
Environmental Advisory Council
Tuesday, August 25, 2015

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

EAC members present –D. Beane, P. Ignozzi-Shaffer, C. White, A. Molteni

Others present – S. Katzenmoyer, D. Hoag

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer called the meeting to order at 12:21 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public present.

MINUTES

Motion was made by Mr. Beane, seconded by Ms. White, to approve the July 28, 2015 minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Mr. Beane stated that discussion on this topic would continue at the September meeting. He stated that each member was asked to make suggestions for membership to the EAC and for contacts that could be used on specific projects.

ORDINANCES

Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that all three ordinances have been submitted for comment to the Berks County Planning Commission and the City Planning Commission. She stated that the County Planning Commission has sent their comments on the Alternative Energy Ordinance and the Riparian Buffer Ordinance. The City Planning Commission will be making comments at their meeting this evening.

CITY OWNED DAMS

Ms. Hoag stated that there has been a storm water emergency which has taken much of her time.

Ms. Hoag stated that there is a dam on the Willow Creek on Water Authority property which needs attention. She stated that this dam may have been referred to as the Reese Mill Dam in the past. She stated that the area of the waterway which is dammed is very shallow and has much algae. She stated that this dam will probably need removal. She stated that the City is working with the Water Authority on adding this dam to the City's dam remediation plan and that the City is requesting financial assistance from the Water Authority.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer questioned if grant funding was researched. Ms. Hoag stated that it has been researched.

STORM WATER ISSUES

Ms. Hoag stated that a large storm water pipe near Heritage Park has washed out. She stated that the washout also caused damage to several trees and the nearby bike trail. She stated that there is a limited conveyance at this location.

Ms. Curran-Myers arrived at this time.

Ms. Hoag stated that this water pipe was replaced in the 1970's and has now failed. She stated that a more in-depth assessment is needed and that red belly turtles have been seen nearby.

MAYOR'S SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE/SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. Beane stated that these committees are officially defunct. He stated that letters were sent to committee members thanking them for their service. He suggested that this issue be removed from future agendas.

BCTV

Mr. Beane stated that a topic for September is needed.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer stated that Dr. Lapinski is out on sabbatical this school year. She noted her hope that he would appear on a show about RACC's involvement in the rain barrel workshops.

Mr. Beane stated that the show can be taped if necessary. He suggested that Mr. Molteni appear with high school and middle school youth for a round table discussion.

Mr. Molteni stated that he was told by Mr. Renninger that the Earth Day event is no longer funded. He stated that he will contact him about the environmental club participating in the show.

Mr. Beane supported this idea.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer stated that she worked with students from I-Lead this summer on a project involvement plantings on Penn St and that they could also participate.

Ms. Hoag stated that BCTV has the capability to tape a show on location.

Mr. Beane and Mr. Molteni will coordinate the show with Mr. Renninger.

STAR INIATIVES

No report.

Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that the future of this program is uncertain.

Ms. Hoag stated that Redesign Reading is involved in a project near Lancaster Ave. Ms. Curran-Myers agreed and stated that it will include traffic calming, greening, etc.

RAIN BARREL EDUCATION

Mr. Beane stated that the 2015 sessions are complete.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer stated that Dr. Lapinski is not interested in participating in the future. She stated that drum sourcing was an issue and that the workshops were more work than he anticipated. She noted the need to understand the cost of the kits and how to move forward.

Mr. Beane stated that RACC was a great location but expressed the belief that other locations should still be considered. He noted the need to identify new partners for 2016. He expressed the belief that this was a great model.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer suggested speaking with Ms. Keppen about interns and working with the Recreation Commission. Ms. Katzenmoyer explained the problems with parental involvement of youth involved in the recreation programs.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer noted the need to follow up on photos of rain barrels that have been installed.

Ms. Curran-Myers suggested utilizing Alvernia students as part of a service project.

Ms. Hoag suggested contacting local food manufacturers to get the drums. Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer stated that Dr. Lapinski did this and was only able to partner with Coca-Cola in Bethlehem.

Ms. Curran-Myers suggested working with Coca-Cola to commit a specific number of barrels for each workshop.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer stated that there are also problems transporting, cleaning and storing the drums.

Ms. Hoag suggested contacting the Water Authority. Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer stated that they were contacted and could not supply drums.

Ms. Curran-Myers suggested that it may be time to focus education on rain gardens with rain barrels being a small component of that.

Mr. Beane agreed and stated that it is not necessary to do several rain barrel workshops annually, only that education continue.

RAIN GARDENS

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that her presentation needs an indoor location. She stated that the presentation will kick-off discussions. She expressed the belief that every conservation district has a rain garden and new schools are also planting them. She noted the need for public outreach in this area.

Ms. Curran-Myers suggested locating rain gardens in the City and County and mapping them.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer questioned if the rain garden at Albright was large enough to qualify. Ms. Curran-Myers stated that there is no minimum size.

Mr. Beane stated that he has recently seen an excellent example in State College.

Ms. Curran-Myers suggested choosing a City location to install a rain garden. Ms. Hoag stated that she has a location in mind.

Ms. Curran-Myers expressed the belief that grant funding is available to install the signage. Ms. Hoag stated that private donations could also be accepted.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer questioned Ms. Hoag's location. Ms. Hoag stated that she would love to see one at the large traffic triangle across from the Museum near the Nursing School on Museum Road.

Ms. Curran-Myers noted her support of this location and questioned if the site could be ready for planting in the spring of 2016. Ms. Hoag stated that this would be too quick for this site as much asphalt would need to be removed first. She also suggested approaching the Museum and Berks Catholic.

Ms. Curran-Myers suggested holding a meeting with representatives of the Museum, Berks Catholic, Reading Hospital and Ms. O'Brien to move a project forward.

Ms. Curran-Myers explained that DEP permit processing now includes MS4 items. She stated that MS4 brings closer oversight of storm water discharge. She stated that municipalities must now have plans to correct discharge issues where they do not meet environmental standards.

Ms. White agreed and stated that this is a mandatory shift.

Ms. Curran-Myers noted the need to focus on watershed areas which may involve several municipalities. She stated that water flow does not respect political boundaries.

Ms. White expressed the belief that these types of projects will be beneficial to all municipalities.

Mr. Molteni questioned if there maps are available. Ms. Hoag stated that they are available through DEP. Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer suggested that the Conservation District may also have maps available.

LIGHT POLLUTION

Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that this issue was on the EAC's last long range plan but

that it was not fully addressed.

Ms. Curran-Myers suggested that it become part of the next Strategic Plan.

Mr. Molteni stated that lighting is a quality of life issue.

Ms. Curran-Myers agreed and stated that light shining downward is the best.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Environmental Advisory Council will be held on Tuesday, September 22 at noon at City Park in the pavilion near the basketball courts.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Shelly Katzenmoyer, CMC
Deputy City Clerk