
Environmental Advisory Council
Tuesday, February 28, 2012

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

EAC members present –D. Beane, B. Jennings, R. Nieves

Others present – S. Katzenmoyer, D. Hoag, J. Wood

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Beane called the meeting to order at 5:36 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

Mr. Beane requested that the agenda format revert to the previous format including Old Business and New Business. He stated that this is the format with which he is most familiar.

Mr. Beane stated that he would be going out of agenda order in hopes that Mr. Molteni would arrive.

BERNHART PARK UPDATE

Ms. Hoag stated that a meeting was held at the Park regarding the fencing issue at Saylor Farm Estates. She stated that the City's position remains that the residential area should be separated from the un-remediated steep slope area. She stated that Exide has met with US EPA regarding this issue. Currently Farina Construction has a silt fence along this area which will be removed and he does not agree with the City's position to have a permanent fence installed.

Ms. Hoag stated that Exide recommends re-sampling the sections near the fence line with levels greater than 650 ppm and that 3" – 4" of wood chips be added in the same manner as used along the Spring Valley Rd side of the Park. She explained that Exide has purchased land near the Saylor Farm Estates and plans to fence in several un-remediated parcels.

Mr. Beane expressed his belief that the depth of the wood chips in this area should be 6" – 8".

Dr. Jennings expressed his belief that re-sampling seems suspicious. Mr. Beane and Ms. Hoag agreed. Ms. Hoag stated that the areas in question have severely different levels. She also noted the need to clearly define the areas where mulch is needed.

Mr. Beane stated that there are also other slope issues which could occur after the silt fence is removed including erosion and run-off issues.

Ms. Hoag reviewed the map of the Park with the areas affected by the fence issue.

Dr. Jennings questioned if the contour lines were correct as the areas in question do not seem to have steep slopes. Ms. Hoag explained that the map was created pre-construction and does not show the sedimentation basin. She noted her agreement with Exide to allow the downed trees and branches to remain where they lie.

Mr. Beane questioned a timeline for the City's response. Ms. Hoag stated that none was given.

Ms. Hoag expressed the belief that Exide should not resample but should complete the work.

Dr. Jennings stated that he does not support the mulch solution but stated that it is the best solution at this time.

Ms. Hoag stated that Exide has recently been fined for air releases. Dr. Jennings noted that this is pertinent to this situation.

Ms. Hoag stated that Exide may not be meeting current containment regulations but that they are performing much better than in the past. She suggested that the model be re-examined with the reduced child blood lead level of 5 and suggested a meeting with Dr. Kimball to discuss this issue.

Mr. Beane explained that a risk assessment was completed at the location which used a child lead level of 10. This allowed the remediation level of 650 ppm. Ms.

Hoag suggested that the remediated areas also be reviewed in relation to a level of 400 ppm.

Mr. Beane reminded the Council that if the remedy fails, Exide is responsible to take corrective action. He suggested another review of the remediation agreement before a response is given to Exide.

Mr. Beane suggested plantings in the fence area to decrease the erosion and run-off issues which may develop.

Mr. Beane suggested another meeting of the work group before the proposal is amended. He stated that the EAC will receive a further update at their March meeting.

STEEP SLOPE

Mr. Beane reported that Mr. Wood has chosen to work on the Steep Slope Ordinance for his master's thesis. He stated that Mr. Wood has begun his research.

Mr. Wood reported that he has located several model ordinances on the internet and has visited several areas in the City which contain steep slopes.

Mr. Beane gave a brief background and stated that a subcommittee – consisting of Ms. Hoag, Ms. Katzenmoyer, Mr. Wood, and Mr. Beane – has been formed to address this issue. He stated that the subcommittee will guide Mr. Wood through the drafting of the ordinance which will be reviewed by the EAC before being introduced to City Council.

FLOODPLAIN ORDINANCE

Ms. Hoag stated that the City has received comment from DEP/EPA and have started the review process. She noted her hope that this ordinance would be complete in the spring of 2012.

RIPARIAN BUFFER ORDINANCE

Ms. Katzenmoyer expressed her belief that after the work is done on the Steep Slope Ordinance that the Riparian Buffer Ordinance will entail similar work and would be completed relatively quickly.

SMARTH GROWTH ALLIANCE

Mr. Nieves reviewed the upcoming smart growth topics which will be covered by the Center for Excellence in Local Government including Flexible Zoning Techniques, Determining your Community's Character, Subdivision and Land Development, and Coordinating Land Use and Transportation.

Mr. Molteni arrived at this time.

Mr. Nieves noted his hope to attend the sessions. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that the City is a contributor to the Center and that members could attend at the reduced member rate. She stated that she attends the sessions as she is able and they are very informative.

Mr. Nieves stated that the EAC nomination of Judy's on Cherry for local green business recognition has been submitted. He stated that an awards recognition event is in the planning stages.

Ms. Hoag questioned how many nominations were made. Mr. Nieves stated that there were 6 – 8 nominations.

BCTV PROGRAMMING

Mr. Beane stated that Ms. Rauenzahn will continue to work on this item through the end of 2012.

STORMWATER ISSUES

Ms. Hoag stated that she has been working with the PA Stormwater Coalition, on the County MS4 permit process and with the Wyomissing Creek. She stated that the representatives from the Wyomissing Creek work group have drafted an agreement for their municipal solicitors to review. She stated that the main concern with the Wyomissing Creek is sediment which can have many sources. She stated that there was a rise in construction in the area during the sampling period and that it is the hope of the work group to have the Creek re-sampled in the fall.

Mr. Molteni questioned why the Creek was a concern. Ms. Hoag stated that it is classified as a high quality creek but that it has been 20 – 25 years since the sampling was performed.

Ms. Hoag stated that the County MS4 work group is looking at what can be done collectively to work together on the permitting process. She stated that public education and employee training is required for all and the municipalities can work together on these issues.

Ms. Hoag reported that the PA Stormwater Coalition is concerned with the mixed messages being given by PA DEP and US EPA. She stated that there have been multiple workshops held with many inconsistencies. She stated that the Coalition is working to determine how to address these inconsistencies and may request a meeting with PA DEP for clarification. She stated that PA DEP has indicated that they are glad that municipalities are working together. She reported that in addition, PA DEP is going through a re-organization process.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Beane stated that the discussion regarding approving the minutes electronically occurred because of the problems the EAC is having reaching a quorum. He stated that this would allow the minutes to be processed without delay. He stated that Ms. Katzenmoyer would print the responses from all to attach to the minutes as part of the public record.

Motion was made by Dr. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Molteni, to approve the December 28, 2011 and January 31, 2012 minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

REORGANIZATION

Mr. Beane stated that the enabling legislation indicates that this should occur each January. He stated that Ms. Rauenzahn has resigned and has reduced the membership to four members. He stated that he spoke with Ms. Rauenzahn who has agreed to continue working on the BCTV programming through the end of 2012.

Mr. Beane stated that the EAC needs a chair and a vice chair. Mr. Beane stated that the chair assists in setting the agenda and runs the meeting. He stated that the vice chair fills in as needed. Ms. Hoag stated that the chair would also assist in the creation of subcommittees.

Mr. Beane noted the need to increase the use of subcommittees and the need to involve more people.

Mr. Molteni nominated Mr. Beane for chair and Dr. Jennings for vice chair. Mr. Nieves agreed and noted his confusion regarding the email sent on this issue. He seconded the nomination. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Molteni expressed his belief that electronic voting is an excellent idea. Dr. Jennings stated that this would be for administrative issues only.

Mr. Beane stated that the EAC's enabling legislation does not prohibit electronic voting.

Ms. Hoag stated that if there are questions or corrections to the minutes, it would also allow Ms. Katzenmoyer to be better prepared at the next meeting.

RAIN BARREL REGULATIONS

Mr. Beane explained that the final draft ordinance will then be reviewed by the full EAC, Codes, Law and ultimately City Council. He stated that Ms. Hoag needs to make her technical comments and this draft does not include Mr. Molteni's suggestion to include an educational component.

Dr. Jennings questioned the problems with rooftop systems. Ms. Hoag stated that this gets closer to rain harvesting which is not the intent of the rain barrel regulations. She stated that the City is not prepared to deal with these types of systems at this time.

Mr. Beane stated that codes and trades officials have issues with co-mingling potable and non-potable water sources.

Dr. Jennings questioned the barrels being out of the public view. He noted that putting them in the public view would increase awareness. He also questioned the inability of residents to decorate their barrels. He also suggested that the barrel either be more than one foot from the property or the diverter but both are not necessary.

There was discussion of the overflow circumference being larger than the inflow. Ms. Katzenmoyer explained the practicality of this issue with available supplies. She stated that drain spouts are larger than garden hose and these are the materials which are available.

Ms. Katzenmoyer explained that if variances are going to be issued, a process needs to be developed similar to the Zoning Hearing Board to review and allow the variances.

Ms. Hoag stated that speaking practically about front sidewalks, including the barrel blocking the right of way and the overflow hosing crossing the sidewalk and causing a tripping hazard.

Ms. Katzenmoyer explained that the main concern with placing the barrels on porches and roofs is the weight of the barrels when full and the structural issues they may cause.

Mr. Beane stated that the work of the subcommittee will continue and the draft will be further amended.

MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Beane stated that he has been in contact with a person who is interested in serving. He stated that she is a City resident.

Mr. Molteni submitted his application for reappointment.

Mr. Beane suggested that members continue reaching out for additional members.

EARTH DAY

Mr. Beane stated that the West Reading EAC will have a table at the Earth Day event. He stated that they are looking for others to share their table and participate.

Ms. Katzenmoyer explained that Mr. Molteni's group worked on Earth Day last year in order to hold the event due to the health issues of the regular committee members. Mr. Molteni stated that Nigel Walker from Reading Beautification could be contacted regarding this year's event.

OTHER

Mr. Nieves suggested the EAC consider a presentation regarding the Water Authority adding fluoride to the water.

Mr. Molteni agreed noting that not adding fluoride to the water would save taxpayer money and that it is no longer needed as an additive.

Ms. Hoag stated that historically it was added to assist children's tooth development. Mr. Molteni stated that the research does not support this.

Mr. Nieves stated that using fluoride for tooth development does not mean the fluoride needs to be ingested.

Mr. Wood stated that recent information shows that fluoride levels in toothpaste have been decreased due to the increase in the water supply.

Mr. Nieves stated that some municipalities in the US have reduced the fluoride level or have stopped adding it to the water supply.

Mr. Beane suggested a subcommittee be formed on this issue. He stated that the subcommittee should report back to the EAC at its April meeting to decide if a formal recommendation should be made.

Mr. Nieves agreed and requested Mr. Molteni serve on the subcommittee.

SUSTAINABILITY

Mr. Beane stated that the Mayor's Sustainability Committee has formed a subcommittee on recycling. He stated that the subcommittee will be working to capture the waste stream of the Reading School District. He stated that this theory can work with the buy-in of District administrators and teachers.

Ms. Hoag noted the cost savings can mean an increase in jobs.

MEETING DATES

Mr. Beane stated that he will not be available on Tuesdays in March and April and requested that the meetings take place the 4th Wednesday of March and April. The Committee was agreeable.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

The next meeting of the Environmental Advisory Council will be held on Wednesday, March 28 at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by
Shelly Katzenmoyer
Deputy City Clerk