

Environmental Advisory Council

February 14, 2023– 7:00 PM

Hybrid Meeting

MINUTES

The following persons were in attendance: Eric Allen (Chair), Christy Cheever (Vice Chair), Phil Getty, Shannon Pendleton, Barry Fetterolf, Scott Blank, Hope Blaythorne, Jeanne Litwin, Kate Robeson-Grubb and Debra McFadden (Administrator).

Absent: C. L. Lindsay III, Tim Marsh, Louise Levy and Robert McEwan (Board Liaison).

I. Call to Order

- a. Eric Allen called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM.

II. Approval of the November 10, 2022 Minutes

December 6, 2022 Minutes

MOTION: Eric Allen made a motion to approve the November 10, 2022 and December 2022 Minutes with minor corrections. Phil Getty seconded the motion. The motion carried a unanimous vote.

III. Announcements

- a. Eric Allen and Phil Getty honored the passing of David Benner with words of remembrance. Phil Getty to research a tree memorial in David Benner's name.
- b. Eric Allen asked the Council to respond to the monthly meeting invitations no later than the Friday before scheduled meetings. It was decided that a general invitation be sent along with the zoom invitation to assure there is an in-person quorum.

IV. New Business

- a. Nomination of Vice Chair

MOTION: Eric Allen made a motion to nominate Christy Cheever as Vice Chair. It was seconded by Phil Getty. The motion carried a unanimous vote.

V. Discussion Items

- a. Wild Area Stewardship / Watersheds

Peter Couchman, Executive Director of Bowman's Wildflower Preserve, presented programs and initiatives for the Bowman's Wildflowers Preserve.

Questions from the EAC members followed. Peter Couchman encouraged anyone interested in volunteering or for an internship to email him at couchman@bhwp.org.

- i. Hope Blaythorne thanked Peter Couchman for his presentation. Hope Blaythorne mentioned the upcoming presentation by the Bucks County Audubon Society and the Watersheds. Ms. Blaythorne also thanked Phil Getty for mentioning the tree recognition. This allows the community to recognize loved ones by planting a tree or a grove.
 - ii. Hope Blaythorne reported Robert McEwan has the tree proclamation.
 - iii. Hope Blaythorne reserved a table to support the Earth Day Festival at the Bucks County Audubon Society and requested ideas from Council Members.
 - iv. Shannon Pendleton outlined the Energy Transition Plan that the township is currently developing and offered to meet with Peter Couchman to discuss some ideas.
 - v. Shannon Pendleton announced that the Electric Car Show to be hosted by the New Hope – Solebury High School along with the Bucks County Audubon Society will have an electric car show at the high school on April 29, 2023.
- b. Deer Management
- i. Eric Allen reported that the deer program is in place. Over eight (8) nights there were one hundred and sixty-eight (168) deer culled which is an average of twenty-one (21) deer per day. One night in January, there were One hundred and one(101) deer culled resulting in over three thousand two hundred (3,200) lbs. of deer meat donated to the Hunters for Harvest for distribution to local food banks.

Sustainability

- i. Shannon Pendleton gave a brief overview of the Sustainability committee. Discussion followed. Shannon Pendleton suggested that the committee be named, Sustainability Steering Committee.

MOTION: Upon a motion by Eric Allen, seconded by Shannon Pendleton, it was unanimously agreed to move forward to the Board of Supervisors, the establishment of a Sustainability Steering Committee.

- ii. Shannon Pendleton summarized the establishment of the Sustainability committee. Ms. Pendleton expressed interest in inviting members to the committee, get a feel for who they are and what they do, have an announcement by

Earth Day on the committee, know what the goals are and have some infographics or literature to share with everyone.

- iii. Shannon Pendleton welcomed the new township hire, Kate Robeson-Grubb. Ms. Robeson-Grubb will be splitting her time between infographics and environmental efforts as that is what her background and education are in. She will also be helping with administrative digitizing.

d. Social Media

- i. Eric Allen gave a brief update for Tim Marsh in his absence. Tim Marsh met with Michele Blood, Assistant Township Manager, and Renee Scally, Communications Coordinator, on February 1, 2023 to get an understanding as to how the website and social media platforms work. It was advised that website changes require a notice of decision on the EAC meeting minutes.
- ii. Tim Marsh installed the new Birdtown signs.

e. Recycling & Trash

- i. Christy Cheever explained the amendments to the Single-Use Plastic Ban Ordinance and requested a motion be made to move it forward. Discussion ensued regarding the amendments and the timeline for the ordinance.

MOTION: Upon a motion by Christy Cheever, seconded by Shannon Pendleton, it was unanimously agreed to move forward to the Board of Supervisors, the amendments to the Single-Use Plastic Ban Ordinance.

- ii. Christy Cheever reported that she spoke with Ellen McCarron, Co-Director Newtown Township's EAC, and their township is going to model their plastic bag ban ordinance on Solebury's Single-Use Plastic Bag Ordinance.

f. Miscellaneous Subjects

- i. Eric Allen discussed the Board of Supervisor's list of 2023 projects.

The projects mentioned that involve the EAC are as follows:

- 1.4 Leaf Burning
- 1.5 Alt. Energy Ordinance
- 3.1 Climate consultant/Energy Audit/LCP program etc.
- 3.5 Trails and Expansion of Trails
- 3.7 Establish EAC Sustainability Committee

3.9 Designate Solebury Creeks in the Lower Delaware Wild & Scenic River Program

3.10 Tree Program

4.1 Route 202 Traffic and Reduce Emission Project

- ii. Scott Blank reported that he attended an information meeting via Zoom held by the Pennsylvania Governor’s Invasive Species Council. The meeting discussion on the upcoming second annual Pennsylvania Native Species Day which will be celebrated on Thursday, May 18, 2023. Mr. Blank asked the Council Members if there is interest in the establishment of a celebration or notifying residents of the Native Species Day and invasives. Scott Blank asked about collaborating with Bowman’s Hill Wildflower Preserve. Discussion followed.
- iii. Shannon Pendleton shared information on the Thursday, February 16, 2023 at 6:30 pm Aquetong Watershed Association meeting. Robert McEwan will be presenting a draft resolution on the Delaware River Wild and Scenic Designation. Shannon Pendleton to forward information on the meeting to the members.
- iv. Phil Getty gave an update on the Paunacussing Watershed Association.
- v. Jeanne Litwin led the discussion on walkability and bikeability in the township.

VI. Public Comment

No Public Comment.

VII. Adjournment

Eric Allen adjourned the meeting at 8.44 PM.

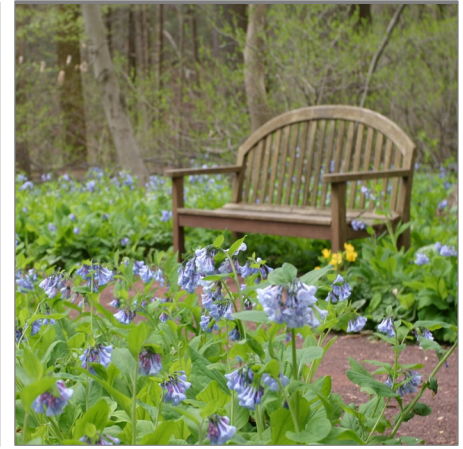
Respectively submitted,

Debra McFadden

Solebury Environmental Advisory Council

Programs & Initiatives of BHWP

February 14, 2023



Bowman's Hill
**Wildflower
Preserve**

2022 in Review



2022 in Review

Preparing to launch!



2022 in Review

Preparing to launch!

➤ 2022-2026 Strategic Plan

- Vetted, benchmarked, detailed and ambitious
- New mission and vision statements

➤ Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access

- Engaging diverse audiences
- Access Card partnership with Art-Reach
- Inaugural *Preserve @ Play* family and children event
- Combination ticket with Bowman's Tower
- Forest Therapy Family Sensory Access Pilot

➤ Property and Infrastructure

- Cabin-Classroom Project
- Hazard tree removal
- Deferred infrastructure repairs
- New River Road sign



2022 in Review

Preparing to launch!

Challenging economic landscape

- ❖ Labor market pressures
- ❖ Stock market performance
- ❖ Significantly increased cost of goods
- ❖ Inflation





We're ready for 2023!

Looking Ahead to 2023

- **Collections & Curation**

- In collaboration with Interpretation, develop statements on climate change and cultivar use
- Determine authority the Preserve will use to determine a plant's native status
- Reach out to institutions and organizations interested in conducting research on site
- Identify, map and prioritize the removal of hazard trees

- **Development**

- Institute and manage digital membership transition, price realignment and new benefit promotion
- Plan and host inaugural members-only *Music in the Meadow* in summer
- Develop an enhanced major gift portfolio to validate and develop
- Introduce Business Partnership, Planned Giving and Naming Opportunity programs
- Design *Cabin-Classroom Project* capital campaign for Phase 2: Construction

- **Education**

- Further develop the *Nature At* series and *Fourth Fridays* preschool programming for family-centered programming
- Host the 2023 virtual *Land Ethics Symposium* for 200 attendees
- Expand the *Knowing Native Plants* series and *Morning in the Meadow* program
- Welcome a new class of BHWP Interpretive Naturalists with enhanced program handbook and refresher training



Looking Ahead to 2023

- **Facilities & Grounds**

- Replace the main creek gate and damaged fence from Ida with long term, sustainable structures if DCNR/FEMA funding will allow
- Replace the Penn's Woods Gazebo with a new, larger structure to accommodate larger events
- Carry out hazardous tree removal per 2022 assessments (in-house and professional)
- Acquire a new, donor-funded dump truck

- **Marketing & Communications**

- Source a vendor in 2023 to create an updated BHWP website as early as 2024
- Execute and mail 8-page printed newsletter
- Explore the use of new social media platforms (i.e. TikTok)
- Benchmark and create a plan for outreach, marketing and access to new audiences

- **Native Plant Nursery**

- Film a virtual tour of the nursery
- Identify ways to better obscure nursery operations to enhance visitor experience
- Further refine plant list to eliminate plants native to areas beyond 100 miles of the Preserve and reduce high maintenance/cost plants
- Continue to cultivate contract growing opportunities with well-vetted vendors, including 2-3 new vendors
- Enhanced investment in propagation volunteers
 - Develop and distribute questionnaire to all volunteers to obtain feedback
 - Restructure propagation sessions to increase production and efficiencies



Looking Ahead to 2023

- **Visitor Interpretive Experience**

- Update priorities of the 2019 Interpretive Plan based on visitor survey data
- Provide interpretive training session for staff and volunteers
- Provide input and guidance for the design and implementation of the Cabin renovation, interpretive opportunities on the site and new outdoor classroom
- Hold the Preserve at Play event for families and children in spring
- Develop a master plan for Penn's Woods "Loop"
 - Create interpretive panels for the Moss Garden and Visitor Center Garden
 - Update the Tree Trail

- **Volunteers**

- Use Preserve community tabling events to distribute volunteer pamphlets and sign up email sheets
- Establish a dedicated volunteer stewardship group to support maintenance of key trails and admissions gate house
- Complete training for cashiers and plant customer service volunteers and propagation training for nursery volunteers
- Two sessions of interpretation training offered spring and fall for retail volunteers
- Establish 4 social volunteer events and 1 special recognition event for naturalists
- Create annual satisfaction survey and check-in communication for each active volunteer
- Update the corporate volunteer program



2023 Budget

GOAL: *To maximize earned revenue streams while minimizing expenditures to accommodate post-pandemic impacts, including:*

- labor market pressures
- stock market performance
- significantly increased cost of goods
- inflation



2023 Budget

The Preserve has a balanced budget of

\$1,236,000

Context of this budget:

- The Preserve receives **NO annual operational support from the Commonwealth of PA.**
- The **Payroll Protection Program** that provided over \$300,000 to the Preserve from 2020-2021 is no longer available.



2023 Budget

KEY TENETS

- ✿ **Investment in fundraising** as the mid- to long-term solution for rising expenses
 - Time to develop, invest in, and realize the benefits of a major donor portfolio and corporate partner program
 - Declining net revenue of the former spring wildflower gala replaced with growing net revenue of the new signature fundraiser, *Rooted In Our Future*
 - Board of Trustees evolving into more strategic body rather than operational, providing more support to fundraising efforts as a best practice



2023 Budget

KEY TENETS

✱ **Investment in our aging infrastructure** and health-and-safety, grounds-related work.

▪ **Building repairs & improvements**

- General deferred maintenance needs
 - Replacement of heating oil tanks
 - Replacement of decayed Visitor Center windows
 - Rehabilitation of development office

▪ **Grounds**

- Hazard tree removals resulting mostly from the dying ash tree population killed by the emerald ash borer infestation
- In 2022 alone, we will have spent over \$40,000 in *unanticipated* hazard tree removals for visitor safety needs



2023 Budget

KEY TENETS

Investment in our members and volunteers

▪ **Membership**

- New, complimentary *Music In The Meadow* members-only event in summer 2023
- Moving to digital membership platform rather than paper-based
- Enhanced general membership benefits to be rolled out in January

▪ **Volunteers**

- Expanded social and appreciation events
- Enhanced staff support



Thank You!

**We need and thank you for your
advocacy!**

couchman@bhwp.org

