

The regular meeting of the **ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (EAC)** for September 2021 was held tonight via Zoom Web-Conference. Members in attendance were: Chair Wendy Ankrom, Vice Chair Greta Bunin, Kurt Ahrens, John Raisch, Michael Freeman, and Sidney Kahn. Staff present: Alyson Elliott, Assistant Township Manager and Lauren Cartlidge, Special Projects Coordinator.

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Bunin called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Upon motion of Ms. Bunin, seconded by Mr. Raisch, the meeting minutes for July 19, 2021 were unanimously approved by the EAC.

2. OLD BUSINESS

A. EAC Vacancy

Rebecca Schultz, a local artist who is passionate about environmental issues and has presented at prior EAC meeting, may be interested in joining the council; however, she is more interested in adding diversity to EAC. Mr. Ahrens suggested adding Ms. Schultz as an ex-officio member with the purpose of helping EAC working on broader engagement.

Members believe many people in the Township are interested in sustainability, but are not able to make the commitment to sitting on the council. Ms. Ankrom said sustainable yards are a great way to create engagement while the Township does not have the capital for larger sustainability initiatives.

Discussion followed on how EAC can further engage with the community.

B. Sustainable Cheltenham Website Page Updates:

- 1) Electric Vehicles – Tabled.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. Plastic Bag Ban Discussion

Ms. Bunin mentioned that a resident of Springfield Township has been gauging the interest of local EACs in a multi-municipality plastic bag ban, as a ban has now been enacted in Philadelphia. Ms. Bunin has a phone call scheduled with the Clean Air Council who is advocating for this, and will update the EAC next month.

Mr. Kahn said that single-use plastics as a whole are a much larger problem (i.e. takeout containers, utensils, etc.) and that a larger discussion on this should be considered in conjunction with or instead of a plastic bag ban.

Ms. Ankrom said she would like to look at the potential consequences and research that has been done on such a measure, as she noted paper bags often replace plastic when a ban is enacted, and the production of paper bags actually has a larger carbon footprint.

4. COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

A. Communications and Engagement:

- 1) Sustainable Yards Contest – There were seven entries for the 2nd annual contest. Mr. Kahn, Ms. Bunin, Cynthia Blackwood (Friends of High School Park), Rebecca Schultz, and Tom Horn (Primex) were judges. Four submissions received “Outstanding Achievement” with a top prize of \$50 gift card to Primex and an hour of garden coaching with Tom Horn. Three received Honorable Mentions and will also get a garden coaching hour. Winners also receive a year membership to the Wyncote Audubon Society. Winning photos will be

displayed on Township website and social media. The winners will receive their gift certificate at Parktoberfest.

EAC offered feedback for making changes for next year's contest. Mr. Ahrens mentioned the entries that included vegetable gardens, saying local agriculture is valuable in itself. Mr. Kahn stated the possibility of having 'urban garden' as its own category. EAC may offer multiple categories for different sized lawns to encourage all kinds of submissions.

EAC members discussed the concept of yard signs to create further promotion of sustainable yards. Mr. Ahrens mentioned possibly inviting the Audubon Society to a future meeting to discuss the possibility of co-branding, since Audubon has a yard sign program.

It was mentioned that Collins Nursery may be organizing a sustainable yards tour for 2022; EAC members would like to reach out for details and possibly join in. If this is being organized solely among clients of Collins Nursery, EAC can at least promote it.

- 2) Parktoberfest – Ms. Ankrom and Mr. Ahrens will be tabling for EAC at this October 3 event by Friends of High School Park. Ms. Ankrom would like to display some of this year's photo submissions and focus on sustainable yards and trails. EAC will promote the Township's Comprehensive Plan Survey at this event; Ms. Cartlidge will give Ms. Ankrom flyers with a QR code for online survey, and printed surveys to include at the table.

B. Water and Ecology

- 1) Ms. Elliott said the Township is working with its Interim Township Engineer on the MS4 report due at the end of the month and meeting new requirements for the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Pollution Reduction Plan (PRP).
- 2) The recording of the August 25 Public Stormwater Meeting is available on the Township YouTube Channel. The topic of a stormwater management fee will be discussed further at the September 22 Finance Committee meeting, and will potentially be recommended to the Board for adoption in order to be implemented in January 2022. How the fee would be implemented is still under discussion.

The goal would be to pull all stormwater-related projects and activities from the general and capital budgets to be funded by this stormwater fee program. Such activities would include leaf collection, street sweeping, inlet maintenance, etc. To address larger stormwater projects, the Township will still need to acquire additional funding.

C. Energy and Emissions:

- 1) Mr. Freeman plans to reach out to PECO for a mass data dump regarding usage and billing for the Township Facilities for the Energy Star Portfolio Manager report.
- 2) Mr. Ahrens stated he personally completed the PECO energy assessment and posted the link to do so on Sustainable Cheltenham channels. The audit helps a homeowner learn about energy use and potential for savings in their home. There is a fee, but a discount code is currently available.

D. Mobility and Healthy Living:

- 1) EAC would also like to create awareness for the Tookany Creek Trail study at Parktoberfest.
- 2) Looking to 2022, Ms. Ankrom asked that EAC members start thinking about ideas surrounding Opening Day for Trails (April), and will do promotion in the spring.

E. Sustainable Development and Local Economy – None.

F. General Updates – None.

G. Staff Report

- 1) Ms. Elliott stated that the Township did a presentation at the September 1 Public Works Committee meeting on the conditions of Township Facilities. An additional presentation was made at the Library Board meeting tonight and will be shared online as well.

Significant boiler issues with the La Mott and Rowland community centers led to the decision to close these buildings, which house the La Mott and East Cheltenham libraries, for winter 2021-22. Other buildings are also in stages of decline, and spending the money required to complete repairs in a temporary fashion will not solve the issues of aging infrastructure and bring these buildings into safe conditions for residents and all who engage with the Township. It will be extremely difficult and expensive to retrofit existing buildings to be energy efficient and sustainable.

5. **NEXT MEETING** – The next meeting of the EAC is scheduled for *Monday, October 18, 2021* on Zoom.
6. **ADJOURNMENT** – There being no further business, Ms. Ankrom adjourned the meeting at 9:41 p.m.



Robert A. Zienkowski, Township Manager

Submitted by: Lauren Carlidge, Special Projects Coordinator

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