

**ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2017
7:00 P.M.**

The Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) met for its scheduled meeting on January 17, 2017 in the Upper Merion Township Building. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ATTENDANCE:

John Weillnau, Chairman
Katherine Vaccaro, Secretary
Christopher Kaasmann, Vice-Chair
Sal Sonsino
Brittany Grala
Janet Serfass, Staff Liaison
Greg Waks, Board Liaison

ABSENT:

Linda Castro

RE-ORGANIZATION PLAN:

Janet Serfass asked if there was a motion to nominate the Chairman of the EAC. John Weillnau, whose wife is due with their first child in three weeks, asked not to be appointed Chair and nominated Kate Vaccaro. Brittany Grala seconded. Kate accepted. All voted in favor.

Janet asked for a motion to nominate the Vice-Chair. Kate Vaccaro nominated John Weillnau. Christopher Kaasmann seconded. John accepted. All voted in favor.

Janet asked for a motion to nominate the Secretary. John nominated Brittany Grala to be Secretary. Sal Sonsino seconded. Brittany accepted. All voted in favor.

MEETING DATE & TIME:

Janet stated that the meeting date will remain as the third Tuesday of the month and added that there was an interest in starting the meeting earlier than 7 p.m.

Brittany made a motion to start the meeting at 6:45 p.m. Chris Kaasmann seconded. All voted in favor. Chris recommended taking Greg Waks' schedule into consideration by hearing Greg's comments at the beginning of a meeting.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

In response to Kate's request, John motioned to approve the November 15, 2016 meeting Minutes. Chris seconded. All voted in favor.

OLD BUSINESS:

Members reviewed the following EAC's successes in 2016, which they will put together for their Joint Meeting with the Board of Supervisors in May:

- Clean the Parks / Schuylkill Scrub.
- The BCA he BCA Grant, used to sponsor the Rain Barrel Giveaway.
- Its partnership with Schuylkill Action Network.
- Updating its Mission Statement.
- Upper Merion Hazardous Waste Disposal Event, which was successfully scheduled for 2017.

Kate offered to address other items the EAC worked on.

NEW BUSINESS - Ideas for 2017:

BCA Grant:

The EAC is awaiting an update on its request to use the 2015 fund's balance of approximately \$400 to purchase additional rain barrels. Greg Waks offered to reach out to the BCA at their re-organizational meeting for an update. Kate will send him an e-mail.

Chris suggested applying for another BCA Grant in advance of their hard March 15 deadline. John submitted the year-end summary in December 2016. Janet stressed the importance of meeting the MS4 Education Outreach requirement for our permit. John offered to produce the application letter for Janet's review and distribution in advance of the meeting.

Meadow installation:

This suggestion is still on the table for future projects that won't require grass to be removed prior to a meadow's installation.

Chris contacted the County's Health Department and obtained their website WestNile.State.PA.US. which can be searched by county for the prevalence of West Nile mosquitoes and West Nile infections in humans. He noted that there were two positive tests in humans for all of Montgomery County.

Janet noted that this project is no longer considered a "retrofit."

Kate will gather data on projects that were recently completed or in their planning stage.

Chris suggested reviewing Park and Recreation's web-page on their long term plans for trail installations.

Bottle refilling kiosks:

John brought up the ongoing funding. Chris suggested updating the details of the 2016 American Water grant and commented that the bottle-counting counter has not worked for months. Janet's recommendation to table the bottle-filling kiosk until a place needing a complement is found received the members' approval.

John offered to explore the American Water Grant for an opportunity and will reach out to Krista, Kate and Janet. Greg recommended working with the BID on the Schuylkill Action Network's forum for local businesses on stormwater issues which Janet is facilitating.

Better Communicate “Garbage, Rubbish, and Refuse” policies:

John reiterated an earlier comment by Chris that bus stations and some restaurants have receptacles for trash but not for recycling. Members will inquire whether a bus stop is a commercial establishment. Janet spoke with Bob Rudzinski, the Property Maintenance Officer, who clarified that just because you don’t see recycling cans at the end doesn’t mean it isn’t being done. Chris commented that bus stops and gasoline stations do not have recycling bins. Group discussion prompted Janet to recommend sending Bob another copy and copying his boss, John Waters. John will provide Kate with the information.

Green rating system for King of Prussia buildings:

John felt that a green rating system was something beyond the means of the EAC to institute. Janet commented that new developments coming to our Township are already doing it but not at the caliber that some are. John felt that some land owners and developers have more of a focus on it than others. Janet noted that “green” applications will be discussed at the upcoming Schuylkill Action Network’s meeting with the BID. Kate tabled the matter for the time being.

Updates on current EAC vacancy:

A newly-appointed member to the EAC will attend our February 21 meeting.

Meeting day/time for 2017:

Kate reiterated that the Council would meet on the third Tuesday of the month in the Public Works Conference Room 101 and that members approved of starting the meeting at 6:45 p.m.; and that a new member would be attending the next meeting.

Janet thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for providing her with their e-mail addresses. She also asked members to restrict their e-mails to members of the Council.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Coffee Bean Tree:

Chris described a Coffee Bean tree in Valley Forge Park that was planted from a seedling that George Washington planted. It’s located in the Chester County portion of the park, in the vicinity of the Valley Creek Bridge, where a small gravel road takes you right to a few buildings and the tree, which is identified by a little plaque. Chris noted that a brochure highlights six trees, three of which are designated as “champion” trees and three that were there at the time of encampment but were not cut down by the troops because Sycamores did not burn well.

Green rating system:

Chris offered to send members the link for the EPA’s Green Power Partnership program for discussion at the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

In response to Kate's inquiry, Chris motioned to adjourn. John seconded. All voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Katherine Vaccaro, Chairperson

Minutes Approved: 01/21/2017

Minutes Entered: 01/22/2017