

Environmental Advisory Council

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

Zoom

Noon

EAC members present –W. Vitale, A. Meas, S. Thompson, C. Curran-Myers, D. Beane, N. Addeo, A. Sellers

Others present – S. Smith, B. Ayers-Fisher, D. Edwards, C. Miller, S. Bachman

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Thompson called the meeting to order at 12:01 pm. He stated that a quorum was present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Ms. Curran-Myers, seconded by Mr. Beane, to approve the March 24, 2026 meeting summary as written. Motion carried unanimously.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND STAFF UPDATES

- Pollinator Garden Maintenance – May 2 at 10 am Baer Park
- Pollinator Garden Maintenance – May 7 at 4 pm Baer Park
- Movie Knights with Centro Hispano – tabling inside IMAX at 4:30 pm; movie begins at 5:30 pm; free parking in garage and movie attendance
 - May 14 – movie TBD
- Pollinator Garden Maintenance – May 16 at 9 am City Park
- Solar Canopy Groundbreaking – May 18 at 10 am Public Works
- Sunflower Fence Installation – May 21 at 4 pm Heritage Park
- Urban Ag Tour – May 23 9 am – 1 pm meet at Berks Nature
- Pollinator Garden Maintenance – May 28 at 4 pm Baer Park
- Camel Project Chalkapalooza- June 6 10am-2pm
- Good Medicine- June 13 11am-3pm Riverfront Park
- Wacky Water Wednesday – 1-4 pm at 3rd & Spruce
- EJ Dives Family Fun Day- July 18 1pm-4pm
- Riverzilla- August 8 Riverfront Park

- 2026 Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Conference – October 14 & 15
DoubleTree

Mr. Thompson stated that it will be a busy May with many events.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that she is creating Keep Reading Beautiful and Public Works events on Facebook.

Mr. Thompson requested reflections on Earth Day.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher thanked Mr. Miller for representing the City. Mr. Miller noted his hope that his comments were appropriate since they were drafted very last minute.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that there was great weather and the event was well attended. She stated that attendance was very diverse and she had a sense that people were more willing to engage. She stated that she answered many questions. She requested a separate table for the EAC with separate identifying signage. She expressed the belief that multiple organizations at one table gets confusing. She also noted the need for an interactive activity. She suggested keeping the white board.

Mr. Thompson stated that an activity was discussed at the last Communications Committee meeting.

Mr. Vitale stated that the boards on easels work well and they are more visible. He stated that this gets people thinking and engaging. He stated that Ms. Melendez had a planting activity with a consistent crowd. He noted the need for the EAC to have an activity that draws people in.

Ms. Curran-Myers suggested asking people to choose the climate change issues that they are most concerned about. She stated that this will also provide good feedback.

Mr. Vitale stated that he will provide additional information about the activity discussion in his report. He stated that the Committee discussed an activity before a person is given a tote bag.

Mr. Thompson expressed the belief that the event was well done. He stated that there was good food and many people began arriving before the event opened.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Signage / Mapping**

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that the art files are complete and the City has received the printer. She stated that the vinyl is on order and noted her hope that the signs would be installed late spring or early summer this year.

Ms. Sellers questioned if she should contact Mimmo's about their tree trench. Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that she should. She stated that Public Works will install the sign with no fee. Ms. Curran-Myers stated that the owner must sign an agreement allowing public access to the area.

Mr. Thompson stated that this is good news on this long-term project.

Ms. Sellers expressed the belief that once the templates are complete, future installations will be much quicker.

- **Single Use Plastics**

Mr. Beane stated that a joint meeting with the Communications and Policy Committees is scheduled for May 6 at 9 am via Zoom. He stated that the Policy Committee has heard comments from the Administration. He stated that most of the comments related to education and enforcement. He noted that the Communications Committee's input will be important for roll out. He noted the need to determine next steps.

Mr. Beane stated that based on the Administration's comments, he will revise the draft ordinance.

- **2026 EAC Conference**

Ms. Ayers-Fisher requested that this item be removed from the agenda. She stated that she had no communication from them.

Ms. Curran-Myers noted the need for Ms. Ayers-Fisher to contact them so that this project is not dropped on the EAC at the last minute. Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that she would contact them.

Mr. Thompson stated that when he and Ms. Ayers-Fisher attended the 2025 conference, it seemed that Reading would be the location for the 2026 conference.

- **2026 Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Conference**

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that there has been progress. She stated that she is walking the downtown with Ms. Smith this Friday to compile an art tour.

Mr. Vitale stated that there should be a brochure about this already. Ms. Smith agreed but stated that she cannot locate any information online.

Mr. Miller suggested contacting the PHMC or Ms. Lynch. He stated that there was a “Save Outdoor Sculptures” movement in the 1990’s.

Mr. Vitale stated that he may have some information from when he served on Reading’s Fine Arts Board.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that she would also attend the downtown art walk on Friday.

- **Road Salt BMP**

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that she will follow up on any possible legislation moving forward.

- **Schuylkill River Trail Gateway Bridge**

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that the project is in the design competition phase and that there are very good ideas. She stated that the Planning Commission heard an update on the project and that the Redevelopment Authority will hear an update in May.

Mr. Edwards stated that he met with the group this morning about funding for the project. He stated that the City will assist with facilitating the project.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that working with an architect will be part of the next phase.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that the group is also considering the landings on both sides of the bridge. She stated that she visited the area recently and the West Reading side is very eroded and the area is scary. She noted the need for work at that location.

Mr. Edwards stated that this condition was acknowledged at today’s meeting. He stated that the concepts will also address aesthetics. He stated that Schuylkill

River Greenway (SRG) has an ambitious plan and stated that phase 1 is improving the trail along the river on the Reading side.

Mr. Thompson questioned West Reading's involvement. Mr. Edwards stated that he is unsure.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that the conditions in West Reading could make or break the project.

Mr. Vitale stated that there is another smaller bridge that crosses the Wyomissing Creek. He stated that Russell Plywood and the West Reading fire house are on either side of this bridge. He questioned if this was located in Reading, West Reading, or Cumru. Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that she is familiar with this triangular area.

Mr. Edwards stated that SRG is addressing the entire trail. He stated that work will occur regardless of ownership.

Ms. Curran-Myers agreed and stated that the missing portions of the trail are being built and that the Gateway Bridge is a priority project. She stated that in less than three years a person will be able to bike from Philadelphia to Reading. She stated that work is occurring to make Reading a destination location for the trail and stated that a brochure of nearby businesses is being compiled to increase tourism.

Ms. Meas disconnected from the meeting at this time.

Ms. Sellers questioned if these businesses would have biking access. Ms. Curran-Myers expressed the belief that if Reading supports the project it will assist with biking access. She expressed the belief that this would be part of the planning process.

Mr. Edwards stated that renderings have been submitted but the design is not complete. He stated that an engineering firm has been retained and stated that he will continue to provide updates.

Ms. Sellers questioned if there was also a landscape architect. Mr. Edwards expressed the belief that there will be one. He suggested that there may also be one on the engineering firm staff. He stated that he expects a good design and that SRG would like him to manage the project.

Ms. Sellers stated that there was a landscape design done for the Penn Street Bridge to tie that project together.

Mr. Vitale stated that this is a grass roots, artist driven process.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that those who live near the bridge and those who use it have also provided input. She stated that she attended one meeting and stated that plantings were discussed. She stated that there is the opportunity to plant one entire side of the bridge.

Ms. Sellers noted the importance of connectivity.

Mr. Thompson stated that he recently spent time in Philadelphia and there were many people using the trails. He noted the need for Reading to take better advantage of bringing people in.

Ms. Sellers noted the economic development that occurred near the Conshohocken Brewery when it encouraged people on the trail to visit this area.

Mr. Edwards expressed the belief that the trail and bridge will help to revitalize Reading. He stated that it all works together. He expressed the belief that it will increase development and that this is an opportunity to turn into a destination.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that she is excited to hear that Mr. Edwards is centrally involved in the project. She stated that there are many inter-related parts and that the addition of bike lanes would be advantageous.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that the Vision Zero Plan expands connections. She noted the need for funding and the will to install projects in this Plan.

- **Act 2 – Former Glidden Site**

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that she has no update.

Mr. Edwards stated that he has met with the developer. He stated that DEP has approved the shopping center use at this site.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that this means that the design meets the brownfield site specifications. She stated that many of the concerning areas will be paved over.

Mr. Thompson stated that this is good news. He expressed the belief that the shopping center is needed in this neighborhood and that it is near First Energy Stadium and George Field.

NEW BUSINESS

- **TOD Zoning Overlay**

Ms. Sellers questioned if the overlay includes trails. Mr. Edwards stated that he is unsure.

Ms. Sellers noted the need to determine this. Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that the TOD overlay and the Vision Zero corridors are similar. She stated that the overlay will encourage alternative modes of transportation.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Communications Committee**

Mr. Vitale stated that the Committee has begun discussions about single use plastics education. He noted the need for information to be non-confrontational and to address both the businesses and the consumers. He noted the need to describe the win-win situation and the need to identify funding for a bilingual communications professional to oversee the project. He expressed the belief that Ms. Ayers-Fisher cannot take on this project. He stated that many ideas were discussed including helping business owners find plastic item replacements.

Mr. Vitale stated that the tote bags have been received and the Committee discussed the need to engage in an activity before a bag is given away. He stated that 1,000 bags were ordered and a one page description of the PA Constitution Article I and the Sustainable Six will be included. He stated that these will be used as tools to engage people. He noted the need for a fun activity that is not difficult to complete.

Mr. Thompson questioned whether it would be possible to have ipads for people to complete a survey. Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that she has also been thinking about this. She stated that it could also collect contact information.

Mr. Thompson stated that this could replace the sticky notes and stated that it would increase engagement.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that she will speak with IT about this.

Mr. Vitale stated that this Committee has become support staff at events. He stated that Ms. Lara and Ms. Addeo have been very helpful. He noted the large turnouts at the movie night events and stated that information is distributed at a variety of places.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that there were approximately 250 people at the movie night that she attended. She stated that this is a family event and people are very engaged.

Mr. Thompson stated that many people still don't know about the availability of the 311 app. He suggested that the EAC share information about that as well.

Mr. Vitale stated that Ms. Lara has indicated that people are hungry for information. He stated that she has completed a video and article about how people can host and participate in cleanups. He stated that the Sustainable Six brochures are almost completed and expressed the belief that these will be very helpful. He stated that there is a series of Spanish language podcasts in process and Ms. Lara continues her social media work. He stated that the focus will shift to single use plastics to kick off that transition.

Mr. Thompson requested that if anyone has ideas who is not on the Communications Committee to please share them. He also requested everyone attend events as they are able.

- **Policy Committee**

Mr. Beane stated that he has nothing further to report on the Committee's work.

- **Green Infrastructure Committee**

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that she has contacted Penn State several times to assist with an ordinance audit but has been unsuccessful.

Mr. Miller disconnected from the meeting at this time.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that the City would need to audit the ordinances themselves and stated that Mr. Edwards will assist. She stated that this review would also tie to the City's next MS4 permit as it is likely that DEP would like to see more green infrastructure installations.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that the Committee discussed Earth Day and noted the need to make posters of the signage so people can see and recognize the types of

green infrastructure in their neighborhoods. She stated that work on yard waste is renewed and stated that the Conservation Corps is removing invasive species. She stated that yard waste signage will be installed after the other signage is completed.

Mr. Thompson requested a separate table and tent for the EAC at events. Ms. Curran-Myers stated that the EAC has a banner. Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that she can also provide a table cover. She stated that there is an overlap of volunteers with the EAC, Shade Tree Commission, and Keep Reading Beautiful.

Ms. Curran-Myers noted the need for people to understand who they are talking to and that not all three groups are the same.

Mr. Vitale noted the need for people to also understand that all of these groups work together.

Mr. Thompson stated that EAC members wear their green shirts. Ms. Curran-Myers noted the need to order shirts for the new members.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that Bill McMahon has joined the Committee.

PROJECT UPDATES

- **MS4**

Mr. Bachman stated that he had walked the storm water line from the river along Lancaster Ave. He stated that several issues were discovered and he has some future project ideas for that area. He stated that his main focus has been on the sanitary lines.

- **City-owned Dams**

Ms. Curran-Myers questioned what is happening at Egelman's Dam.

Mr. Bachman stated that the project is beginning and there is equipment onsite.

Ms. Smith explained that the bed of the lower pond will be raised in order to keep the historic spillway. She stated that an additional spillway will also be added on the other side of the pond and will drain into the Rose Valley Creek. She stated that she will get a progress report from Mr. Anspach.

- **Beekeeping Zoning Amendment**

Ms. Smith stated that she has been told that this amendment will be packaged with another zoning amendments so that it does not have to have its own public hearing. She stated that she has no further update and no timeline.

- **Green Business Alliance (GBA)**

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that a workshop will be held for businesses within the CRIZ so that they can access funding for energy efficiency projects. She stated that there are 15 active projects, not including City projects. She noted her hope that the First Energy Fund would fund the GBA for another three years.

- **GESA Project**

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that the project is in the home stretch. She stated that the field lights had been installed. The solar canopy groundbreaking will be on May 18 at 10 at Public Works and will be under construction in early June. She noted the need to relocate the flag poles at the Public Works building and the addition of native landscaping once construction is complete.

Mr. Vitale stated that the City Park lighting upgrade is noticeable in a good way.

Ms. Sellers expressed the belief that these lights are not Dark Sky compliant and noted the very bright glow.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that these lights are Dark Sky compliant.

Ms. Sellers stated that it is the color of the light. Mr. Vitale stated that it is a very cool light.

Ms. Sellers noted the issues caused by blue light on the circadian rhythm and noted her concerns about the type of light and their brightness.

There was a discussion about the brightness and coolness of the lighting and the illusion of safety.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that these lights turn off daily at 10 pm and they all focus the lighting downward.

- **BCTV program**

Mr. Beane stated that he is working through a backlog and has no update.

- **EPA Exide Cleanup Update**

Mr. Beane stated that he attended the most recent meeting with EPA. He stated that the sampling will expand west beyond the one mile radius due to increased lead levels near the boundary. He stated that commercial sampling will also be conducted.

Mr. Beane stated that residential remediation will begin on properties with more than 600 ppm as emergency removal actions. He stated that there were fewer people in attendance at this meeting.

Mr. Edwards disconnected from the meeting at this time.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that a testing technique is being determined for Bernhart's due to the wetlands. She stated that testing will occur in 2026.

Mr. Beane stated that groundwater monitoring wells will be installed within the one mile radius. He stated that most properties are on public water systems but EPA wants to know how groundwater was impacted.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that there is a very thorough team.

Ms. Curran-Myers questioned the formation of the citizens advisory board. Mr. Beane stated that he has indicated that Reading is willing to serve on the board. He stated that there are only six volunteers and that more are needed for the board to be formed.

LONG TERM PROJECTS

- **PFA's**

Ms. Sellers questioned if testing had begun. She stated that PA has not yet set safe limits while other states have very strict regulations.

Mr. Beane stated that PA has set soil limits and that effectuate limits are set in Act 2 standards. He agreed that PA is not as strict as other states yet. He stated that this is very new science and is developing. He stated that the cost of treatment is astronomical and that PFA's are measured in ppt (parts per trillion) not ppm. He expressed the belief that treatment will occur forever.

Ms. Sellers stated that this was discussed at a conference and that it will affect water treatment.

Mr. Beane stated that local water testing has begun and results are being reported to EPA. He stated that this will help guide regulation.

- **Environmental Justice**

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that she and Ms. Meas attended the DEP Climate Conversation in Reading. She stated that DEP is updating its CAP in 2027. She stated that it is clear that they will continue to assist with technical and financial assistance for environmental justice municipalities. She stated that Reading qualifies for this assistance and that is encouraging.

OTHER MATTERS

- **Brownfields**

Ms. Sellers noted the federal government's shift away from brownfields and is encouraging private industry to build on greenfields. She expressed the belief that this would create additional brownfields. She stated that there is a lot of advocacy happening and stated that the issue is in the court system.

- **Charging Smart Certification**

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that this program was paused but has been reactivated. She stated that her goal is to attain bronze certification at this time and work toward higher levels. She stated that several small Zoning amendments will be needed to attain the bronze level.

NEXT MEETING

The next EAC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 26, 2026 at noon at Centre Park. In case of inclement weather, the meeting will be held via Zoom.

The meeting adjourned at 1:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Shelly Smith, MMC
Deputy City Clerk