

The regular meeting of the **ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL** (EAC) for February 2022 was held tonight via Zoom Web-Conference. Members in attendance were: Chair Greta Bunin, Vice Chair Wendy Ankrom, Kurt Ahrens, John Raisch, Michael Freeman, and Sidney Kahn. Staff present: Alyson Elliott, Assistant Township Manager; Lauren Walter, Special Projects Coordinator. Guests present: Julie Slavet, Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership (TTF), Zhenya Nalywayko, Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC), and several residents.

CALL TO ORDER

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

1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Upon motion of Mr. Raisch, seconded by Mr. Freeman, the meeting minutes for January 10, 2021 were unanimously approved by the EAC.

2. OLD BUSINESS: None.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion on Proposed Development at 222 Church Rd

Mr. Freeman gave a summary of prior discussion on this development at the Planning Commission and Shade Tree Advisory Commission (STAC) public meetings that already took place. The applicant, 222 Church Rd. LLC, Zvi Bloom, is proposing to subdivide the six (6) acre lot into 10 lots, with eight (8) lots to have single family residential dwellings; one lot with an existing dwelling to remain; and the final lot to be dedicated to the Township for open space.

Concerns raised by the public included: tree replacement and landscape improvements; traffic; quality of life; management of the proposed detention basin, downstream impact of construction on wetland area, and other stormwater management concerns; and endangered native plant life. Residents participating in the meeting said that not enough information was provided by the developer to be comfortable with approval of the project, and asked that the EAC, in its advisory capacity, try to slow the process enough for due diligence to happen.

This item will be up for discussion at the March 2, 2022 Public Works Committee (PWC) meeting. Ms. Elliott said the Township generally has 90 days to review a plan and render a decision. It was also noted that if a proposal meets the regulations of the Township's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) and Zoning requirements, the Township cannot deny the development. The PWC would recommend it to the Board of Commissioners for conditional approval if they feel the proposal is in a place that the engineer and staff can work through final items.

TTF, in partnership with Natural Lands Trust, sent a letter to the developer regarding specific issues within their purview, i.e. replacement trees, landscape details, paving, stormwater management, and basin maintenance.

Upon motion of Ms. Bunin, the EAC unanimously moved to draft a letter to the Public Works Committee by February 25 raising specific environmental concerns.

In summary, Mr. Ahrens said that the EAC endorses and reiterates the points stated in the TTF letter, and asks that in addition, the PWC look at the legal obligation to protect the downslope wetland from potential damage due to the removal of trees and construction.

4. 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) Tookany Creek Trail Update – Mr. Nalywayko spoke about the feasibility study for the stretch of the Tookany Creek Trail from Cheltenham Avenue to Ogontz Park, which was conducted in 2020 and received by the Board of Commissioners in April 2021.

Ms. Slavet said there was a lot of public participation in the feasibility study process, which was conducted by TTF and PEC, and funded through a grant from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC). She encouraged people to read the Executive Summary on the project; information is available on both the Cheltenham Township and TTF websites.

In the study, the trail was broken into eight segments, with comprehensive cost estimates for completing each. The third segment of the trail is the stretch between Harrison Ave and New Second St., which is fully funded. Mr. Nalywayko stated PEC is willing to write grants to help fund any of the remaining segments at no cost to the Township, and to manage those grants in a way that would require a small amount of Township staff time for minor oversight, signing off on items, and status updates by PEC.

Regarding Phase 3, Ms. Elliott said the Township is working on wrapping up design on the Transportation Alternatives Program grant portion of the project, which is the bridge over Tookany Creek. She is hopeful the Township will be able to go out to bid this spring, and the final part of the trail construction will be funded through DVRPC and the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), and the Township hopes to complete the project next year.

Discussion also addressed resident-expressed safety, flood, and maintenance concerns.

- 2) Trailfest – Mr. Raisch said the EAC is planning this event for Sunday, April 24, and is working with the Township to close Tookany Creek Parkway to traffic for the event. The goal is to get the community out enjoying the trail. The event will include trail cleanup, bike rides for children, and other activities. The EAC is also planning to partner with the Cheltenham Township Police Department to coincide with its Bike Rodeo event. PEC, TTF, and Wyncote Audubon Society have also agreed to partner for the event.

E. Sustainable Development and Local Economy – None.

F. General Updates – None.

G. Staff Report – None.

5. **NEXT MEETING** – The next meeting of the EAC is scheduled for *Monday, March 21, 2022* on Zoom.
6. **ADJOURNMENT** – There being no further business, Ms. Bunin adjourned the meeting at 9:59 p.m.



Robert A. Zienkowski, Township Manager

Submitted by: Lauren Walter, Special Projects Coordinator