

WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (EAC)
Westtown Municipal Building, 1039 Wilmington Pike, West Chester, PA
Tuesday, February 25, 2025 7:00 PM

Present: EAC members Bob Yeats, Ray Dandrea, Russ Hatton, Joe Debes, and Mike Gioia. Absent were Adam Kapp and Kim Maialetti. Also present was Township Manager Mila Carter.

Call to Order

Bob called the meeting to order at 7:01pm.

Adoption of Agenda RH/BY (5-0)

Russ recommended to add minutes to the agenda from the November 27, 2024 meeting. He made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Bob seconded. There was no public comment, and all were in favor of the motion.

Approval of Minutes, November 27, 2024 and January 28, 2025 RH/JD (5-0)

Russ made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes from November 27, 2024 and January 28, 2025. Joe seconded. There was no public comment, and all were in favor of the motion.

Announcements

None.

Public Comment (non-agenda items)

None.

Old Business

- 1. Route 926 (E Street Road) Roadside Trash Cleanup** – Mike provided an update that the next step was to set up a date for the first event and suggested to consider cleanup activities for the adopted segment twice per year. He suggested March and September. Bob thought it would be a good idea. Mike provided that he would work on putting something together for the next steps and would touch base with West Vincent Litter Lifters to let them know that the Westtown EAC would take it on as their own initiative. Mike wondered about the number of people needed. Ray noted that it was recommended to keep it manageable and suggested 10-15 people. Mile suggested for members of EAC to do the first cleanup before inviting the public to participate to learn the ropes.
- 2. Rustin High School Environmental Club and Westtown School Outreach** – Bob provided that he continues having trouble getting a hold of the club. He wondered whether there was another group at Rustin who might be interested in the EAC. Mila suggested to look at the school’s list of clubs to consider other candidates. Joe provided that he received an email from Sustainability Director at Westtown School and recapped that the school is very involved in sustainability efforts, including composting program on site. He wondered about potential opportunities for engagement. Mila reminded that the school has also recently installed a solar farm to power some of their buddings.
- 3. Preparation of 2024 Annual Report** – Bob complimented Joe on putting the annual report together and asked for feedback. Joe summarized that he tried to keep it short and to the

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point. There were no proposed changes. Mila suggested to discuss it with the Board at the joint meeting on March 17.

Joe made a motion to approve 2024 Annual Report to be presented to the Board on March 17. Ray seconded. There was no public comment, and all were in favor of the motion.

4. **Preparation for Earth Day Cleanup at Crebilly Preserve** – Ray stated that he talked to Robin McCardell, who currently farms Crebilly, about a tour around the property to determine areas of most need for cleanup. Ray suggested to create a map that shows where to park and to develop registration and liability waiver forms. He will continue to work on the next steps.

New Business

1. **Chester County Plastic Pollution Task Force (Kathy Cook, Chair)** – Kathy Cook asked about the quality of involvement from the public and whether there is a plan on how to educate and engage the public in addressing plastic pollution. Ray recapped that EAC has proposed plastics bag ban last year, which did not pass. Kathy noted there were not that many businesses in Westtown and thought that all have to be involved. She asked about how the roll out for proposed ordinance was done. Ray responded that EAC has previously developed the survey where residents indicated their preferences, including priority for addressing plastic bags. Kathy asked whether businesses were surveyed. Ray noted that WAWA and Giant located in other municipalities are abiding by the implemented plastic bag bans, and thought that most businesses were open to this possibility for Westtown. However, he did not believe they were approached by EAC.

Kathy suggested to contact Rotary Clubs, which have environmental focused programs and grants for reusable bags through partnerships with other agencies. Bob noted that there is budget for reusable bags for Westtown Day this year. Kathy suggested to focus on advertisement aimed at environmental and community benefits of combating plastics pollution, and provided examples of educational sessions on composting and solar to get community interested as well as involved in these efforts. Mike asked whether plastic bag ban would be challenging at the Amish Market. Kathy thought there was an opportunity to work with Amish on making and providing reusable bags to their customers. Ray believed that a lack of support from the Board was a main obstacle to implementation. Kathy provided that EAC has to make their case, such as that implementing such initiatives decreases litter by third as per completed study. Bob asked to verify the name of the study. Kathy noted it was done by the environmental group and offered to share it. Joe wondered how to gain community support and enthusiasm. Kathy suggested to play educational movie about the issue of plastics that was raised in Pennsylvania. She provided a brief synopsis about the movie and stated that licensing fee was taken care of. She also talked about partnerships with local organizations, schools, retirement homes, and libraries or educational efforts.

Mike asked about the next steps. Bob suggested to work on building momentum and support in the community. Mike asked whether collecting signatures would be appropriate. Kathy pointed out that the process might take 2 to 3 years, but there is a possibility of a shorter timeframe if it is done in a thoughtful way. She stressed the importance of collaborating with local religious institutions and schools. Mike thought that it would be

challenging to get public involved. Kathy pointed out that each municipality is unique with their own demographics and culture. Ray saw an opportunity with Rustin High School and Westtown School. Kathy volunteers to assist with schools and churches.

Bob suggested to consider plastics pollution related article for the newsletter. Russ added that the proposed ordinance shall not be called “a ban”, because it creates a negative perception. The other EAC members agreed.

Janet Amighi, 1461 Overhill Road, suggested to be more proactive by handing out informative flyers and knock on peoples doors to ask their opinions and mark their priorities on paper. Mila cautioned against solicitation as it might become an issue with some residents.

2. **America 250 Initiatives in Westtown** – Bob noted that several members of EAC attended the stakeholder meeting organized by the Historical Commission to discuss opportunities for collaboration to celebrate America’s birthday in 2026. He recapped that there were several organizations in attendance who were interested in participating and that everyone was given a homework to come up with the activity to focus on. Bob wondered whether EAC can offer input and volunteer for whatever is needed to move these initiatives forward. He encouraged EAC members to get involved and support the Historical Commission.

Public Comment (All Topics)

None.

Reports

1. Bob summarized the Board of Supervisors meeting of February 3.
2. Russ summarized the Planning Commission meetings of February 5 and 19.
3. Ray summarized the Bird Town Committee initiatives, including a proposed pollinator garden at Oakbourne Park and installation of bird boxes and signage.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Bob adjourned the meeting at 9:10pm

Respectfully submitted,

Mila Carter, Township Manager