

WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (EAC)
Westtown Municipal Building, 1039 Wilmington Pike, West Chester, PA
Tuesday, May 28, 2024 7:00 PM

Present: EAC members Bob Yeats (Chair), Ray Dandrea (Vice Chair), Russ Hatton, Joe Debes, Mike Gioia, Meghan Hanney, Adam Kapp, and Township Manager and Director of Planning and Zoning Mila Carter.

I. Call to Order

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

II. Approval of Minutes, April 30, 2024

Joe made a motion to approve the minutes of April 30, 2024. Ray seconded. Adam Kapp abstained. There was no public comment and the motion passed 6-0.

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

IV. Old Business

A. Riparian Buffer Restoration Project (Plumly Open Space) - Joe shared a draft newsletter article about the accomplishments that were made on the project and requested the EAC's feedback. He stated that he was in contact with the Chester Ridley Crum (CRC) Watersheds Association and the Township staff about potential tree planting in the fall. He explained that the CRC has committed to tree planting at the Pleasant Grove area at this time, thus, once that project is complete, there might be an opportunity to do so at the Plumly Open space. Joe stressed the importance of collaboration between the EAC and the Township with the CRC. Bob suggested to focus tree planting activities in one focus area due to the limited number of volunteers and amount of work needed to make the project a success. Bob also raised questions about the number and types of trees that might be needed and the need for a planting plan. Ray thought that a long-term maintenance plan was needed for the open space area that was cleared by volunteers and wondered how it could be accommodated. Joe suggested to budget for obtaining the services of the Outdoor Corp group to continue the clearing work along the stream. Ray asked about the costs. Joe believed it was between \$800-1,000 per one time. Meghan suggested for the Corp group to remove the rest of the invasive plants and for the EAC to recruit volunteers to do tree planting. Joe volunteered to look into other alternatives for obtaining trees. Mila suggested to put the proposal for long-term plan and maintenance for the riparian buffer restoration project in writing in preparation for the next budget year. Joe wanted to complete the invasive removal in 2024 and move forward with tree planting in 2025. Bob felt that the main priority was to maintain the cleared area free of invasive this year. Adam agreed and asked about potential herbicide application. He also thought that recruitment of volunteers shall be done in advance. Bob wondered what the cost would be for herbicide application. He said he would reach out to Mark Gross, Public Works Director. Bob asked the EAC's feedback on what other areas were in need of invasive removal. Joe suggested to reach out to Public Works to ask about that. Ray noted that the intent of this project was to see a success rate before moving towards other areas. Russ added that the project morphed from the proposed establishment of managed

meadow, as a pilot to future conversion of agricultural fields at the Crebilly Farm, to removal of invasive along the stream. Megan noted that the project provides environmental value to the tributary of the Chester Creek and can be replicated throughout other areas. She asked about the EAC's remaining budget and whether there was any opportunity to continue maintaining the cleared area. Joe felt that the next step should be an herbicide application. The EAC agreed. Joe provided that there was a grant opportunity from Aqua for tree purchase.

B. Bird Town PA - Ray recapped an introductory meeting with Heidi Shiver, President of Bird Town. He also referred the EAC to a draft newsletter article he prepared about the designation. Ray also stated that he attended the webinar on the light pollution. He noted that there is a legislation being developed in the PA House of Representatives that would call attention to the issue of light pollution through HB 1803. There was a discussion about the next steps for the Westtown Bird Town Committee.

C. Energy Benchmarking Update – Mila provided several handouts that showed the energy usage of the Township buildings. She pointed out that there might be several errors depending on the available data, but felt that several improvements that were made to the Administration building seemed to lower the energy usage. She pointed out that the other recommendations that were provided in the previously completed report were the installation of solar panels and mechanical upgrades. Bob noted that mechanical upgrades will probably be done once there is a need for replacement of the units. Adam wondered whether the Board would be agreeable to the solar panels if there was no initial investment needed. Russ suggested to publish article on energy savings. There was a discussion about opportunities for energy savings for Oakbourne Mansion.

V. New Business

A. Roadside Trash Removal – Mike reported that he reached out to a contact at the Adopt a Highway Program and felt that the process was fairly straightforward. He volunteered to work on the application and submit it to PennDOT. Mila noted that the EAC did not make a decision on which roadways were in need of trash removal and explained that prior to submitting any applications on behalf of the Township, the Board's approval is necessary. She suggested to provide a written proposal and present it at the Board's workshop for feedback. Bob felt that Route 926 was in need of trash removal but was concerned with the lack of shoulders. Meghan questioned the relevance of roadside trash removal to the EAC's mission. Bob thought that it would prevent trash accumulation in the streams. Bob pointed out that the Board had previously suggested S Concord Road as potential roadway for cleaning up and wondered whether it was needed. He suggested to follow up with Ed Yost, Township Supervisor, on that. The EAC discussed various roadways in the Township and whether or not trash removal was needed. Mila suggested for the EAC members to drive throughout the Township for assessment and come up with the proposed list (if any).

B. Oakbourne Park Community Garden Composting – Ray suggested to come up with ideas to encourage public participation in composting. He noted that one of proposed

initiatives was to see whether the community garden group at Oakbourne Park might be interested in having a composting demonstration and potentially a composting bin at the garden for community use. He wanted to know more about the community garden and how to contact them. He also suggested for the EAC to build a composting bin if there is a buy-in from the garden community. Bob believed that the trend of community composting is growing. Meghan suggested to contact the garden users directly. Mila noted that the Township cannot share private contact information, but she would reach out to them and report back to the EAC at the next meeting.

C. Newsletter Article – Mila suggested to combine draft articles on composting, Bird Town and invasive removal into one page to showcase the EAC’s accomplishments. The Council agreed.

D. Westtown Day Participation – Mila explained that the planning for Westtown Day is ongoing and asked the Council to provide a list of initiatives and subsequent items that might be needed. Adam suggested to teach attendees how to use the bird related apps and provide a walking demonstration with the competition among participants at the event. Russ suggested to have QR codes as opposed to paper handouts. Adam also suggested to showcase the EAC’s efforts with the composting and posters of Plumly Open space invasive removal. Adam has volunteered to put the plan together in writing for the discussion with the EAC.

VI. BOS Report – None.

VII. Public Comment – None.

VIII. Announcements

A. Russ announced that there is a settlement proposal for the Stokes Estate that will be presented to the Board of Supervisors on June 3, 2024.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business, Bob adjourned the meeting at 9:06pm

Respectfully submitted,

Mila Carter, Assistant Township Manager