



SUSTAINABLE CHELTENHAM NEWSLETTER

May 2014

The Cheltenham Township Environmental Advisory Council

In This Issue

Announcements

Events

Can we live without invasive species?

Sustainability Series



Announcements

Sustainability Festival (at Arts in the Park)

Sunday, June 1st from 10AM-5PM (rain date June 8th)

High School Park, High School Road & Montgomery Avenue in Elkins Park

Don't miss Cheltenham's showcase of sustainable practices and the first annual Sustainability Awards! While you are there, enjoy the fun, food and wonderful art at Arts in the Park. See the "Events" section for more information.

New format for the EAC Newsletter

Going forward, you should expect to see a monthly newsletter from your EAC with news of recent and future events in the Township pertaining to Sustainability and other environmental issues. In addition, there will be occasional articles of an educational nature and links to useful websites with more information. Do you have suggestions? We would be glad to hear your ideas about how to engage Cheltenham Township residents, businesses, and government in the worthwhile pursuit of Sustainability; just come to our monthly public meetings and join the other enthusiastic volunteers who comprise the Cheltenham Township

Environmental Advisory Council!

What is the EAC, anyway?

The Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) is made up of 7 voting members who were appointed to their positions by the President of the Township Board of Commissioners, with the advice and consent of the whole Board. The role of the EAC is to provide advice to the Township on environmental matters and to promote the 10 Goals of Cheltenham's landmark Sustainability Plan. Public meetings are held at 7:30 PM on the third Monday of each month, usually at the Township Administration Building. These meetings follow parliamentary procedure (so they may seem a bit formal), but visitors are always welcome and encouraged to join in the discussions. This is a great way for interested residents to get involved, and it is an important way for the concerns of citizens to be brought to the attention of the local government! [Find out more here.](#)

Upcoming Events

Mark your calendar

Sustainability Festival

Sunday, June 1st from 10AM-5PM (rain date June 8th)

High School Park, High School Road & Montgomery Avenue in Elkins Park

The Cheltenham Environmental Advisory Council is very excited to bring Sustainable Cheltenham to "Arts in the Park". It is our time to educate and engage our community about the amazing environmental efforts happening where we live and have fun in the inspiring setting of High School Park!!!

There are **5 Sustainable Cheltenham events** at Arts in the Park this year:

1. Sustainable Showcase

Visit our Nature Wall of projects: we have received project descriptions of sustainable efforts from residents, businesses, institutions and schools. Come see how our community is saving energy and water, optimizing waste disposal, teaching students and parents, gardening to feed others and supporting our local economy. You will be amazed what's going on right in Cheltenham Township!!

2. Bike Corral

- Free secured bike parking at the festival for all bikers.
- Put a pin at your biking start location and we will be calculating the Green House Gases saved by biking instead of driving!

3. Sustainable Cheltenham Awards Ceremony

This is our first Annual Awards Ceremony. We are recognizing residents, businesses, institutions and schools who exemplify efforts toward meeting the 10 goals of our Sustainability Plan, focused on reducing energy and water use and waste production, increasing mobility, ecological stewardship, healthy living, improving our local economy, and supporting sustainable development and community engagement. Two ceremonies will be held on the "Main Stage":

- **11:40 am - recognizing Residents & Schools**
- **3:20 pm- recognizing Institutions & Businesses**

4. Arts & Crafts / Games and Learning

In collaboration with the Cheltenham Center for the Arts, young people (and the young at heart) can create energy with their muscles, learn about surface water flow on a 3-D model, go on a nature scavenger hunt in High School Park and create beautiful art projects, like bottle cap and clothes pin bugs, all in the High School park back meadow!

5. Recycle Art at the Recycling Truck

Express your creative side, while visiting Cheltenham Township's newest single stream recycling truck that allowed us to collect more than 3,000 tons of recyclables in 2013. Join in the creation of a TRASH-TO-ART sculpture..... a Tookany Creekscape! All art skill-levels are welcome. Please bring some recyclables (clean plastic bottles & containers, fabric scraps, string, small plastic toys no bigger than a tennis ball, egg crates, (no glass, please), bags from chips, etc., to add to your creation!

So, come to Arts in the Park and support sustainability in Cheltenham, as well as the Friends of High School Park!



Become a Streamkeeper

June 4th, 5:30-7:30 PM at Abington Friends School

Our creeks and rivers are a vital component of the environment, providing habitat for a wide variety of wildlife and serving as the water supply for homes across our region. Learn how to get involved in monitoring and improving the health of our watersheds. The Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership is holding an introductory meeting for potential Streamkeepers Wednesday, June 4th. [Click here for more information!](#)

Recent Events

In case you missed it...

Earth Day 2014

Many thanks to the 225 volunteers and 9 community groups who worked on a wide range of service projects around the Township to commemorate Earth Day!

TTF Riparian Buffer Planting

On May 3, 2014, 25 residents came out to plant nearly 100 native trees and shrubs in Rock Lane Park, about 25 feet from Rock Creek. The value of this new riparian buffer is \$7500, planned and planted at no cost to Cheltenham Township. Learn more and see pictures of the event [here](#).

Can we live without Invasive Species?

Yes, but it will take some effort...



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

Invasive species are organisms that evolved in a different environment but have been transported to a new location (sometimes intentionally, sometimes not), where they out-compete the native plants or animals. Often, they are able to do so because when they

arrived, they didn't bring their natural enemies along. Without the threat of being eaten or inhibited by the organisms they evolved with, they have a big advantage over native flora and fauna.

Many exotic plants and animals live in the Philadelphia area, but we only refer to some of them as "invasive." This term is reserved for those that actually cause harm to the native environment, by crowding, poisoning, eating, or otherwise damaging the indigenous plants and animals that have been here for much longer.

It can be very difficult to remove invasives, once they have established themselves. Some people might even say we shouldn't try, because they are obviously better suited to this environment! However, that view doesn't acknowledge the economic and environmental harm caused by invasive species, nor does it recognize the benefits inherent in a healthy native ecosystem: the native plants and animals depend upon each other!

Individually, we can inform ourselves about the invasives that are found nearby or are threatening to invade, and we can try to promote the preservation of natural habitats. Are you planning to do some landscaping? Consider removing the English ivy or other invasive species you might find in your yard, and replace them with native plants or at least less-harmful exotics. Learn more about the global threat posed by invasive species in this fascinating documentary: [Silent Invasion](#). Future editions of the EAC Newsletter will revisit the topic of invasive species, and you are sure to have opportunities to join others in Earth Day or other projects aimed at eradicating these pests from Cheltenham.

Sustainability: An Introduction

The first in a series of columns on "sustainability"

A sustainable community is one that can endure; but sustainability isn't simply an attempt to preserve the past, and it certainly isn't achieved by ignoring changes occurring in the wider world. It is better to think of sustainability as a kind of resiliency that enables the community to grow and adapt in the face of threats and changing conditions.

There are many different ways to view sustainability, and many different aspects of society that could benefit from having this type of resilience. For example, one threat that is much discussed is global climate disruption. [Good scientific evidence](#) points to excessive production of CO₂ as one factor that may be changing the climate, with a variety of consequences predicted or already observed. The sustainable response would include learning about the threat, changing behavior to reduce the harm we are causing, and taking action to mitigate or reduce the consequences of prior choices that led to this situation. If you think about this at a personal level, this is really how responsible people live their lives: If you spill something, you clean it up. I expect most parents teach that lesson to their children, as well.

A major challenge is for complex communities, like families, businesses, cities and countries to coordinate diverse agents (meaning people, each with their own motivations) to act in a way that tends to preserve and enhance the best parts of the community. Some of the

important factors that must be considered when thinking about how to make a Sustainable society are ecology, economics, politics and culture. In a democracy, we elect representatives to act on our behalf and establish reasonable and sustainable policies; this process played out when Cheltenham developed its Sustainability Plan. The township commissioners set in motion a team of citizen volunteers and professionals who met regularly for over a year (soliciting input from the wider public, along the way) and discussed how we could make our Township a resilient, vibrant, and enjoyable place to live for years to come.

The Sustainability Plan we developed, and which was ratified by the Board of Commissioners in early 2013, serves to focus attention on a wide range of interrelated issues, so that the government, businesses, and residents can easily find out how to think about and adopt more sustainable practices. There are 10 domains in which goals for sustainability were identified ([click here](#) for more detailed explanations 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



This newsletter is one example of a small citizens committee of the township government attempting to promote "Community Engagement." The full statement of the Community Engagement goal is:

Engage and educate all Cheltenham residents and stakeholders to unite behind a shared set of goals to build a sustainable future.

OBJECTIVES:

- **Engage and educate residents on what they can do to live sustainably.**
- **Provide incentives to residents, businesses, and institutions to make sustainable changes and choices.**
- **Integrate sustainability into schools' curriculum and practices.**
- **More citizen involvement in all township meetings and planning.**
- **Align rules, regulations, policies, and incentive programs to support all of the community sustainability goals outlined herein.**
- **Support the creation or continued existence of a Cheltenham Sustainability Implementation Organization that will promote the sustainability goals and**

holistically work toward their implementation.

- **Leverage the energy and commitment of the faculty, staff and students of the area's colleges, specifically including Arcadia University.**

Sustainability is a way of living in which people explicitly acknowledge the consequences of their actions and mindfully strive to act in ways that can be continued into the future. Cheltenham's Sustainability Plan does not cover every possible action people could take, nor does it dictate what people **must do**; it simply helps shape future discussion and action in our community, to promote its long-term viability. Do you have ideas about how to achieve this? Perhaps you are part of an organization that is already pursuing Sustainability in the Township. Come to an EAC meeting and let us know about what you are doing, or what you think we should do!



JOIN OUR MAILING LIST

[Forward to a friend](#)



Try it FREE today.

This email was sent to ngibson@cheltenham-township.org by eacnewsletter@cheltenham-township.org | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Cheltenham Township EAC | 8230 Old York Road | Township Administration Building | Elkins Park | PA | 19027