

The regular meeting of the **ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL** (EAC) for June 2022 was held tonight via Zoom Web-Conference. Members in attendance were: Chair Greta Bunin, Kurt Ahrens, Michael Freeman, Boris Kerzner, and Sidney Kahn. Staff present: Alyson Elliott, Assistant Township Manager; Lauren Walter, Special Projects Coordinator. Guests present: Rebecca Schultz, Sam Thacker, Risa Robinson

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Bunin called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Upon motion of Mr. Kahn, seconded by Mr. Ahrens, the minutes of the May 9, 2022 meeting were unanimously approved.

2. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Plastic Bag Legislation Update:

Ms. Bunin, Mr. Plaut, and Mr. Kahn met with staff to discuss, and then presented to the Public Affairs Committee on June 8. She, Mr. Kahn, and Mr. Plaut addressed questions and concerns that arose, and none of the Commissioners expressed opposition. They discussed the potential impact of implementing a fee versus a ban with paper bags available for a fee, and whether delivery services would be impacted, as they don't have the option to bring their own bag(s).

There was a motion from the Committee for staff to work with the EAC to draft a plastic bag ban ordinance for consideration at an upcoming meeting.

Mr. Kahn asked to note for the minutes that there was great encouragement from the Township Board and Administration for this initiative.

B. Ms. Bunin and Ms. Ankrom visited the Cheltenham Elementary School class that wrote to them, walked with them to the creek they mentioned, and spoke to them about what was going on with the invasive plants. Ms. Ankrom demonstrated ways to combat them, such as cutting a foot out of the middle of the ivy vine. Ms. Ankrom and Ms. Bunin spoke to Ryan Neumann from Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership (TTF), who said there is a five year plan for the area and the invasive plant problem is not something that could be fixed by parents and kids in a weekend. Ms. Bunin will invite Ryan and Julie Slavet of TTF to a meeting soon to talk about what the kids could do to be involved.

3. NEW BUSINESS

4. COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

A. Communications and Engagement

1) Sustainable Yard Signs

Ms. Schultz and Ms. Bunin have been communicating with prior participants in the Sustainable Yards Contests to develop the Sustainable Yards/Spaces Showcase. They came up with proposed signage to designate a space as sustainable if it meets certain criteria. Ms. Schultz volunteered to design the signs, and is looking into pricing for sustainable (non-plastic) sign printing. Additional certifications such as Audubon Bird Town could be added as stickers. They would like to present the concept and signs at the Sustainable Yards Showcase at Arts in the Park in October.

Sample text for the signs could be "Sustainable Yard in Progress" or "My Yard Supports People, Pollinators, and the Planet". Ms. Schultz suggested both standard lawn signs and mini signs for smaller spaces such as window boxes or driveway strips, designating, "Sustainable Space Here!"

They are working to come up with criteria for the checklist and how people should enter / prove their implementation of sustainable practices or native plants.

- 2) Sustainable Businesses and Sustainability Awards – The Friends of High School Park has asked if the EAC would like to announce sustainability awards at Arts in the Park in October. Because the contest is now a showcase, the EAC will need to nominate people or businesses for Sustainability Awards. Ms. Bunin reiterated that they could highlight Tiffin for their use of reusable containers.

Mr. Thacker suggested Karen Shaffran at the high school for the environmental efforts she's taken on with her students, including their recent installation at High School Park.

Ms. Bunin attended the May EDTF meeting and told the task force about sustainable businesses in the Township that the EAC was discussing before the pandemic, including Domus, Ways Restaurant & Brewery, and Arcadia. Ms. Bunin will share contacts for these businesses with the EDTF to potentially be featured in their Business Spotlight videos.

- 3) Mr. Ahrens has looked at the Sustainability Awards page of the website after Ms. Walter brought it back from archive. He feels it's already mainly a list of winners, and perhaps the Township can just drill down to the winners and remove unnecessary text. Ms. Walter said that at one time, she edited it at much as possible for succinctness, and asked that Mr. Ahrens look at particularly year 2017, to note what categories those awards fit in, so that the award list format remains consistent year to year. Mr. Ahrens stated that the award categories are the Township's 10 sustainability categories. Mr. Ahrens said in prior years, a press release would go out with the criteria and asking for submission.
- 4) Mr. Thacker asked how to encourage solar in the Township. He asked if they could partner with a solar provider to get cheaper rates, or if anyone has other ideas. Mr. Kahn mentioned the Solarize Montco program and Ready for 100 teams who were actively pushing this prior to COVID. Mr. Kahn will connect with Mr. Thacker to share some organizations that are doing what they can to promote solar energy across the region. Ms. Bunin said Solarize Southeast PA has partnered with an installer and homeowners who install solar may get a discount.

Mr. Kahn said what will be more important to the transformation of the energy grid in our area will be community solar; however, the fracking lobby in Harrisburg continues to oppose community solar at the legislative level. Mr. Kahn also stated that the local grid operator recently announced a promising multibillion dollar investment in the local grid to accommodate renewable energy practices over the next 10-15 years.

- 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 said the bid for Phase III of the Tookany Creek Trail, through Transportation Alternatives Program Grant, was due June 9. This is a federal program, and bids had to go through PennDOT, so Township received the bids today. This item is on the Board of Commissioners agenda for June 15. The bid was for the section from New Second Street to Gimbel Field. In 2023, the second phase of the project would complete the path and put pavement markings out to Harrison Avenue through grants from the Delaware Valley

Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) and the Department of Conservation of Natural Resources (DCNR).

Mr. Kahn asked if this stretch of the trail would be impacted by the 222 Church Road development. Ms. Elliott she said it does run along the property and the Township had acquired land from the previous property owner for the trail.

The biggest cost driver was that the flood analysis necessitated that the bridge section be bigger than originally planned, adding cost and time to the project.

- 2) There was a water main break on Church Road at Curtis Arboretum, and as a result, a lot of the fish in two ponds at Curtis died. The Friends of Curtis Arboretum (FOCA) was planning to do a pond study to understand the ecosystem of the ponds, which could potentially lead to a mitigation and improvement project. Due to the water main break, this project may be moved up. The pond study would be a collaborative effort of some FOCA members and a scientist from a professional firm analyzing the data.
 - 3) Ms. Elliott stated that Comprehensive Plan is back on track and there will be a Public Workshop on Thursday, June 23 on Zoom. Participants are asked to register ahead of time. The workshop will be interactive and include use of breakout rooms. Ms. Elliott will share the flyer so the EAC can help spread word.
5. **NEXT MEETING** – The next meeting of the EAC is scheduled for *Monday, July 18, 2022* on Zoom.
 6. **ADJOURNMENT** – There being no further business, Ms. Bunin adjourned the meeting at 8:31 p.m.



Robert A. Zienkowski, Township Manager

Submitted by: Lauren Walter, Special Projects Coordinator