



SUSTAINABLE CHELTENHAM NEWSLETTER

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June 2014

The Cheltenham Township Environmental Advisory Council

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Announcements

Now you can **follow us on Twitter** @CheltenhamEAC



Many of you are probably thinking that you have no use for Twitter, but you should be aware that you can choose how to use it, and there is no need to expose yourself publicly through Twitter. For many people, Twitter serves as a way to get rapid notification of the news and events that are important to them. Even if you have never considered using it, you may find it to be a convenient way to get content that you want, sent directly to your computer or phone.

Opportunity to have a say:

Should the intersection of Church Road and Greenwood Avenue be safer and have better traffic control?

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission is soliciting comments until 5 PM on June 30th, 2014!

To provide your comments, follow [this link](#), and search for the "**PA 73, Church Road Intersection and Signal Improvements**" project proposal using MPMS code **16334** in the search panel on the right side of the screen. Once you find the project link, you can read about the current plans, and by clicking the comment link icon (it looks like a cartoon "speech bubble"), you can add your thoughts on the importance of bike and pedestrian safety and access. The plan descriptions says: "Additional sidewalks can be considered if there is local support." Imagine if you could walk or ride to Curtis Arboretum without dodging traffic and breaking the law! What if our streets were safe to walk across or ride upon? If that is what you want, it behooves you to tell those who are planning future development!

Background: As the federally designated "Metropolitan Planning Organization," the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission is responsible for developing the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is the regionally agreed-upon list of priority projects, as required by federal law, and goes through a major update every other year. **DVRPC invites the public to review and comment** on the Draft FY 2015 TIP for the PA portion of the region through **5:00 PM on June 30, 2014**.

Feel free to explore all the projects in the TIP list, but the **Church Rd/Greenwood Ave** intersection is a local concern that is challenging in a car and completely unsafe on bike or by foot. To improve [Mobility](#) (including the non-motorized sort) in Cheltenham, the Regional Planners need to know **OUR PRIORITIES**, and this is one of the mechanisms that supports that communication. Modifying state highways, such as PA 73, to make them bike- and pedestrian-friendly is not impossible, but high-level authorities like DVRPC need to know what **we** want for **our** community.

A note from Bill Mettler:

Hi Cheltenham Energy Scholars:

Over the summer I will be working on a study initiated by the Energy Efficiency group at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL). The study is about portable air conditioners. The goal is to understand how much energy is consumed by this appliance in US homes.

If you have a **portable air conditioner** or know of someone who might be interested, LBNL is offering a [\\$100 incentive](#) for those who are selected to be part of the study.

A portable air conditioner is similar to a window unit. However, instead of being installed in a window or a wall, it has wheels and can be moved around easily from room to room. It also has one or two ducts that can be connected to a window. The ducts are used to draw air into or exhaust air from the room. The unit may have a water bucket to collect condensate.

This will be a 4-month study. There will be 2-3 short visits during this study to check equipment and readings.

Measurement of electricity consumption will be done using a portable metering device (12"x12"x6"). We will also measure temperature and humidity levels with two battery-powered monitors (the size of a deck of cards) near the unit and in an adjacent area.

Requirements include your willingness to fill out an initial survey of the system and your demographic information; and to sign a consent form to participate. **LBNL adheres to strict confidentiality practices.**

If you are interested, please contact me:

Bill Mettler at billmettler3@gmail.com or (215) 885-8936

Upcoming Events

Mark your calendar

Environmental Advisory Council Meeting

Monday, June 16th 7:30 PM

Township Administration Building, 8230 Old York Road, Elkins Park

This is the monthly meeting where the volunteers of the EAC discuss new and ongoing environmental concerns, draft advisory notices for the Township Commissioners, and work on strategies to promote widespread action toward the goals of our Township's [Sustainability Plan](#). Township residents are encouraged to attend and get involved in Sustainable Cheltenham.

Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership Calendar of Events

Click [here](#) to see what is happening in the largest watershed in the Township! Hint: Birdwatchers may be particularly interested in the June 29th entry.

Volunteer Opportunities in a Native Plant Sanctuary

Friends of High School Park invite you to their "Workday Weekends." Follow this [link](#) to learn more and see the schedule.

Recent Events

In case you missed it...

Sustainability Festival at Arts in the Park

On June 1st, sustainable practices in Cheltenham were on display and celebrated with

awards at the annual Sustainability Festival. Winners, whose projects were on display in the Sustainability Showcase Pavilion, received their awards on the main stage:

- Myers Elementary School
- Ancillae-Assumpta Academy
- Primex Garden Center
- Federation Housing - Samuel A. Green House
- Dr. Sidney Kahn and John Hubert
- CreekSide Food Co-op
- Andy Rudin
- Ben Adams and Gail Korostoff
- Oskar Dressnandt
- Ramah Day Camp at the Mandel Education Campus Garden
- La Mott Community Garden

Will you be among them, next year?





Bicycle riders were also welcomed at a Bike Parking "Corral" attended by volunteers, who tabulated distances pedaled and carbon emissions saved!



Become a Streamkeeper

On June 4th, at Abington Friends School, the Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership held an introductory meeting to explain how individuals could get involved in research and restoration projects aimed at improving water quality in the entire Delaware River watershed. The "StreamKeeper" program requires some training (provided by TTF) and a commitment of just a few hours each month. **If you are interested in getting your feet wet for science and ecological stewardship, it's not too late:** contact Alex Cooper at cooper@ttfwatershed.org or 215.744.1853

Knotweed Gone Wild

Taming invasive species



Three common invasive plants found in Cheltenham Township: English ivy, Japanese knotweed, and fig buttercup.

Biology Students at Arcadia University have the opportunity to study ecology first-hand in the headwaters of the Tookany/Tacony Creek, just outside Boyer Hall on the Glenside Campus. Several of my students in the *Research Methods in Biology* course prepared educational documents related to invasive species and watershed health and restoration. Here is one such essay, on the topic of Japanese knotweed, a highly invasive pest of a plant that is found throughout the township and our entire region. [Follow this link to read more.](#)

Sustainability: An Introduction

The second in a series of columns on "sustainability"

Last month, I introduced the ten goals for sustainability that were identified in Cheltenham Township's Sustainability Plan ([click here](#) for official statements of each goal).

1. Community Engagement
2. Energy
3. Mobility
4. Waste Reduction
5. Sustainable Development
6. Ecological Stewardship
7. Water Management
8. Local Economy
9. Healthy Living For All
10. Monitoring



You can see how this Newsletter and events like the Sustainability Festival are aimed directly at Goal Number 1, "Community Engagement." By simply making the local opportunities to improve our environment and our community more visible, we hope to induce more people to actively volunteer with the EAC or some of the many local groups who work to make our Township better. However, **EVEN MORE IMPORTANT** is for all of us to think about cause and effect, or the consequences of our actions. By promoting education and a spirit of inquiry about "sustainability," we are encouraging Cheltenham businesses, residents, and their government to consciously reduce negative impacts and increase positive impacts on the world around us.

The environment is often the focus of discussions about sustainability, and it is certainly an important part of the conversation, especially when we consider the problems resulting from ecosystem degradation, pollution, and climate disruption. However, the impact of our choices and actions on the ability of our community to endure and thrive goes beyond just environmental concerns. Given our democratic system of government, and the potential of government policy to affect all aspects of our community's life, it is vitally important for everyone to think about these issues, make their voices be heard, and get involved in maintaining and improving the world in which we live.

The Sustainability Showcase Pavilion at the recent Sustainability Festival included a board on which visitors could comment in response to some questions about their personal actions, their intentions, and their thoughts on what the Township government should do. Comments were frequently reiterated by other visitors, and those are denoted with check marks:

What actions do YOU NOW practice that are sustainable?

- √√ Recycling more!
- √√ Changed all bulbs to LED's
- CSA share [community supported agriculture]
- √√√√ Composting + gardening!!
- Learned about meadow monitoring and adopted a plot at HS Park!
- √ Kitchen garden
 - Wormery! lots of castings
 - native plantings to support wildlife
 - Use Re-usable bags at grocery
 - Hang wash out to dry on clotheslines in backyard
 - In winter drape over radiators and stair rails - and clothes rack
 - Put in Energy Star & ADA appliances
 - Expanded my vegetable garden in 2013 - This year I'm planting different vegetables and some berries
 - Taking train & walking more instead of driving

What sustainable practices would YOU LIKE TO ADOPT? (more biking, composting, healthy eating.....)

- √√√√ Ride my bike more (but don't feel safe on Chelt. roads.)
- √√ Bike paths to all schools and through all neighborhoods - less buses!
- √√√ Yes! Bike paths! Road Markers! Established Routes
- √ Vegetable Garden
- √ Backyard Chickens
- √ Composting
- Put in butterfly garden
- √ Continue to eradicate invasive plants
- Timed Traffic lights so bikers don't have to run red lights or wait for cars

What Sustainable changes would like our Township to adopt?

Police vehicles that are more appropriate for twp use & are consequently more fuel efficient [for example, are SUVs truly justified? Where are the bicycle-mounted officers?].

- √ "No Volcano Mulch" Policy [this refers to piling mulch too high around tree trunks]
- * √ More "Green" infrastructure to hold stormwater
- √ Partner more w/ Institutions/Businesses to increase their help in adopting creeks near their properties (esp. adding trees, shrubs & doing cleanups.)
- √ Train Park Maintenance staff to adopt better practices for maintaining park lands esp. near creeks.
- √√√√ More bike paths to connect greenways & schools.
- Collect compost from residents + use in green places
- Recycle Alkaline batteries
- Battery Recycling in weekly recycling pickup
- √ Free Cycle drop off/pick up
- √ More education/awareness about chemical use & less lawns -> harm to environment.
- √ Adopt more open space & promote more open space in to-be developed properties
- Collect waste cooking oil/grease
- Participate in take back drug days (Chelt. Police Dept.)
- Haz. waste collection (not on a Saturday)
- √ BE MORE PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY - Sidewalks, stop signs, turning arrow's, IT'S SAFER TOO.
- √ Garden Plant Exchange
- More sidewalks & bike lanes!



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