

The regular meeting of the **ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL** (EAC) for May 2022 was held tonight via Zoom Web-Conference. Members in attendance were: Chair Greta Bunin, Vice Chair Wendy Ankrom, Kurt Ahrens, Michael Freeman, Sidney Kahn, and Boris Kerzner. Staff present: Alyson Elliott, Assistant Township Manager; Lauren Walter, Special Projects Coordinator. Guests present: Jeffrey Plaut, Karen Shaffran, Marylou Castaldi, Andrew Gale, Allison Kerzner, Alon Fain.

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Bunin called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

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

2. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Discussion on Plastic Bag Legislation:

Ms. Bunin, Mr. Plaut, and Mr. Kahn have been working on researching this topic for the Township. This item came up at the Township Public Works Committee meeting when the Committee reviewed April EAC minutes. Ms. Bunin said they still need to drill down to specifics, but the EAC would like to present to the Public Affairs Committee. Mr. Plaut said they would like to meet with the Township Manager and Assistant Township Manager first to discuss enforcement and to make sure whatever is proposed is feasible for Township to implement.

Mr. Ahrens said the Board would most likely like to see and amend existing legislation and asked about the process by which they might do so. Ms. Elliott said she looked at Penn Environment's draft legislation, and said it is a good start, but does not address enforcement issues and how the Township would management. She wants to make sure whatever legislation gets put in place is able to be enforced in order to have its intended impact.

Features of Penn Environment model:

- Ban single use plastic bags by retailers, including restaurants, used to carry out purchases
- Bags are defined by the process by which they are made, not by thickness.
- Paper with 40% post-consumer recycled content is an allowed alternative. A fee of not less than \$.15 per paper or reusable bag, to be kept by retailer, must be noted on receipt.
- Delivery is not exempt. Exceptions: dry cleaners, bags for bulk items, bakery goods, live animals, meat, and bags sold in packages

Mr. Kahn stated this has been done in other municipalities, so they don't have to reinvent any wheels. The EAC can take a leading role by identifying key points from other ordinances and working with Township staff to adjust appropriately so as to not overburden Township administration.

Ms. Elliott suggested the importance of working to educate the community and local businesses on the benefits of single-use plastic bag bans and get their buy-in before moving toward implementation.

Ms. Shaffran stated her students are putting a week-long exhibition in High School Park on June 1 encouraging people to take responsibility for stewarding the earth. She would like for them to include this topic. Students would like a "So What?" component to challenge people to do better. Ms. Shaffran offered collaboration on promotional efforts in the future as well.

Ms. Elliott noted that Abington Township has been testing the water with a survey of residents, and asked if the exhibition would be a good place to start distributing a survey. Ms. Shaffran liked this idea and stated it could be spread beyond the exhibition through social media groups.

Ms. Elliott noted that while many communities in Montgomery County are considering a ban, only six communities in Pennsylvania have enacted a ban, with two of the six communities' bans going into effect in 2023.

- Narberth Borough, Montgomery County implemented a 10 cent tax on plastic bags October 18, 2018
- West Chester Borough, Chester County January 1, 2020
- Philadelphia, enacted December 2019, rollout July 2021 and went into full effect April 1, 2022
- West Goshen Township, Chester County, went into effect April 22, 2022
- Haverford Township, Delaware County, goes into effect January 1, 2023
- Pittsburgh, enacted April 2022, goes into effect April 13, 2023

B. Environmentally Friendly Park Maintenance Suggestions – This item was tabled, but Mr. Kerzner volunteered to be part of this committee. Ms. Elliott stated that Parks Superintendent Bob Dominick also works with local Parks Friends groups.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. Reusable To-Go Containers Webinar – Ms. Walter made the EAC aware of this webinar taking place May 10, which was brought to her attention by Tiffin Indian Cuisine, who implemented reusable containers a year ago.

Mr. Ahrens said in the past, the EAC's Sustainability Awards recognized businesses and entities for practices like this, to highlight and commend sustainable practices, and this would be the appropriate initiative to showcase Tiffin. The webpage previously dedicated to this was deactivated when the EAC revised their site map in recent years, but Ms. Walter can restore it for the EAC to review. Domus and Wawa were also mentioned for their sustainable practices.

In early 2020, the EAC discussed a way for businesses to self-certify as sustainable by following a list of criteria, and earn a window decal or something similar indicating they are a sustainable business.

The EAC will reach out to the Economic Development Task Force (EDTF) to see if they will partner on this initiative and get in touch with local businesses. Mr. Plaut stated Pinto in Glenside has an environmentally friendly business model as well.

4. COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

A. Communications and Engagement

1) Tookany Creek Trail Fest Recap

Ms. Ankrom stated there was a good turnout at Trail Fest. Many community partners tabled and spread information on trails. Sustainable Yards gardening plans and native seeds were given out at the EAC table. The Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) had a trail map, and postcards that Cheltenham residents could send to Commissioners stating their support for trails. Ms. Schultz's table featured an art project.

Ms. Ankrom stated there are blank postcards still available if any attendees would like to share them with neighbors or friends who are also Cheltenham residents.

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 – None.
- G. Staff Report

- 1) Ms. Elliott stated that she spoke with the Township’s Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) representative about Electric Vehicle legislation. She said there are not yet a lot of other MontCo countries working on this, likely because Cheltenham is one of the few municipalities challenged by a lack of off-street parking situations for EV infrastructure. MCPC will research this topic for the Township to recommend best management practices.
- 2) The Tree City USA Growth Award was applied for and received for the first time in several years, granted for growth through implementing a Tree Donation Program and contracting with John Hosbach of Rockwell Associates as a consulting arborist to the Township.
- 3) Township Facilities – Ms. Elliott discussed conditions of Township facilities and the need to build or substantially renovate all of its facilities for health and safety reasons in addition to the facilities not being able to meet the modern needs of Township staff and residents. She said this will be an opportunity for the EAC to contribute to implementing sustainable practices into the new facilities. The Township will not be able to meet its sustainability goals with its current facilities.

Ms. Ankrom raised the issue of transportation to Township facilities, particularly if they are consolidated. Ms. Elliott said transportation options will be part of the conversation after a location or locations for Township services are identified.

Mr. Fain asked if there were recent energy audits done for the existing buildings. Ms. Ankrom stated Steven Clark did a pro bono Township-wide assessment of energy usage in recent years. Ms. Ankrom said the reality is the Township is unable to maintain all these buildings, much less make energy upgrades. Mr. Freeman has been putting the Township’s recent energy bills into Energy Star Portfolio Manager to find energy usage benchmarks, which could be helpful to the Township for future planning. Ms. Ankrom and Ms. Elliott also noted that the Township switched to LED lights in its buildings in 2016 during the streetlight conversion project.

Ms. Elliott stated the Township is in the very early stages of the discussions, and there are many variables for what will be the best outcome for the community.

5. **NEXT MEETING** – The next meeting of the EAC is scheduled for *Monday, June 13, 2022* on Zoom.
6. **ADJOURNMENT** – There being no further business, Ms. Bunin adjourned the meeting at 9:28 p.m.



Robert A. Zienkowski, Township Manager

Submitted by: Lauren Walter, Special Projects Coordinator