal Resolution to all EAC members for their review so that they can vote at the next EAC meeting. There was suggestion for a photo opportunity to send to the Bucks County Herald once approved by the Board of Supervisors.
- iv. Hope Blaythorne was selected to be on the Bird Town Nominations Committee. She asked for suggestions on the locations of the two new Bird Town signs.

Eric Allen suggested that the placement of the signs be in a high velocity intersection where people stop.

- v. Hope Blaythorne suggested that Peter Couchman, Executive Director at Bowman's Hill Preserve, Diane Smith, Director of Education and Mary Joe May, Executive Director at Bucks County Audubon Society at Honey Hollow come to an EAC meeting once a year to share their vision and their initiatives. Eric Allen agreed and asked Hope Blaythorne to schedule.
 - vi. Hope Blaythorne reported that Primrose Creek is having the lower creek flow mapped out created by the DEP. Solebury School's tree planting is maturing, there is a weeding effort on Thursday, August 11, 2022 and a tour of the site. There was nothing to report on Aquetong Watershed.
 - vii. Hope Blaythorne briefly discussed possible fund-raising incentives similar to the Abington Birdtown Program and offered the possibly of garden tours, rainwater garden and native plant tours. She announced several upcoming events such as the Birdtown Annual Summit at New Britain Borough on October 29, 2022 from 9 am to 12 pm. Also, the EAC Network Fall Gathering is being held on October 22, 2002 at the Haverford Community Environmental Center and is an all-day event.
- c. Deer Management
- i. Eric Allen reported that he met with Nate Spence of the USDA and there are left over funds for 8 or 9 nights in November and December. He also noted that 2023 is fully funded.
- d. Bag Drive and Plastic Bag Incentive
- i. Christy Cheever reported that the finalized letter with a summary and a link to the township website, as well as a hard copy of the Plastic Ban Ordinance, will be mailed tomorrow. The Plastic Ban Ordinance will go into effect on September 19, 2022. Phil Getty suggested a press release with a photograph would have more of an impact than a letter to the editor.
- e. Webpage Update / Social Media
- i. Jim Mansfield said that Hope Blaythorne's articles on Birdtown and Tree City will be added to the website.

- ii Timothy Marsh suggested that the accomplishments that the township has made as examples of sustainability in practice should be added to the website.
- iii Shannon Pendleton reported that at last Board of Supervisor’s meeting the committee chairs offered a brief synopsis to the new township manager. She thought that it was helpful to the community at large and suggested that each committee chair create a short video of their activities or updates that can be posted on the website.

f. Invasives

- i. Eric Allen began the discussion by asking if the committee was familiar with the “mile-a-minute” plant, noting it acts similarly to kudzu, a climbing vine by cutting off sunlight and taking over native plants. He added he would like to look at other invasives besides deer.
- ii. Timothy Marsh recalled a speaker from the Annual Aquetong Meeting who addressed dozens of invasive plants and said he will try to get the slide deck that was used for that presentation. He added the idea of educating landscapers and arborists on this to prevent putting invasive plants in landscapes.
- iii. Eric Allen noted that Jay F. Kelly from Raritan Valley Community College of the Deer Management Program is a wealth of information on invasives, as deer are only a small part of what he does and Eric Allen will reach out to him to have him back for a meeting.
- iv. C. L. Lindsay III stated the township’s land use ordinance defines what an invasive is but currently does not regulate them and this perhaps should be pursued.

g. Sustainability and Energy Plan

- i. Jim Mansfield commented that they have not met on Sustainability in about a month-and-a half.
- ii. Eric Allen asked Shannon Pendleton to consider joining the Sustainability Committee and she noted that has already volunteered.
- iii. Eric Allen clarified that the Sustainability Steering Committee is comprised of Planning Commission and EAC members and is an ad hoc commission, not an official committee, in the steering stages.

- iv. Jim Mansfield noted that one area of the Transition Plan that remains weak is listing specific actions, as they ran out of time to list them all.
- v. Phil Getty noted that one of the items listed is converting the police cars to hybrids and suggested that they should be looking at converting to electric vehicles. Jim Mansfield stated that converting the police cars has been going on for several years and that two-thirds of the fleet has already been converted. Additionally, he noted that there are very few electric vehicles that are pursuit rated.
- vi. Shannon Pendleton asked with Sustainability, a budget line item, are there regularly scheduled meetings and Eric Allen replied there are not, that they get a notice about a week prior to meeting.

IV. New Business

Eric Allen asked the EAC members to bring to the table new things to consider or pursue. He added he has great interest in the invasives and will work on and several members discussed some of their ideas (to follow). Christy Cheever wants to circle back to schools and continue things like they had done with donated signs that signify to the kids the proper placement of trash and recyclables and also to work with cafeterias to reduce plastic use, such as in vending machines. Shannon Pendleton suggested looking at school community engagement including having kids run the school's energy transition plan. Phil Getty received confirmation from Eric Allen that the letter to the NJ DEP regarding the Devil's Tea Table was sent out. Phil Getty indicated interest in the Tuscarora pipeline and its contamination potential. John Francis provided the background for this ongoing issue, including Shell's role and position on the pipeline status, DEP's activities. Phil Getty recommended creating a database for contaminated wells to inform land developers. He proposed looking at the potential for photovoltaic systems on public buildings, such as carports. Phil Getty put forward the idea that the township study to convert detention basins into retention basins. Shannon Pendleton recommended that the Township do a GIF mapping of all the outlets to and allow residents to report on erosion.

Eric Allen requested that ideas for new things for the EAC to pursue be sent to him. Eric Allen thanked the EAC members and said that this is the strongest EAC in 9 years with their talent and energy.

V. Public Comment

John DeAndrea, resident and Planning Commission member, informed that at all of the Board of Supervisor's meetings that there is a reporter from the Bucks County Herald and most of the minutes are presented there and that is how we make our announcements. He suggested for the Deer Management Program, at \$200K and \$70-80k for hiring sharp shooters, if the 1,000 deer goal is reached, the average cost per culled deer is around \$300. He said hunting is not mentioned on the township website and hunting season opens in October. It is bow season and each bow hunter can take one buck. Other townships monitor herds and have doe permits, which cost \$5.95 and never sell out. He said this is a cheap way to thin the herd and keep it thinned by having local hunters go to farms to hunt, as this is a continual problem. He added that while the current program is successful, the deer population can peak back up, especially if other townships are not managing the deer population. John DeAndrea stated that he researched the hybrid vs all-electric and concluded that the hybrid is the best way to transition to reducing CO2 emissions. The hybrid doesn't put an issue on the grid, which is currently 61% fossil fuels, while the all-electric just shifts the issue to the grid. Additionally, the peak period for panels is during the day so the energy must be stored in batteries, which are a CO2 culprit. He noted the 167-page report on Climate Change and Planning, he saw only one section on energy and said that if you are addressing transitioning and CO2, you must talk energy. He reported that there are 98 nuclear plants in the US: they are expensive to build, each is above a megawatt and nuclear supplies approximately 19% of our energy. He added that there are several start-ups, such as NU Scale Power, with some EPA funding, supplying mid-scale plants at 460 megawatts that have a relatively miniscule foot print and can be built in 3 years. As an example of the potential, he said that if one of these mid-scale plants was placed at the quarry, it would deliver all the energy needs of every home in Bucks County with zero CO2 emissions. He further offered that he will provide a paper on the nuclear energy potential. Jim McGowan from Buckingham Township thanked Solebury's EAC for leading the charge on the plastic ban ordinance and would like to set up time to meet with Christy Cheever to discuss how she accomplished it. Jim McGowan would like to propose a similar ban for Buckingham Township's EAC.

VI. Adjournment

- a. **Eric Allen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 pm. The motion was seconded by C. L. Lindsay III. The motion carried a unanimous vote.**

Respectively Submitted,
Debra McFadden
EAC Administrative Assistant