

Meeting Minutes
City of Reading Environmental Advisory Council
Tuesday, October 22nd, 2024

The regular monthly meeting of the City of Reading Environmental Advisory Council (“EAC”) was held for the transaction of general business on Tuesday, October the 22nd, 2024, virtually *via* Zoom.

EAC members present: A. Sellers; S. Thompson; J. Cole; B. Vitale; and D. Beane

Others present: B. Ayers-Fisher; S. Bachman; S. Harrity; and R. Bradley

Call To Order

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 12.04 P.M. by Vice-Chair S. Thompson, presiding in the absence of Chair S. Bach.

Public Comment

None

Administrative Matters

Minutes from the EAC’s September 24th, 2024 meeting were approved upon motion of Mr. Beane, seconded by Ms. Sellers.

Upcoming Meetings, Events and Staff Updates

Ms. Ayers-Fisher provided an update on the following: 1. the City Park tree planting has not yet occurred, as the City is still waiting on the trees to be delivered; 2. a tree planting at Schlegel Park is scheduled for October the 23rd; and 3. Berks Nature’s annual State of the Environment breakfast is scheduled for November the 14th at the Doubletree. Public Works will be ordering tickets. Anyone interested in attending should let Ms. Ayers-Fisher know.

Mr. Bradley provided an update the clean-up of illegal dumps and on the results of completed dumpster collection events and on upcoming dumpster collection dates and locations.

Mr. Harrity reported that due to a grant, Public Works was able to purchase a new yard waste collection truck. Mr. Beane commented that the new truck just stopped by his home to collect his weekly yard waste bags.

Old Business

- *Signage/Mapping Proposal, Funding:* Ms. Ayers-Fisher reported that the City will receive more signs than originally anticipated and will be ordered by years-end.
- *Goggleworks Rain Barrel Workshop:* Mr. Bachman reported that no date has been scheduled yet.
- *2025 Budget Request:* Ms. Ayers-Fisher reported that the EAC's budget request for 2025 is \$20,000, consisting of \$10,000 for interns, \$6,000 for signs, \$2,000 for translation services, and \$2,000 for pocket park improvements.
- *Beekeeping Zoning Amendment:* Mr. Beane reported that the Policy Committee has finished its work and is recommending that the EAC approve the latest draft for submission to the County and other City bodies for the next level of approval, prior to a vote by Council. Upon motion by Mr. Beane and Ms. Sellers, the recommendation was approved.
- *PFAS Update:* Mr. Beane will forward his Keynote presentation to Ms. Smith for distribution to the EAC.
- *Single Use Plastics Work Group:* Mr. Beane reported that he is awaiting dates from Berks Nature for a meeting that Berks Nature has agreed to host on the issue.

New Business

- Mr. Cole requested that the EAC consider initiating a conversation about ways to promote e-bike usage in the City, particularly the infrastructure challenges currently standing in the way of expanding e-bike options in the City.

Updates

- *Communications Committee Update:* Mr. Vitale reported that the Committee's next meeting is scheduled at Franklins on November the 18th, where discussion items will include the City's Climate Action Plan and proposed single use plastics ban. Bodega and small business owners are being invited to the meeting to obtain their input.
- *Policy Committee Update:* Mr. Beane reported on efforts to move along the EAC's beekeeping ordinance, as previously noted, and on efforts to schedule a single use plastics meeting at Berks Nature, also previously noted. Mr. Beane also noted that he is also waiting to hear from Berks Nature on the scheduling of a Shade Tree Commission meeting.

- *Green Infrastructure Committee Update:* No report.
- *Rain Garden Installations:* No report.
- *USEPA Exide Cleanup Update:* Ms. Ayers-Fisher reported that the next Agency update will take place on November the 14th, 1 P.M., at the Muhlenberg Township Building, followed by a site visit to Bernhart's Park by the EAC for anyone interested. Ms. Ayers-Fisher and Mr. Beane will be attending the meeting and site visit.
- *NREL Project:* Ms. Ayers-Fisher reported no update.
- *Energy Efficiency Project:* Ms. Ayers-Fisher reported the work has been approved and that a construction kick-off event is scheduled for October the 30th.
- *Innovation Corridor/Green Spaces:* No report.
- *Climate Resiliency and Sustainability Plan:* Ms. Ayers-Fisher reported that the plan is still in draft form.
- *Urban Agriculture:* No report.
- *Technical Assistance from the Water Center at UPenn and the University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center:* Ms. Ayers-Fisher reported that mapping pictures are being uploaded.
- *Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds Education:* No report.
- *MP3 Environmental Committee:* No report.
- *Stormwater/MS4 Issues:* Mr. Bachman reported nothing new.
- *Solid Waste/Recycling:* Mr. Harritty reported nothing new.
- *Lead Abatement Program:* No report.
- *BCTV Program:* Mr. Bradley reported on upcoming programs.
- *City Owned Dams:* Mr. Bachman reported nothing new.

Long Term Projects

- *Environmental Justice Issues:* No report.

- *Code Review Committee*: Mr. Vitale reported that work on this project is awaiting an update on the International Building Code from the Commonwealth.
- *PFAs*: No report.
- *Zero Waste Plan*: Ms. Ayers-Fisher reported that this item falls into a wish list category.
- *Comprehensive Plan*: No report.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.34 P.M. upon motion of Mr. Beane and Mr. Thompson.

The next meeting of the EAC will be held virtually *via* Zoom on Tuesday, November 26th, at Noon.

Respectfully submitted by David R. Beane, Acting Secretary