
Environmental Advisory Council
Tuesday, September 25, 2012

The regular meeting of the Environmental Advisory Council was held on the above date for the transaction of general business at Pendra Park.

EAC members present –D. Beane, B. Jennings, P. Ignozzi-Shaffer

Others present – S. Katzenmoyer, D. Hoag, N. Agnes

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Beane called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm.

Mr. Beane welcomed Pier Ignozzi-Shaffer as a new member. Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer gave a brief background highlighting her experience in architecture, sustainable design and construction management. She stated that she had worked on the Opportunity House Learning Center. She stated that she lives in Reading and hopes to get more involved in the community. She is currently working on some water analysis and has been fundraising to install solar panels on Opportunity House. She stated that she also has contacts in Philadelphia.

Mr. Beane stated that he liked her ties to Philadelphia as they have been making positive progress with sustainability issues. Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer stated that the Green Build 2013 Conference will be held in Philadelphia and that she is a member of their Legacy Committee.

Mr. Beane stated that he is working to broaden the scope of the EAC by bringing individuals with different disciplines on as members.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public in attendance.

MINUTES

Dr. Jennings moved, seconded by Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer, to approve the August 7, 2012 minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

BERNHART PARK UPDATE

Ms. Hoag stated that the review of the final punch list occurred last week. She stated that there is concern with one willow tree and the City Arborist will be following up. She stated that she has also requested he check the streamside plantings. She stated that the park looks good and that Exide is looking forward to closing out the project.

Ms. Hoag stated that Exide will continue with lawn maintenance through the 2013 season to allow Public Works to determine how the maintenance of this park will fit into the rest of the maintenance schedule. She stated that the current mowing contractor has a reasonable rate and it may pay the City to contract the maintenance of this park.

Ms. Hoag stated that DEP is also anxious for the project to be complete so that they can address the dam.

Mr. Beane explained the role of the EAC. He stated that Council can request assistance from the EAC, the EAC may undertake their own initiatives and that they should provide educational opportunities on environmental issues. He stated that in the case of Bernhart, the City requested the assistance of the EAC during the clean-up by Exide.

SMART GROWTH ALLIANCE

Ms. Katzenmoyer questioned removing this topic from the agenda as Mr. Nieves is no longer a member of the EAC. Mr. Beane stated that this agenda topic can be removed as long as the City has representation.

Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that the City representative is Crystal Edwards. Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer stated that Ms. Edwards has approached her to serve in this capacity and that she will be filling this role.

The topic will remain on the agenda with regular updates from Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer.

RIPARIAN BUFFER ORDINANCE

Mr. Beane stated that he has not yet reviewed the draft ordinance prepared by Ms. Katzenmoyer. He requested a reminder in two weeks.

Mr. Molteni and a member of his Fluoride Committee arrived at this time.

STORM WATER ISSUES

Ms. Hoag stated that much work is being done in this area at the Schuylkill River and Tulpehocken Creek. She stated that Council has approved joining the MS4 group and the Wyomissing Creek Watershed and has approved updating the Memorandum of Understanding with the Conservation District on sedimentation issues. She stated that the Conservation District will be handling educational issues County-wide to be sure that all get the same message. She stated that the GIS mapping is also being updated. The sanitary system is also a priority at this time as there are consent decree issues.

Mr. Molteni stated that wetlands are very effective for handling sediment and to remove toxins. Ms. Hoag stated that the Schuylkill River runs through the City and the City must deal with other municipalities' toxins. She stated that there are issues with inflow and outflow areas. She also stated that there continue to be conflicts between DEP and EPA.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY ORDINANCE

Mr. Beane stated that Dr. Jennings has found a student at Albright who is willing to work on drafting this ordinance. He explained to Mr. Agnes that he would be responsible to perform research on the types of alternative energy and how they may fit into an urban setting. He stated that a subcommittee would be formed to assist in the drafting and processing of the ordinance(s).

Mr. Beane explained that the EAC has been asked by the Mayor's Sustainability Committee to assist with this project. He stated that the project will also entail deciding to address alternative energy in a comprehensive way or piecemeal. He stated that zoning may also be an issue with alternative energy as with steep slopes and riparian buffers.

Ms. Hoag stated that the City has received a request for a geothermal system. She stated that at this time they are not allowed within City regulations. She stated that with issues such as this one, City Codes and Trades may also need to be involved in drafting the ordinances. She stated that staff will make the necessary contacts. She stated that she hopes to address this type of situation on a case by case basis until regulations are in effect.

Mr. Molteni noted that the City must be careful to take the capacity of the water to take on these systems before raising the water temperature in a negative way.

Ms. Hoag stated that the size of the lot will influence decisions and that in many parts of the City this type of system will not be compatible.

Mr. Beane stated that this project has potential to be a high profile project for the City. He stated that he has spoken with the developer and stated that the EAC supports the project and will assist as needed.

Ms. Hoag stated that this same developer is also looking at a rain harvesting project in the future.

Mr. Beane noted the hope of the Mayor that the City remove building impediments for this type of project.

Mr. Beane questioned Mr. Agnes's timetable for completion. Mr. Agnes stated that he is working on the project for no credit but noted his hope for the project to be completed by January.

MAYOR'S SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Mr. Beane stated that this Committee continues to meet monthly. He stated that they are moving forward in a positive way.

MAYOR'S SOLID WASTE/RECYCLING SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. Beane stated that the focus of this committee has been on recycling in the Reading School District. He stated that because of the District's budgetary and turnover issues a presentation needs to be made to the School Board. He stated that the Committee is now investigating curbside commercial recycling. He stated that Lancaster has begun collection of recycling at commercial properties.

Ms. Hoag suggested an update to the Solid Waste Ordinance.

Mr. Beane noted the Committee's hope to begin with small corner businesses.

Mr. Molteni suggested that Mr. Denbowski attend a future meeting to provide an update. He stated that Cogle has a great recycling operation. He also suggested a tour of Allied's single stream recycling facility.

Ms. Hoag stated that there are also oil/grease issues at many small corner businesses. She stated that oil/grease is getting into the collection system but can be recycled. She suggested these two items be addressed together.

Mr. Beane stated that Pittsburgh and Philadelphia are moving forward with recycling programs.

**CONSERVANCY STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE
– LEAD IMPACT STUDY**

Mr. Beane stated that Dr. Kimball is involved in this project as she is very knowledgeable on this issue.

Ms. Katzenmoyer questioned if this topic could be removed from the agenda. Mr. Beane stated that he will provide an update at the next meeting.

RAIN BARREL REGULATIONS

Mr. Beane stated that he attended the Council meeting when the regulations were enacted. He stated that rumors that the regulations would mandate every property to install a rain barrel persist. He stated that he was impressed with the Council's support of the EAC and that the regulations had unanimous consent.

Mr. Beane stated that the EAC must now begin on the educational component. He suggested working with the Conservation District and using a BCTV program.

Ms. Hoag suggested following up with Don Spatz from the Reading Eagle about his column.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer stated that the Conservation District has rain barrel workshops at the County Ag Center. Ms. Katzenmoyer explained that the EAC has discussed this in the past and many City residents cannot find transportation to that location.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer suggested holding the workshops at the Goggleworks and RACC. Ms. Hoag suggested following up with Ms. O'Brien.

Mr. Molteni noted the need to tailor the message to the different types of City residents.

PRIVATE WELL DRILLING

Ms. Hoag stated that the City has received a request to drill an irrigation well to be used for landscaping purposes. She stated that this is also not allowable per

City regulations. She stated that the developer will be winterizing the well and that the plumbing systems will not intermingle so as not to mix the potable and non-potable water. She stated that lot size and type of use should be used to determine guidelines for this type project. She noted the need for logical guidelines to be established.

Mr. Beane stated that the criteria should drive if a new ordinance is needed. Ms. Hoag stated that other chapters of City ordinances may need to be amended as well.

BCTV

Mr. Beane stated that Ms. Rauenzahn will continue programming through the end of 2012. He noted the need for the EAC to determine how the programming will be addressed in the future. Ms. Hoag stated that Ms. O'Brien has suggested using this time for panel discussions in place of County EAC meetings.

Mr. Beane noted his support of this approach and his hope that Ms. O'Brien will coordinate the programming.

Mr. Molteni noted the need for better programming to attract other viewers.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer suggested that educational items be translated into Spanish. Ms. Hoag noted the problems with different dialects. She stated that this hurdle needs to be addressed so as not to have to translate into many different dialects.

FLOURIDE IN WATER SYSTEM SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. Molteni introduced Kirby and Kyle Medeya as members of his subcommittee.

Mr. Molteni expressed the belief that there is no benefit to having fluoride in the water system that cannot be gained through other methods. He stated that fluoride is very detrimental and should be removed. He stated that his research has revealed much propaganda but not scientific data. He stated that many times those who fund the research skew the results.

Mr. Medeya stated that he has located a Harvard study which shows that increased fluoride levels can reduce IQ and slow the neuro-development of children. He stated that it has also been linked to cancer. Mr. Molteni explained that once cancer is present the fluoride accelerates the disease.

Mr. Molteni stated that many countries have banned fluoride in their water systems. He stated that the addition of fluoride into water systems began many years ago when Alcoa had much of the material as industrial waste. He stated that some communities are now trying to add lithium to water supplies. He stated that pure water is best.

Mr. Medeya stated that Germany was the first country to add fluoride to its water supply to make its citizens more subjectible to propaganda. He stated that Germany has now removed fluoride.

Mr. Molteni stated that if individuals want to take fluoride there are other, safer ways to take it.

Mr. Molteni noted the need to assemble peer reviewed studies and documents to submit to the City.

Ms. Hoag suggested contacting Dr. Kimball as she is currently researching the issue. She stated that the Water Authority should be included in discussions as they make the final decision about the water system. She stated that changes to the water system would affect others outside the City as well.

Mr. Molteni explained that fluorine is a very active element. He stated that it is added to the compound of vaccinations and is now causing concerns. He expressed the belief that individuals are overdosing on fluoride and that it is prevalent in too many things.

Dr. Jennings questioned if removing fluoride would reduce the cost of water to customers. Mr. Molteni stated that it would not as it is not very expensive. Ms. Hoag stated that it is more a health issue. Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer agreed and stated that this is not a consumer issue.

Dr. Jennings questioned when fluoride was added to the City system. Ms. Hoag stated that Water Authority representatives can answer this type question. Mr. Molteni expressed the belief that it was just after World War II.

Dr. Jennings questioned if it was controversial then. Mr. Beane stated that in the past municipalities were pushed to add it to systems as it was viewed as being healthier.

Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that the demographics of City residents also needs to be considered as some may not get the necessary fluoride if it is not added to the water system. Kirby stated that these residents would be on assistance programs. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that this is no guarantee.

Mr. Beane reminded the subcommittee that politics should not be included in the final report to Council. Mr. Medeya stated that he will send his scientific research to Ms. Katzenmoyer for distribution to the EAC.

Mr. Beane suggested that a future meeting include a 30 minute presentation from the Water Authority and Dr. Kimball to incorporate their information into the final report. He stated that the EAC's recommendation must have supporting data.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

The next meeting of the Environmental Advisory Council will be held on Tuesday, October 23 at 5 pm in the City Council Office.

Respectfully submitted by
Shelly Katzenmoyer
Deputy City Clerk