

WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (EAC)
Westtown Municipal Building, 1039 Wilmington Pike, West Chester, PA
Tuesday, February 27, 2024 7:00 PM

Present: EAC members Bob Yeats (Chair), Ray Dandrea (Vice Chair), Russ Hatton, Joe Debes, Meghan Hanney, and Township Assistant Manager Mila Carter. Adam Kapp was absent.

I. Call to Order

Bob called the meeting to order at 7:04pm.

II. Approval of Minutes, January 23, 2024

Ray made a motion to approve the minutes of January 23, 2024. Russ seconded. There was no public comment and the motion passed 5-0.

III. Public Comment (non-agenda items) - None.

IV. Old Business

A. Planning Commission Report – Russ provided a summary of recent Planning Commission (PC) activities. He also referred to the Commission’s annual report for 2023 and recapped the joint meeting with the Board of Supervisors. Russ explained that the Planning Commission presented a list of priorities for discussion, but did not feel that sufficient feedback was received from the Board. He added that most of the discussion was focused on subject of attainable/affordable housing with some time dedicated to the environmental rights amendment. Ray asked about the specifics of the amendment. Russ summarized that Jack Embick, the PC Chair, who is the environmental law attorney, presented the history of the amendment and updated the PC on several court cases that he felt provided legal basis for municipalities to require compliance with the amendment. Megan commented that it would definitely be something for the EAC to be supportive of. He also reported that there are several applications for variances and special exceptions and there is no movement on the proposed Managed Meadow ordinance at this time. Megan suggested for the EAC to discuss it at the next meeting.

B. Update on 2024 Priorities for Discussion with Board on March 4 & review of Draft Annual Report – Bob recapped that the EAC would discuss their 2024 priorities with the Board at the March 4th Workshop, which are 1) the acquisition of Crebilly; 2) composting; 3) invasive removal and streambank restoration; and 4) Birdtown USA designation. He complimented Joe on compiling a report and suggested to add a list of priorities and some details on each specific item. The EAC members agreed. Joe asked whether the Board would review the report prior to the meeting. Mila explained that it would be included in the Board’s packets on Friday prior to the workshop.

C. Update on Crebilly Acquisition – Bob provided an update that he spoke with Jonathan Altshul, Township Manager, about the status of the acquisition. He recapped that the recent efforts to amend the battlefield map in order to secure funding from the American Battlefield Trust is moving forward, however, the funding will not be

available in time for acquisition to close the money gap. Ray raised an issue that there is no movement on the public fundraising campaign. He recapped that volunteers wanted to organize fundraising last summer but were told that it was too early. Ray was concerned that time was running out to secure much needed funding and questioned legging on behalf of the Natural Lands Trust. Bob agreed with Ray and wondered if there was something the EAC could advocate for to the Board. He thought that it would be challenging to have a successful fundraising campaign when the momentum has passed. Ray wanted to know firm plans for fundraising. He also noted that he reached out to the National Park Service and Representative Houlihan's office in regard to the American Battlefield funding but have not heard back. Bob suggested to make it clear to the Board at the upcoming meeting that it is a main priority for the EAC.

D. Update on Subcommittees—There was no update.

E. Update on WeConservePA EAC Virtual Conference and PA Outdoor Corps—Megan and Ray provided some insight into conference discussions. Megan attended seminar on composting which she felt was helpful. She also shared that there was a presentation on how to regulate flow to stormwater facilities with a simple solution that might be of use to the Township. Ray also attended the composting session and he shared details about PA Outdoor Corps which provides volunteers for all kind of projects for a service fee. He felt that they could be utilized if there is an issue in getting volunteers for tree plantings and other planned EAC initiatives. The EAC members thought it was a good idea to be aware that such service exists.

F. Update on Gazette Article — Ray provided an update that the article about composting was sent to the Township. He said that Adam was working on getting images for the article.

V. New Business

A. Summary of Westtown Township's 2023 MS4 Annual Report – Joe summarized his review of the report. He detailed what is included and the projects that have been designated by the Township to comply with the regulations. He noted that planting of trees would not gain many credits and the most impactful projects were basin retrofits and stream restoration. Megan asked about basin retrofits. Mila explained that those are proposed when the stormwater facility is not functioning as designed and needs to be modified to work properly. The EAC discussed whether there was an opportunity to assist with the MS4 initiatives. Mila explained that the Township staff with the assistance of the Township engineer have been successfully accomplishing what is required for compliance with the MS4 program, but encouraged the EAC to continue with proposed tree plantings and other initiatives even if they did not yield many or any credits towards the program. The EAC agreed that it was a helpful discussion to understand about the requirements and the Township's efforts.

B. Discussion with Paula Kline – Paula Kline, the former EAC member, brought materials that she compiled to share with the EAC. She thought they would be helpful for the members to review, which included information on tree commission, invasive

removal, biodiversity, stormwater management and energy related topics. She stressed the importance of monthly or annual reporting and benchmarking for energy efficiency to show the Township's progress. Ray has asked who is responsible for completing the reports. Paul believed it was Jonathan Altshul. She also provided with a list of activities that the EAC compiled when it was initially created and suggested for the EAC to track what has been accomplished.

VI. BOS Report – None.

VII. Public Comment – None.

VIII. Announcements

- A. The April meeting for the EAC has been moved from April 23 to April 30.
- B. Bob announced that Mila will be taking meeting minutes until new Manager is hired.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business, Ray adjourned the meeting at 8:58pm

Respectfully submitted,

Mila Carter, Assistant Township Manager