

The regular meeting of the **ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL** (EAC) for August 2022 was held tonight via Zoom Web-Conference. Members in attendance were: Chair Greta Bunin, Michael Freeman, Boris Kerzner, Kurt Ahrens, and Sidney Kahn. Staff present: Alyson Elliott, Assistant Township Manager; Lauren Walter, Special Projects Coordinator. Guests present: Rebecca Schultz; Jeffrey Plaut; Julie Slavet, Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership (TTF); Tom Wieckowski and Tim Esposito, Historical Commission; Karen Hanson

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Bunin called the meeting to order at 7:36 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Upon motion of Mr. Kahn, seconded by Mr. Freeman, the minutes of the July 18, 2022 meeting were unanimously approved.

2. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Stream Naming in the Township

Tom Wieckowski and Tim Esposito of the Township's Historical Commission (HC) joined to discuss the naming of unnamed tributaries. Mr. Wieckowski said that in 2008, the EAC was charged with naming six unidentified Township streams, and the HC and Old York Road Historical Society consulted on this matter. It was recently when the HC received a request from a resident to name a stream running through their property that they became aware the names proposed in 2008 were never submitted to the United States Geological Survey (USGS) for approval. Since that time, three more unnamed streams have been identified, including the one by Conklin Pool for which TTF did a restoration project, and the Township has renewed discussion to get these nine streams named.

Ms. Elliott said the USGS guidelines state that the name must describe a characteristic of the stream or be of historical significance. Ms. Rappoport added that there are a number of other specific guidelines, including that they cannot be named for someone living.

Attendees discussed the map of streams and tributaries, and whether Cheltenham can name a section of a stream that has a name in another municipality where it originated. Mr. Wieckowski had compiled the prior discussion into a document which explains the rationale behind the names chosen at that time. Ms. Bunin suggested a combination of some historical names and some geologic features, rather than all names based on land ownership history.

Mr. Ahrens said the names should not just be up to this body, but rather should be a public discussion. He suggested publishing the map of unnamed streams and letting residents know this is a unique opportunity to help name a local feature.

Ms. Rappoport had a conversation with a liaison from the US Board of Geographic Names and will share this information with the committee.

Ms. Slavet said TTF is happy to host events at the stream locations to gather names (they did this at Conklin). The Township can also use an online form to accept suggestions. EAC and HC can review the suggestions received, and then maybe have a public vote. Mr. Wieckowski suggested that people who participate should give a descriptor or context for their suggestions.

Mr. Freeman asked if many go through private property. Mr. Wieckowski said most do, but most also have at least one place publicly visible if you know where to look.

The group decided to convene a task force with representatives from the EAC, Historical Commission, and TTF to develop a process for stream naming. Ms. Slavet said the task force should identify and contact any relevant civic groups for each stream location to engage in discussion.

B. Plastic Bag Legislation Update:

Ms. Bunin said there is a Southeastern PA Coalition with members from Montgomery and other Counties; other municipalities are moving toward this goal at their own pace.

Ms. Elliott said the Solicitor has reviewed the draft ordinance but she has not yet had a chance to review and incorporate his comments. She will bring it to September's meeting for review.

C. Zero Waste Webinars:

Mr. Kerzner shared that Cheltenham's waste stream goes to Covanta, a waste to energy facility that burns trash. Last year, Cheltenham sent approximately 8,085 tons.

He restated that Montgomery County's Waste Management Plan is due for update in 2025, and a commission will probably form in 2024; he is on the list to be contacted when this process begins. This will be an opportune time to insert more sustainable provisions into the plan.

Mr. Kerzner stated that removing organic waste from the waste stream does make a difference. One recommendation from Media Borough's report on implementing a compost program was to encourage gradual participation and increase from there; educate residents. Ms. Elliott mentioned that the Township is in the process of hiring a Refuse and Recycling Superintendent, and asked that considering new initiatives wait until this position is filled.

Mr. Kerzner said the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) has an Energy and Emissions profile for Cheltenham available online.

Mr. Kahn said that everything he has read suggests that plastics are nearly impossible to recycle. He said he would like to know what happens to the plastics recycled through Cheltenham's program. Mr. Freeman said the recycling market is driven by economics, and right now plastics are not marketable, and are ending up in landfills. He stated that solid waste is a huge industry. Mr. Kahn asked if a tour could be arranged for EAC members for the Covanta waste facility and the Republic recycling facility.

Mr. Freeman stated the best potential to make a difference is source reduction, and trying to get rid of waste in a way that protects public health and safety. Mr. Kahn added that now there is the issue of microplastics contaminating water. Members discussed that more education can be done for the general public about what is truly recyclable, and help people learn how to reduce rather than recycle.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. MCPC Return on Environment Study: Tabled

B. Alon Fain asked about the Township's herbicide policy for Township property, specifically in regards to Japanese knotweed, because it is very prevalent. Ms. Elliott is not aware of an official policy, but stated that the Township is thankful for a number of volunteer groups that have been working to address issues in some Township parks. She said there is some targeted herbicide use, but it is not widespread. Mr. Fain is dealing with this on his property and plans to inject the weeds, but noted this is a labor intensive process, suitable for his smaller patch but not the Township's acres.

4. COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

A. Communications and Engagement

1) Sustainable Spaces Showcase and Signage

Ms. Bunin said they extended the deadline to September 15. Ms. Schultz said they had a meeting with some past entrants and discussed outreach. She started putting links to resources in the Linktree on the Sustainable Cheltenham Instagram account.

The past entrants had enthusiasm for yard signs, and Ms. Schultz got a quote for \$300 for 25 signs. She plans to design them, and the intent is to increase visibility in the community. Ms. Bunin asked if there is money in the Township's budget for the signs. Ms. Elliott stated there is some money in the budget. Ms. Walter will get some additional quotes to get cost down.

2) Sustainability Awards

Deadline for this was also extended to September 15. Ms. Bunin said there are plenty of kinds of people and organizations to nominate.

B. Water and Ecology – None.

C. Energy and Emissions – None.

D. Mobility and Healthy Living – None.

E. Sustainable Development and Local Economy – None.

F. General Updates

1) Brookwood Run / Cheltenham Elementary – Tabled.

2) Ms. Bunin said the Cheltenham Township Library System is looking to host teams of two people from partner organizations for a CTLS Spelling Bee to be held at the Ways Brewery in Glenside in October.

3) Ms. Bunin said she plans to visit several Township parks that she has never been to. She extended the invitation to others to join.

4) Ms. Bunin said there will be a La Mott Community Day event August 27 outside at the La Mott Community Center. Ms. Schultz has reached out to the organizers to offer an art activity and will share contact information.

G. Staff Report: None.

5. **NEXT MEETING** – The next meeting of the EAC is scheduled for *Monday, September 19, 2022* on Zoom.

6. **ADJOURNMENT** – There being no further business, Ms. Bunin adjourned the meeting at 9:16 p.m.



Robert A. Zienkowski, Township Manager

Submitted by: Lauren Walter, Special Projects Coordinator