

The regular meeting of the **ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL** (EAC) for January 2022 was held tonight via Zoom Web-Conference. Members in attendance were: Greta Bunin, Wendy Ankrom, Kurt Ahrens, Michael Freeman, John Raisch, and Sidney Kahn. Staff present: Alyson Elliott, Assistant Township Manager. Guests present: Susan Dannenberg, Friends of Cresheim Trail; Mindy Lemoine, Cheltenham STAC; Julie Slavet, TTF Watershed Partnership; Ann Rappoport, Leigh Altadonna, Jeffrey Plaut

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Bunin called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m.

1. REORGANIZATION

Chair – In capacity of chair pro tempore, Ms. Elliott took nominations for Chair of the EAC. Ms. Ankrom, seconded by Mr. Freeman, made a motion to nominate Ms. Bunin as Chair of the EAC. Ms. Bunin accepted the nomination, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Vice Chair – Ms. Bunin, seconded by Mr. Raisch, made a motion to nominate Ms. Ankrom as Vice Chair. Ms. Ankrom accepted the nomination, and the motion was unanimously approved.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Upon motion of Ms. Bunin, seconded by Mr. Kahn, the meeting minutes for December 20, 2021 were unanimously approved by the EAC.

3. OLD BUSINESS – None.

4. PRESENTATION

- A. Sue Dannenberg, Executive Director of Friends of Cresheim Trail, gave background on the history and updates on the progress of the expanding Cresheim Trail.

The nine mile trail, started in 2005, crosses three municipalities (Philadelphia, Springfield, and Cheltenham), mostly following along Germantown Avenue. The feasibility study is available at cresheimtrail.org.

Ms. Dannenberg said that as you connect to existing trails, it allows people more trail on which to bike, and connects more communities. She said trails tend to benefit near neighbors most.

Friends of Cresheim Trail Board includes people from all three communities and would be happy to help apply for funding if Cheltenham can build public momentum to continue trail connections. Ms. Dannenberg said constituents need to bring their interest to the Commissioners. In Cheltenham, Arcadia and Westminster both built trails to connect into the Cresheim Trail. Ms. Dannenberg asked about the status of the Laverock Hill Trail from Willow Grove Avenue into Falcon Hill Estates, but progress is unknown at this point. Ms. Elliott mentioned PECO is not entering into new leases on their right-of-way at the moment, which impacts part of the proposed trail.

5. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Collaboration with Shade Tree Advisory Commission (STAC)

Mindy Lemoine of the Cheltenham STAC gave an introduction to the history of STAC, which started in 1998 to advise the Public Works Committee with regard to planting, removal, maintenance, and protection of shade trees in the Township. A majority of the STAC's works involves review and advice on subdivision and land development plans.

Ms. Lemoine stated many municipalities have STACs, and goals may vary slightly. In Abington, one of the roles of the STAC is to encourage planting and maintenance of shade trees on private property, and they created a Master Tree Action Plan in 2020.

Moving forward, Cheltenham STAC is ready for additional initiatives and looking toward increasing tree cover in the Township, where many trees have been removed because they are nearing the end of their lifetimes. Ms. Lemoine is a Tree Tender through the Pennsylvania

Horticultural Society (PHS) and has been organizing plantings for three years. Bare root trees can be purchased for \$55 each. Bare root trees need to be watered weekly for the initial two years. Ms. Lemoine will share bare root tree order forms with EAC for residents to order trees for their home properties.

Ms. Slavet stated that TTF will sponsor people to take the Tree Tender course and would love to see more Tree Tenders in Cheltenham, to not only plant but continue to care for trees.

EAC continued discussion on how to advocate for trees and create buy-in from residents. EAC and STAC will collaborate to identify neighborhoods that most need trees, look into ways to subsidize trees, and see how they can work with schools and other partners such as TTF and Wyncote Audubon Society. Ms. Slavet said TTF gets many trees through TreeVitalize grants.

The Township has been planting trees in parks through grants and the new tree donation program. The Public Works Parks Department waters and takes good care of these trees.

Ms. Rappoport suggested weighing in with feedback and advocating for trees for a proposed development during the zoning process rather than waiting for the SALDO review process.

6. COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

A. Communications and Engagement – None

B. Water and Ecology – None.

C. Energy and Emissions – None.

D. Mobility and Healthy Living

- 1) Mr. Raisch discussed plans for Tookany Creek Trailfest, planned for Saturday, April 23, which is the weekend of Earth Day, also tying to Rails to Trails Conservancy event formerly titled Opening Day for Trails, but renamed Celebrate Trails Day.

The goal is to get people out enjoying the park, and reinvigorate momentum to support the feasibility study for the expansion of the trail. The event will include trail and park cleanup as well as organized bike rides for kids. Partners invited include TTF, Collins Nursery, Independence Youth Cycling, and Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC). They have engaged artist Rebecca Schultz to do some environmental art, and are trying to get funding through PEC for safety equipment for biking.

E. Sustainable Development and Local Economy – None.

F. General Updates

- 1) Ms. Bunin asked members to think about what aims they would like to work on (from 2022 goals as stated in the last meeting's minutes).

G. Staff Report

- 1) Ms. Elliott said articles are due at the end of February for the Township spring newsletter, for early April in-home date, if the EAC would like to add a list of Earth Day activities.

7. **NEXT MEETING** – The next meeting of the EAC is scheduled for *Monday, February 14, 2022* on Zoom.

8. **ADJOURNMENT** – There being no further business, Ms. Bunin adjourned the meeting at 9:12 p.m.



Robert A. Zienkowski, Township Manager

Submitted by: Lauren Walter, Special Projects Coordinator