



ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Tuesday, August 12, 2025

12:00 p.m.

3rd & Spruce Playground

- **EAC members:** A. Sellers, B. Vitale, C. Curran-Myers, D. Beane, S. Thompson, J. Cole
- **Council Representatives** – C. Miller, R. Nunez
- **City Staff** – B. Ayers-Fisher, M. Smith, B. Murray, R. Gensemer, S. Bachman, S. Harrity, D. Anspach, R. Bradley, K. Zeiber, S. Wangolo

Public comment will be accepted in writing through an email to michelle.smith@readingpa.gov. Written public comment must be submitted by 11:00 am on the day of the meeting. All comments received will be read into the record. Those wishing to make comment at the meeting must also register prior to 11:00 am the day of the meeting by emailing or calling 610-655-6204.

I. Opening Matters

- Call to Order
- Welcome from Chair
- Public Comment
- Approval of Minutes – April 22, 2025 & June 24, 2025

II. Upcoming Meetings, Events, and Staff Updates

III. Old Business

- Beekeeping Zoning Amendment – Shelly Smith
- Signage / Mapping Proposal, Funding – Cathy Curran-Myers, Bethany Ayers-Fisher
- 2024 Annual Report to City Council – Shelly Smith
- Use of ebikes in Reading – Jim Cole

IV. New Business

-

V. Project Updates (as needed)

- Communications Committee Update – Bill Vitale
- Policy Committee Update – David Beane

- Green Infrastructure Committee Update – Cathy Curran-Myers
- Goggleworks Rain Barrel Workshop – Scott Bachman
- Rain Garden Installations – Cathy Curran-Myers, Scott Bachman
- GESA Project Update – Bethany Ayers-Fisher
- EPA Exide Cleanup Update – David Beane, Bethany Ayers-Fisher
- NREL Project – Bethany Ayers-Fisher
- Climate Resiliency and Sustainability Plan – Bethany Ayers-Fisher
- Urban Agriculture – Cathy Curran-Myers, Shelly Smith
- Technical Assistance from the Water Center at UPenn and the University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center – Bethany Ayers-Fisher
- Invasive Plants / Noxious Weeds Education – David Beane, Cathy Curran-Myers
- MP3 Environmental Committee – Cathy Curran-Myers
- Storm Water / MS4 Issues – Scott Bachman, Bill Murray
- Solid Waste / Recycling – Steve Harrity
- BCTV Program – Ryan Bradley
- City-owned Dams – David Anspach, Scott Bachman

VI. Other Matters

VII. Long Term Projects (as needed)

- Environmental Justice Issues – Cathy Curran-Myers
- Code Review Committee – Bill Vitale
- PFAs – Bill Murray
- Zero Waste Plan – Bethany Ayers-Fisher
- Comprehensive Plan
- Fluoride in Drinking Water – David Beane, Cathy Curran-Myers

VII. Next Meeting – Tuesday, September 23 @ Reading Rising Park, 2nd & Franklin Sts

IX. Adjourn

Environmental Advisory Council
Tuesday, April 22, 2025
Virtually

EAC members present – D. Beane, S. Thompson, C. Curran-Myers, A. Sellers

Others present – S. Smith, B. Ayers-Fisher, S. Bachman, S. Harrity

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Thompson called the meeting to order at 12:05 pm. He noted that a quorum was present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Mr. Beane, seconded by Ms. Sellers, to approve the February 25, 2025 and March 25, 2025 meeting summaries as written. Motion carried unanimously.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND STAFF UPDATES

Ms. Ayers-Fisher provided the following upcoming events:

- April 23 – Reading Conservation Corps and PA Outdoor Corps will be working at the Buttonwood Garden from 9 – 11 am
- April 25 – Green Building Alliance (GBA) Energy Efficiency 101 at Alvernia Upland Center for municipalities, school districts, businesses and nonprofit organizations
- April 26 – Great American Cleanup and Earth Day

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that 500 people have signed up for the Great American Cleanup. The Great American Cleanup begins at 8 am and supplies will be picked up across from the tennis / basketball courts. Set up for Earth Day begins at 10 am. The tree planting, a red oak, and proclamation will be held at 11:30 am and the event is noon – 6 pm rain or shine.

- South American Grandmothers Day – Saturday, May 10 from 10 am – 2 pm at the Northeast Branch Reading Public Library – recycling theme
- Chalkapalooza sponsored by Keep Reading Beautiful and the Camel Project – Saturday, May 10 from 10 am – 2 pm at Northeast Middle

School

Mr. Thompson stated that the Recreation Commission has announced that they will be holding Wacky Water Wednesdays again this summer. He stated that these are fun events and the EAC's attendance is worthwhile.

Ms. Curran-Myers agreed and encouraged all to attend. She stated that the events are enjoyable and are a great opportunity to interact directly with the community.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that a "Flip the Switch" celebration will be held at the May 12 City Council meeting after the City Hall lighting project is complete.

Ms. Smith reminded all about the Schuylkill Action Network bus tour on May 2. She encouraged all to register to attend.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that it will be a short tour and will highlight the City's stormwater infrastructure and how Reading is using green infrastructure to enhance its stormwater system.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Beekeeping**

Ms. Smith stated that she has no update.

- **Signage / Mapping**

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

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that quotes have been received and a local company has been chosen to provide the signage. She stated that the signage will not be installed in time for the Schuylkill Action Network bus tour but that she will have samples available at that event. She stated that the signage is expected to be installed by the end of this summer.

Mr. Thompson questioned where the signs would be installed. Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that she does not recall all of them but stated that they will be installed at 6th & Amity Playground, Baer Park, and Angelica Park. Ms. Smith added that one will be installed at Mimmo's.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that the signage will have great graphics.

- **2024 Annual Report to City Council**

Ms. Smith stated that she and Ms. Bach have drafted the report. She stated that she will circulate it for comment. *(Note: the report is scheduled to be presented to City Council this summer.)*

Mr. Thompson thanked Ms. Bach for her assistance.

- **Use of Ebikes**

No report.

NEW BUSINESS

None

PROJECT UPDATES

- **Communication Committee**

Mr. Thompson stated that Ms. Lara is doing a great job. He stated that she is surveying attendees at events and getting good feedback. He expressed the belief that she is well worth the expense. He stated that she has also produced several videos for social media.

Mr. Thompson noted Mr. Mitchell's work in elementary schools and Ms. Takacs' work on the Sustainable Six documents.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that the Sustainable Six documents are in their final edits and that Ms. Lara will be attending Earth Day.

Mr. Thompson stated that this committee meets every two weeks.

- **Policy Committee**

Mr. Beane stated that the committee has received Mr. Kissinger's recommendations on the Shade Tree amendment and will be meeting on May 16.

- **Green Infrastructure Committee**

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

Ms. Smith questioned if she should schedule a meeting on May 5. Ms. Curran-Myers stated that she should schedule the meeting.

- **Goggleworks Rain Garden Workshop**

Mr. Bachman stated that he has no update.

- **Rain Garden Installations**

Mr. Bachman stated that he will speak with Mr. Anspach about these installations. He noted that there are outfall issues near the Wyomissing Creek and near Berks Catholic stadium. He stated that a new employee has been hired which should allow him to focus more closely on stormwater issues.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that the rain gardens and the pond at City Park will be monitored and maintained with the assistance of the Conservation Corps. She stated that additional native plants would be added.

- **GESA Energy Efficiency Project**

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that the lighting in City Hall is 85% completed and that exterior lighting is scheduled to begin next week. She stated that once City Hall is completed, work will shift to the Public Works building and then to the fieldhouses. She stated that the HVAC project is currently being reviewed for permits and should begin in May. She stated that the geotech for the solar canopies is completed and work at City Hall is expected to begin in August. She stated that City Hall is expected to take 14 weeks to complete and Public Works is expected to take 16 weeks to complete.

Ms. Smith questioned if cars would need to be parked elsewhere during the canopy construction. Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that they will need to be elsewhere.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that the Skyline Dr solar lighting will be installed in August after the hill climb. She stated that it has been fantastic working with Schneider Electric.

- **EPA Exide Cleanup Update**

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that she has no update.

Mr. Beane stated that assessment has begun.

Ms. Curran-Myers noted the issues she encountered on the EPA website. She stated that it has become difficult to find information.

Mr. Beane stated that the assessment work was pre-paid due to federal funding concerns. He stated that Superfund funding may not be decreased.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that this is good news but that working with the EPA website has become very time consuming.

- **NREL Project**

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that she is meeting with the team today to discuss a project to address cold weather modeling, similar to the project with warm weather modeling. She noted her hope that she will be working with the same team.

- **Climate Resiliency and Sustainability Plan**

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that the Communication Committee is updating the Sustainable Six language but that she has no other update.

- **Urban Agriculture**

Ms. Smith stated that the next meeting is next week.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that many of the people involved in this group are also involved with Schuylkill Action Network.

- **Technical Assistance from the Water Center at UPenn and the University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center**

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that this refers to the story map. She stated that she will be requesting another summer intern to continue the work but that the base layer is complete.

Mr. Thompson questioned if there would be one intern from each University. Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that it will be one intern as the schools work together.

- **Invasive Plants / Noxious Weeds Education**

Ms. Curran-Myers noted her hope of having a walk and a brochure. She stated that she noted her hope to hold the walk in June after the plants have bloomed.

Mr. Thompson questioned if this would be a bus tour. Ms. Curran-Myers stated that it would be a walk to show invasive species spread along Oak Lane at the preserve area. She stated that it would be a 10 - 15 easy walk in the preserve.

Ms. Sellers questioned if EAC funding could be used to rent a machine to remove invasives. Ms. Curran-Myers stated that a machine would not be enough. She noted the need to use goats. She suggested that six goats penned around the invasives will make progress.

Ms. Sellers stated that the goats may also increase awareness. Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that Berks Nature will be experimenting with goats on their properties this summer.

Using the chat feature, Ms. Smith reminded all about the prohibition of farm animals in Reading.

Mr. Thompson questioned how long it would take six goats to remove the invasives. Ms. Curran-Myers stated that this is unknown but that there would be a better idea about this after Berks Nature's experiment.

Mr. Thompson stated that neighbors may not appreciate the goats. Ms. Curran-Myers stated that the neighbors caused the problem by spreading the invasives.

Mr. Beane stated that he manually dug out the invasives on his property that spread from his neighbor. He stated that it was 3 - 4 years of hard work but that it is now paying off.

There was a brief conversation about how goats could help with education, what they may cost, signage to describe the project, and media coverage.

- **MP3 Environmental Committee**

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that the chair recently resigned but that cleanups continue. She stated that this is a small group but a group that works hard.

- **Storm Water / MS4 Issues**

Mr. Bachman stated that there have been many rain events and he has been fielding complaints. He stated that the hot / cold temperature swings are causing sinkholes and heavy rains and winds have brought down trees.

Mr. Thompson noted the tree that came down near Berks Catholic. Mr. Bachman stated that this tree would have been handled by Mr. Kissinger. He stated that he continues to clear debris from inlets to avoid flooding.

Mr. Thompson noted his appreciation of Mr. Bachman's work.

Mr. Bachman stated that he has also been addressing sanitary issues. He stated that the system gets ongoing cleaning. He noted the recent main break in the 200 block of N 3rd St.

- **Solid Waste / Recycling**

Mr. Harrity stated that the DEP 902 grant funding was used to purchase a new leaf machine which will be received by the fall of 2025. He stated that the funding was also used to purchase 1,200 new recycling carts. He stated that 365 new carts have been delivered to those on the waiting list and 300 more will be delivered shortly.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that this is great news and noted how easy the carts are in use.

- **BCTV Program**

Mr. Thompson questioned if Mr. Bradley is still producing programming on the EAC's behalf. Mr. Harrity stated that he is but that he took a break for several months.

Mr. Thompson questioned if Mr. Bradley would be attending Earth Day. Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that he would attend after he completes the Great American Cleanup.

- **City-Owned Dams**

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that the work to deconstruct the Bushong Dam is currently out for bid. She stated that work staging has begun and that bog turtles were found. She stated that this will change the work plan but that deconstruction should begin shortly.

Ms. Curran-Myers questioned if riparian repair was also part of this project. She noted the need for natural reconstruction and described the original plan for this area to connect it to other local park areas.

Mr. Harrity disconnected from the meeting at this time.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that deconstruction is phase one. She stated that she will request an update from Mr. Krall as he is the lead on the project.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that Mr. Lloyd from Berks Nature may be able to assist with funding possibilities for the riparian repairs.

OTHER MATTERS

- **Berks County Community Foundation Community Forums**

Ms. Curran-Myers explained that Berks Alliance has dissolved but that Mr. Myers is continuing the Community Forums at the Community Foundation. She stated that an upcoming forum will feature the Schneider Electric project and will recruit businesses to participate in the Green Building Alliance program. She explained that the forums are held once or twice per month and cover a wide variety of timely topics.

- **Single Use Plastics**

Mr. Thompson questioned if follow up had occurred from the meeting at Franklyn's. Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that she is working with a professor from Penn State on the single use plastics issue. She stated that she will be able to get back to her projects after Earth Day.

LONG TERM PROJECTS

- **Fluoride in Drinking Water**

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that this is now a federal issue as the US Secretary of Health and Human Services is requesting states to remove fluoride in drinking water. She stated that there may be judicial guidance on the issue and that US EPA is reviewing new information.

Mr. Thompson stated that this is similar to the Secretary's stance on vaccinations.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that a recent study has concluded that fluoride, even slightly above acceptable levels, can reduce children's IQ by several points, especially in male children. She stated that other studies have not shown this and the situation will need to be continually monitored.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 27, 2025 at noon at 6th & Amity Playground.

Mr. Thompson questioned if the meeting would be held at this location rain or shine. Ms. Smith stated that there is a pavilion. Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that in the case of torrential rains, the meeting should be held via Zoom.

The meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Shelly Smith, CMC
Deputy City Clerk

Meeting Minutes
City of Reading Environmental Advisory Council
Tuesday, June 24th, 2025

The regular monthly meeting of the City of Reading Environmental Advisory Council ("EAC") was held for the transaction of general business on Tuesday, June the 24th, 2025, virtually *via* Zoom. The meeting was originally scheduled to be held in person at Centre Park, but due to the extreme heat, and no one having registered to provide public comment, the Chair decided to hold the meeting *via* Zoom instead.

EAC members present: A. Sellers; S. Thompson; B. Vitale; C. Curran-Myers; and D. Beane

Others present: B. Ayers-Fisher; C. Miller; and S. Wangolo

Call To Order

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 12.05 P.M. by Chair S. Thompson.

Public Comment

None

Administrative Matters

Minutes from the EAC's May 27th, 2025 meeting were approved unanimously upon motion of Mr. Beane, seconded by Ms. Curran-Myers. The agenda for the meeting requests approval for minutes from the EAC's April 22nd, 2025 meeting. Those minutes are believed to have been approved at the EAC's regularly scheduled May 2025 meeting.

Upcoming Meetings, Events and Staff Updates

Ms. Ayers-Fisher provided an update on the following: 1. Wacky-Water Wednesdays have started, and assistance with table staffing would be appreciated; 2. Berks Nature's quarterly inter-municipal meeting is scheduled for June the 25th, the topic being invasives; 3. a Good Medicine event at Riverview Park is scheduled for June the 28th, with a cleanup to follow-staffing assistance at the City's table would be appreciated at the event; 4. progress with the Mayor's summer youth program helping to maintain the City's 21 parks was reported; 5. a Comcast public service announcement on the City's electronic recycling program is scheduled to air during the week of June the 30th; 6. City Hall's double-hung window recaulking and relanging project is commencing; and 7. service upgrades to Baer and Pendarra Parks are ongoing.

Mr. Wangolo provided an update on the City's Vision Zero Plan and on efforts to update the City's ordinances to address short term rental issues.

Old Business

- *Reekeeping/Zoning*: Mr. Beane provided an update on the status of the amendment. Awaiting Council approval.
- *Signage/Mapping Proposal, Funding*: Ms. Curran-Myers provided an update. A Fall date is targeted for completion.
- *2024 Annual Report to City Council*: The EAC's immediate past Chair is unable to deliver the Report. Mr. Thompson as the current Chair will deliver the Report instead once a date has been selected.
- *Use of E-Bikes*: No update in the absence of Mr. Cole.

New Business

- None.

Project Updates

- *Communications Committee Update*: Mr. Vitale reported on the Committee's ongoing work.
- *Policy Committee Update*: Mr. Beane reported on efforts to move along the amendment to the Shade Tree Ordinance. A follow-up meeting needs to be scheduled to review the latest revisions by the City arborist. Mr. Beane also reported that a proposed single use plastics ban will be taken up this Fall in conjunction with the next quarterly inter-municipal meeting at Berks Nature, at which single use plastics will be the topic of discussion.
- *Green Infrastructure Committee Update*: Ms. Curran-Myers reported on the Committee's ongoing work.
- *Goggleworks Rain Barrel Workshop*: No report.
- *Rain Garden Installations*: Ms. Ayers-Fisher reported that a project is being planned for the Fall.
- *GESA Project Update*: Ms. Ayers-Fisher reported on progress.
- *USEPA Exide Cleanup Update*: Mr. Beane reported that efforts to form a Community Advisory Group have stalled for apparent lack of interest. USEPA is redoubling its efforts to work with local municipal officials to get the word out

about efforts to form a CAG and plans to schedule one last meeting to drum up public interest.

- *NREL Project*: No report.
- *Climate Resiliency and Sustainability Plan*: No report.
- *Urban Agriculture*: No report.
- *Technical Assistance from the Water Center at UPenn and the University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center*: No report.
- *Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds Education*: Ms. Curran-Myers reported that she would like to schedule a community walking tour this Fall.
- *MP3 Environmental Committee*: No report.
- *Stormwater/MS4 Issues*: No report.
- *Solid Waste/Recycling*: No report.
- *BCTV Program*: No report. Questions were raised about whether our BCTV program is continuing.
- *City Owned Dams*: Ms. Curran-Myers asked what is delaying efforts to remove the Bushong Dam. Ms. Ayers-Fisher reported that a turtle assessment is causing the delay.

Long Term Projects

- *Environmental Justice Issues*: No report.
- *Code Review Committee*: No report.
- *PKAs*: No report.
- *Zero Waste Plan*: No report.
- *Comprehensive Plan*: No report.
- *Fluoride in Drinking Water*: No report.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:32 P.M. upon motion of Ms. Curran-Myers and Mr. Vitale.

The next meeting of the EAC will be held in person on Tuesday, August 12th, at Noon, at the 1st and Spruce Playground.

Respectfully submitted by David R. Beane, Acting Secretary

Environmental Advisory Council
Communication Committee
Wednesday, July 16, 2025
Virtually

Those in attendance – S. Smith, B. Ayers-Fisher, W. Vitale, S. Thompson, C. Curran-Myers

Mr. Vitale called the meeting to order at 9:03 am.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that she has just returned from Pittsburgh after attending the US Water Alliance conference. She stated that she has found new resources for water stewardship. She stated that the conference included a tour of Sawmill Run, a tributary to the Allegheny River. She stated that there was a plan to improve this tributary but that it was not implemented and is now very problematic.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that Pittsburgh has begun to implement Vision Zero and she was excited to see some of the projects in action. She stated that Pittsburgh's streets are even narrower than Reading's streets and that Pittsburgh's bike lanes connect their trails to the downtown area for commuters. She stated that it made her appreciate the work being done in Reading even more.

2026 EAC Budget Request

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that the EAC budget is a part of Public Works. Ms. Smith stated that it is a separate budget area where she manages all of her boards.

Mr. Vitale questioned what was needed at this time. Ms. Smith stated that she needs to provide a budget amount at this time and that the narrative can be finalized at the full EAC meeting on August 12.

Mr. Vitale noted the need to include the 50% match for the Barrio Fellow in 2026. He stated that the fellow will be working 20 hours per week for one year. Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that the cost in 2026 will be \$22,000 and suggested that she and the EAC budget \$12,000 each to cover this cost.

Mr. Vitale stated that he has spoken with Mr. Orozco, who is pleased that the City's sponsorship also helps pay toward the fellow's healthcare costs. He stated

that he would like to renew this contract for an additional year. He stated that Ms. Lara loves the work that she is doing and that she is learning a lot about environmental issues. He stated that Ms. Lara is meeting all expectations and that this has been a successful relationship.

Mr. Vitale questioned Ms. Curran-Myers's suggestion of an intern. Ms. Curran-Myers stated that Ms. Smith shared an article about a young person doing environmental work at the high school level. She stated that his work is impressive and suggested that the EAC support his work.

Ms. Smith stated that it was a Spotlight Berks article.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that he is doing community outreach and suggested that the EAC may be able to provide support.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that she is familiar with the young man. She agreed that he is doing great work and stated that he is also part of What'S UP Berks. She stated that What'S UP Berks has received a grant from the Berks County Community Foundation.

Mr. Vitale questioned the EAC's current spending. Ms. Smith stated that they have paid approximately \$2,880 for the Barrio Fellowship but there has been no other spending to date in 2025. She stated that the 2025 budget year closes on December 31.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that the 2025 signage project is nearly complete and that category will be spent down. She stated that the narrative can be worked out at a later time.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that she hopes to have the signage project moving forward by the end of July. She stated that the project will cost a total of \$15,000 and she is working to get three quotes as required by the City's purchasing policies.

Mr. Thompson suggested budgeting for tabling give aways as marketing tools. Ms. Ayers-Fisher agreed. Ms. Curran-Myers noted the need for someone to manage the ordering.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher suggested creating table displays. Ms. Curran-Myers agreed and stated that the GESA project banners are easy to transport and set up. She suggested using that type of display.

Mr. Thompson stated that bags are popular and suggested that the EAC have bags at tabling events. Ms. Curran-Myers agreed and suggested that the bags have a message about sustainability and climate action.

Mr. Thompson expressed the belief that people like bags and they are a great way to start a conversation. He stated that the bags will also reduce people's reliance on single use plastic bags. Ms. Ayers-Fisher agreed and stated that the bags that she orders are very sturdy.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that the EAC logo should be on one side.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that 500 bags would cost \$1.38 each and 1,000 would cost \$1.35 each.

Mr. Vitale questioned the cost of the water bottles. Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that they are approximately \$2.00 each.

Ms. Curran-Myers noted her support for EAC bags. She stated that bags are helpful to carry informational items.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher questioned if the EAC would like to budget for tree plantings. Mr. Vitale expressed the belief that this expense is a better fit in the Public Works budget.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that she would also like the EAC to hold or sponsor events at the greenhouse once construction is completed. She noted the need to cover the hospitality costs incurred for events held by Ms. Lara.

Mr. Vitale suggested that Ms. Lara design the bag. Ms. Curran-Myers suggested that Ms. Lara make suggestions of educational information to include on the bag.

Mr. Thompson noted the need to produce additional member shirts. Ms. Ayers-Fisher agreed. He also suggested ordering hats.

Ms. Smith stated that a new member has been appointed to the EAC and she will need a shirt as well.

Mr. Vitale questioned the City's budget process. Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that all line items begin at zero and all expenses must be justified. She stated that her

budget also supports other department budgets. She noted the need to also be flexible and opportunity ready. She noted her hope to begin changing the management of public spaces. She stated that she will including matching funding in her budget for the fellow and for signage.

Events

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that she, Mr. Thompson, and Ms. Takacs attended Good Medicine and there was a very small turnout. She estimated that there were less than 100 people in attendance all day.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that she has spoken with the event organizer. She expressed the belief that turnout was lower due to the rain delay of the Juneteenth events which then occurred on the same day. She noted the need to increase public awareness.

Ms. Curran-Myers suggested having posters in neighborhood stores in both English and Spanish.

Mr. Thompson questioned if ads were placed on BCTV. Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that they are.

Mr. Thompson stated that people always tell him they didn't know about an event. He noted the need to post information in a central location. Ms. Curran-Myers stated that this is done but that people don't see the information.

Mr. Vitale stated that other events are well attended and questioned how to improve attendance at this event.

Mr. Thompson stated that events in West Reading are always well attended. He suggested holding events on the same weekend annually. Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that this is already done.

Ms. Smith questioned how Good Medicine would translate into Spanish and expressed the belief that there may be confusion about what the event is.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that there were more people in attendance at last year's event. She stated that attendance at Earth Day is growing.

Mr. Thompson suggested that the low attendance may also be due to weather issues that day.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher noted that she has adopted Mr. Orozco's philosophy that it is not the number of people at an event that makes it successful but the quality of the interactions with the people who do attend.

Upcoming events:

- Wacky Water Wednesday - July 23 from 1 pm - 4 pm - Amanda Stoult Elementary School
- Wacky Water Wednesday - July 30 from 1 pm - 4 pm - 1400 block of N 12th St
- National Night Out - August 5 from 5 pm - 8 pm - 400 & 500 blocks of Penn St
- Wacky Water Wednesday - August 6 from 1 pm - 4 pm - 2nd & Oley Playground
- Riverzilla - August 9 - morning cleanup afternoon event - Riverfront Park
- Wacky Water Wednesday - August 13 from 1 pm - 4 pm - Oakbrook Housing
- Party at the Park - August 16 from 1 pm - 6 pm - Pandora Park
- Wacky Water Wednesday - August 20 from 1 pm - 4 pm - Glenside Housing Avenue A

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that Riverzilla will be held on August 9. She stated that there were permitting issues and she believed the event would need to be cancelled. She stated that there will be kayaks available at the event. She stated that the event will focus on water safety, clean water, bike lanes, and connectivity.

Mr. Thompson questioned if there would be a cleanup in the morning. Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that there is always a cleanup in the morning. She stated that it would be embarrassing to have an event at this location without it being cleaned up first.

There was a discussion about the demolition of historic properties in the 400 block of Penn St.

Ms. Lara connected to the meeting at this time.

Outreach and Engagement

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that she has followed up with Ms. Lara about the Recycle Coach app. Mr. Vitale stated that Ms. Lara has done a good draft of information.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that she has many items to review for Ms. Lara. She stated that she must also finish working on handouts, the signage, and the 2026 budget. She stated that she will email updates and that there will be deliverables by the August meeting.

Ms. Lara stated that she has received emails from Ms. Ayers-Fisher and that she has enough projects to work on until the next meeting.

Mr. Vitale stated that there is a long list of things to do.

Other Matters

- Angelica Creek

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that the public comment period is open on the change in category of portions of the Angelica Creek. She noted the watershed association's hope to have the section of the creek in Nolde Forest qualified as exceptional value and the rest of the creek in Reading as high quality. She stated that DEP is being asked to study both sections of the creek.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that she has viewed this extensively. She explained that DEP will compare the Angelica Creek with other similar creeks to determine its quality status. She expressed the belief that the lower portion of the creek is much improved but does not qualify as exceptional value.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that work has occurred for 120 years to attain exceptional value at the upper section of the creek.

Ms. Curran-Myers agreed that there has been great progress. She stated that the creek is many miles long. She stated that the portion of the creek near Angelica Park is considered a cold water fishing area. She expressed the belief that there may be an upgrade in the qualification.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher agreed and stated that there are also new restoration areas. She noted the need for the additional protections provided to exceptional value and high quality creeks.

- Green Building Alliance (GBA)

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that Reading will be getting technical assistance from the US Green Building Alliance. She stated that she plans to work with the CD Department to set policy and priorities to accelerate the City's efforts to move toward green energy.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that the GBA and City have submitted a grant for technical assistance through the Inflation Reduction Act to assist with green building projects. She stated that the award is \$250,000 and Reading is a finalist. She noted her hope to hear back about the award in August. She noted that grant applications are complicated and take much work.

Mr. Vitale questioned who attended the last GBA educational session. Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that there were representatives from RACC, the Housing Authority, and Mitsubishi Chemical in attendance.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that the GBA has hired the local coordinator. She stated that Ms. Melendez is currently being onboarded and noted her hope that the position would be full time beginning in 2026.

Mr. Vitale noted the value of Ms. Melendez. Ms. Curran-Myers agreed and stated that she can make many connections.

Ms. Ayers-Fisher stated that the next GBA meeting will be held on August 12 in Council Chambers. She stated that the focus would be water conservation and will include a tour of City Hall.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 13 at 9 am via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:41 am.

Respectfully submitted by
Shelly Smith, CMC
Deputy City Clerk

Environmental Advisory Council
Green Infrastructure Committee
Tuesday, July 8, 2025
Virtually

Those in attendance– S. Smith, C. Curran-Myers, A. Sellers

Ms. Curran-Myers called the meeting to order at 12:03-pm.

Set 2025 Priorities

Ms. Curran-Myers noted the need for new projects. She stated that the signage project is almost complete and the other agenda topics are five years old. She stated that City Council adopted Vision Zero and suggested working on initiatives contained within the Plan.

Ms. Sellers noted her agreement with this approach.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that many initiatives in Vision Zero are related to Green Infrastructure including transportation, shade trees, connectivity, and parks.

Ms. Sellers noted her support of green connectivity and the experience of complete streets. She stated that there are also economic impacts when businesses and restaurants open along the corridors.

Ms. Curran-Myers agreed and stated that walkable neighborhoods need those options.

Ms. Sellers suggested the slogan "Green Pathways".

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that these items can become part of the mapping project to help make connections. She expressed the belief that these fit together well and that it would also create an opportunity to work with Council to promote Vision Zero.

Ms. Sellers agreed and suggested that the focus begin in a specific neighborhood and include downspout planters to reduce flooding and to build excitement.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that she receives news releases from Penn Future, an

environmental advocacy group, outlining the Shapiro Lightning Plan to increase alternative energy, make electric grid changes, and provide tax credits and rebates for community sized energy infrastructure. She stated that the series of bills have bi-partisan sponsors. She stated that she has spoken with Mr. Vitale about this Plan. She stated that a State-wide board, similar to the PUC, would be created and that this Board would make decisions about projects, rather than local officials. She noted local concern about taking farmland for solar arrays.

Ms. Sellers questioned if local zoning would be pre-empted from the project review process. Ms. Curran-Myers stated that the newly created board would have the power to approve the project if it is a use permitted by local zoning. She noted the need to more closely review the Plan details. She stated that the Plan sets a January 2026 effective date and noted her belief that this would mean that the Plan will be tied to the annual budget. She expressed the belief that there will need to be an educational component. She suggested that this Plan also become part of the Committee's agenda.

Ms. Sellers agreed with adding this topic to the agenda. She noted the need to work on big picture issues.

Ms. Curran-Myers expressed the belief that this Plan would help the City move forward. She noted the need to educate residents and be supportive of the Plan.

Ms. Sellers expressed the belief that this will create a good foundation and that she is pleased to see it move forward. She noted the need for attainable costs and to install projects that will get residents excited. She expressed the belief that these are great next steps for the Committee.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that she has re-worked the agenda to focus on unfinished projects.

Signage

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that once Ms. Sellers drafts the chart of benefits, the signage can be ordered and installed. She stated that the mapping project will restart in the fall.

Schuylkill Action Network Tour

Ms. Sellers questioned when the tour would take place.

Ms. Curran-Myers explained that the tour occurred in May. She stated that no City officials attended and that it was suggested to recreate the tour for City officials. She stated that Ms. Ayers-Fisher is now the Stormwater Committee chair for SAN. She noted her support for holding another tour.

Ms. Sellers agreed with the need for a second tour. She compared this tour to the EAC's tour of City dams and stated that this tour was very informative.

Education & Outreach

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that the focus will be on rain gardens, rain barrels, and downspout planters. She stated that the Greenhouse construction will be completed in the fall and that workshops can begin to be held there. She suggested utilizing the Penn State Master Gardeners.

Ms. Sellers noted the need for rain gardens to be purposeful and to catch pollutants.

Ms. Curran-Myers described how the Albright community garden's rain garden catches rain from a garage roof and drains slowly. She stated that it works well.

Ms. Sellers noted the strong storms that have occurred recently which show the need to slow the water down. She stated that green infrastructure reduces flooding and recharges the groundwater.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that rain gardens can also keep clean water clean.

Open Spaces

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that this topic refers to connectivity.

Yard Waste

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that work on yard waste would continue. She stated that residents are concerned about all types of waste and that it would also address native plants versus invasive plants.

Ms. Sellers stated that she represents Lower Alsace Township on the MP3.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that she no longer receives information from the MP3 but that she would like to continue on the Environmental Committee.

Ms. Sellers stated that she will be scheduling a meeting with Mr. Olsen to discuss a few items and invited Ms. Curran-Myers to join them.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that signage discussions were held but that the work has stalled. She noted her hope to get the project restarted.

Ms. Sellers questioned where the signage would be located. Ms. Curran-Myers stated that it would be in the areas where yard waste is being dumped. She stated that the signage would contain the MP3 logo and information about the City ordinance. She also noted her hope to hold educational walks.

Ms. Sellers stated that photos are also very effective.

Ms. Curran-Myers agreed and stated that she hopes to have brochures attached to the signage with additional information. She stated that Mr. Kissinger knows the most problematic areas and it is obvious where invasive species have escaped. She stated that native plants also increase the number of pollinators.

New Green Spaces

Ms. Sellers noted the need to choose appropriate tree species for small spaces. Ms. Curran-Myers agreed.

New Committee Members

Ms. Curran-Myers noted the need for additional committee members.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 5, 2025 at noon via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by
Shelly Smith, CMC
Deputy City Clerk