

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

Present: EAC members Bob Yeats (Chair), Joe Debes, Russ Hatton, Adam Kapp and Mike Gioia. Ray Dandrea (Vice Chair) and Meghan Hanney were absent. Also present was Mila Carter, Township manager.

I. Call to Order

Bob called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

II. Approval of Minutes, July 23, 2024

Joe made a motion to approve the minutes of July 23, 2024. Bob seconded. There was no public comment and the motion passed 5-0.

III. Public Comment (non-agenda items)

None.

IV. Old Business

A. Riparian Buffer Restoration Project in Plumly Open Space

Joe Debes summarized his visits to the restoration site after Red Tail, which is a contractor, did some work as approved by the Township. Joe expressed several concerns over the progress. He explained that vegetation has increased in several areas and felt that it needed to be addressed, specifically around native plants. He also pointed out that no herbicide has been applied yet. Joe also inquired about the amount of work and cost of clearing out the full length of the unnamed tributary of Chester Creek. He was told it would take approximately 50 hours per year (with \$50.00 an hour) and a total of 2 years to extend this effort. He felt that it was a worthy investment. Adam Kapp wondered about the reasoning behind the Board's nonsupport. Bob Yeats explained that the Board felt there were other overgrown areas that needed attention. He pointed out that there were plans under way for the stream restoration project in Pleasant Grove neighborhood. Joe believed that the invasive removal work might be beneficial in that area as well.

Adam suggested for the volunteers, including students from the West Chester Area School District (WCASD), to assist with restoration and long-term maintenance efforts. Joe believed that the Township should budget for such maintenance. Adam recapped that the intent of this effort was to complete a pilot project which can be replicated in other areas of the Township and suggested to evaluate return on those efforts and to have a plan for the next 5 years. Mike Gioia suggested to keep track of the progress and conditions on a quarterly basis via photographs. Adam felt that the EAC should not be the one doing removal activities and suggested to also look into other areas of the Township. Bob recommended to include proposed maintenance activities in the budget for 2025. Joe suggested to review his proposal for a long-term maintenance plan for the Plumly open space, and to discuss the next steps.

B. Roadside Trash Removal

Bob asked about potential areas for trash removal efforts. Russ Hatton shared an article about the group, Litter Lifters, which does that kind of work in other communities and suggested to reach out to them to learn more about the initiative. He felt that it would be helpful in creating some ideas to implement in Westtown. Adam suggested to focus on educating the residents on trash and littering with targeted messaging. The EAC agreed. Bob will reach out to the group and invite them to the next EAC meeting.

C. Westtown Day Participation

Bob summarized the proposed activities for Westtown Day. Mike suggested to provide posters with pictures of local birds and ask attendees to match the names or sounds with the pictures, stickers with birds and plants to give out, and some sort of a kids activity. Bob suggested to reach out to Paula Kline, former member, to see if she would be willing to let the Council to borrow some materials that she provided last year. Russ suggested to create a passport that can be stamped for visiting various tables to encourage participation. Adam felt that in lieu of providing printing resources, such materials can be posted on the EAC webpage with QR code displayed at the event.

V. New Business

A. Priorities and Budget for 2025

Adam suggested for the past survey to be advertised again to evaluate the progress on accomplishments and to identify new areas of focus. Mike proposed to complete ongoing initiatives before moving towards something new. Joe asked whether there were other areas that the EAC should be focusing on. There was a discussion about current initiatives and their status. Adam summarized that the EAC agreed to focus on the current priorities with additional community education and outreach efforts. Joe recapped that the proposed budget includes work activities in the Plumly Open Space (\$5,000), reusable bags for Westtown Day (\$1,000), and Bird Town Committee initiatives (\$2,000). Adam referred to the reusable bag quote and asked whether anyone knew where and how they were made. Bob explained that it was just an estimate provided by Ray Dandrea. Adam suggested to get more details about the bags.

Joe made a motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors to consider the proposed budget for a total of \$8,000 for the EAC initiatives for the next year. Adam seconded. All were in favor of the motion.

VI. Bird Town Committee Report

A. Bird Town Sign Placement

Joe summarized that the Committee recommended purchasing additional 4 signs and the following locations for their placement: on the Westtown Township sign at the intersection of Route 202 and 926, and one at Route 352 and 926; along the frontage of Oakbourne Park; along Route 926 at the Chester Creek bridge if the private landowner approves. The other 3 2 locations are to be determined. Ms. Carter noted that she expressed her concerns to the Committee about signage placement on private property and suggested to focus on locations that are within the Township's right-of-way.

Adan made a motion to recommend approval of the Bird Town Committee for the Board of Supervisors to consider their proposed placement of the Bird Town signage.

B. Webpage Content

Joe suggested to table the discussion item until the later date because the Committee is still working on the content of the webpage.

VII. Planning Commission Report

Russ provided the Planning Commission's report from the August 21st meeting.

VIII. BOS Report

Bob provided a report of the Board's meeting, and noted that Meghan Hanney was scheduled to attend the September 3rd meeting.

IX. Public Comment

None.

X. Announcements

None.

XI. Adjournment

There being no further business, Bob adjourned the meeting at 8:39 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Liudmila Carter
Township Manager