
Environmental Advisory Council
Tuesday, April 27, 2010

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

Present – H. Rauenzahn, A. Molteni, D. Beane, J. Drayer, B. Jennings - 5

Also present – S. Katzenmoyer, D. Hoag, R. Ganter, S. Schuster, M. Schorn

CALL TO ORDER

Harriet Rauenzahn called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm.

ENVIRONMENTAL CLUBS

Sophia Schuster, President of Albright College Eco Club, described the club's efforts on campus. She stated that they are working on a recycling system and outdoor recycling containers will be placed around campus. She also noted that several events were held in honor of Earth Day including serving organic food in the café and film screenings. She noted that they did participate in the Great American Clean Up and volunteer at Nolde Forest removing invasive species of plants from trails.

R. Ganter, 6th grade science teacher at the Magnet School for Performing Arts (located at the former JCC site), stated that this property includes 17 acres of land. The Eco Club participated in the Great American Clean Up and held several Earth Day activities. He noted his hope that City students gain experience with nature and the environment. He stated that he is researching a grant to build a mini environmental center on the site and incorporate a trail with nature activities.

Ms. Hoag and Mr. Brantley arrived at this time.

Mr. Brantley described his work with the Excel School at Reading Iron. He stated that the herb project was very successful culminating in the sale of herb soaps. He stated that this has been a very positive experience for at risk City

youth.

Mr. Schorn congratulated the EAC on their work and showing interest in the City youth. He noted his recent experience at the ground-breaking of the Angelica Environmental Center. He stated that Alvernia and Albright have partnered well on this project and that the labor unions have pledged to donate time working on the Center. He also noted that students from Millmont were using the environmental park at the time.

Mr. Schorn stated that he has been working with City 4th graders for approximately 3 years. He stated that he visits every classroom in the City including public and private schools and neighborhood groups. He makes his presentation to one classroom at a time. He stated that he addresses recycling versus trash, respect for the environment, the Can It program, and invites students to join the Mayor's Kids for a Cleaner City.

Mr. Brantley questioned if the certificates are awarded during a school assembly. Mr. Schorn stated that each building handles this differently – some as part of an awards assembly, some as a classroom assembly.

Mr. Schorn stated that he is aware of Eco Clubs at:

- Northeast Middle School
- 12th & Marion Elementary School
- Reading High School
- Gateway School for Performing Arts
- Millmont Schools

Note: Southern Middle School Astra Club works on recycling and planting projects.

Ms. Rauenzahn questioned how the EAC could assist.

Mr. Brantley stated that he has seen an increase in awareness overall and that more people are becoming eco-friendly.

Mr. Ganter suggested partnering to assist him as he begins planning and planting a garden at the school.

Mr. Beane stated that some schools are very involved, while others are not involved at all. He expressed his belief that the EAC should introduce the concept to other schools and help them get started.

Ms. Schuster stated that the Albright PSEA Club is often looking for opportunities to work with students. She suggested partnering with them. She noted that they are currently looking for a way to work with the RSD.

Mr. Molteni stated that youth should also learn by the example set by the community.

Ms. Drayer stated that people need to realize that the City can be “green” as well.

Mr. Beane questioned the process to reach out to the RSD. Ms. Hoag suggested using the recycling program as a barometer of which schools to approach. Those schools recycling the most may have the most interest in starting clubs.

Ms. Rauenzahn suggested working with schools. Ms. Hoag suggested contacting Dr. Chapman to discuss this issue. Ms. Rauenzahn, Ms. Hoag, and Mr. Beane will meet with Dr. Chapman.

Mr. Brantley noted the success of other cities with organic waste composting. Commercial establishments would be approached to separate their organic waste. He stated that this would also be appropriate in school cafeterias.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Mr. Beane, seconded by Mr. Jennings, to approve the March 23, 2010 minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

423 SCHUYLKILL AVE LOT

Mr. Brantley stated that he has been contacted by Ken Pick County Community Development Director regarding several locations for urban gardens.

Ms. Rauenzahn questioned how Mr. Brantley finds volunteers. He stated that it is best to have area residents volunteer.

Ms. Rauenzahn questioned if the EAC could assist in this process. Mr. Brantley stated that he sometimes gets requests from people in need of community service who contact the Conservancy. He stated that the gardens must be sustainable and these volunteers don't necessarily commit to continued work.

BCTV PROGRAM

Ms. Rauenzahn stated that the April program on sludge was very successful.

RESOLUTION FOR COUNCIL SUPPORT OF EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

Mr. Beane suggested that the resolution be edited after the meeting with Dr. Chapman.

BERNHART PARK REMEDIATION PLAN

Mr. Beane described the meeting at Senator Specter's office. He stated that the deadline for response to the remediation plan has been extended to June 1. A small group has been meeting to draft the City's response.

Mr. Beane noted that the remediation plan would not address the entire park; only those areas that Exide feels would be most heavily used. The rest of the area would be restricted. He noted that the City would like to expand the scope of the clean up for unrestricted use of the park.

Mr. Beane noted that the issue of environmental justice will be addressed in the response. He stated that new soil sampling will be done by the City and the response will attempt to show that the model used by EPA to determine the clean up level is flawed. He informed the EAC that Dr. Eve Kimball has arranged for free blood lead levels to be taken of children who reside in the area of the Saylor Farm housing development.

Ms. Katzenmoyer requested that members review the draft response letter and send comments via email.

Mr. Jennings stated that he has reviewed current Exide emissions data. Ms. Hoag stated her belief that this information should be incorporated into the response.

Mr. Beane stated that another goal of the response is to keep Exide accountable through periodic sampling and surveys. They should not be allowed to clean up the park and walk away from the issue.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Good Schools Pennsylvania

Ms. Rauenzahn stated that she will be meeting with Dave Smith later this week.

Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that they are contacting the EAC in regards to housing and its effects on the City environment.

- Conservancy Luncheon

Ms. Rauenzahn stated that several members were in attendance. She stated that she has invited Katie O'Brien from the Berks Conservation District to talk about her work with the District.

- PICEH

Ms. Katzenmoyer reviewed information distributed by PICEH in the Reading Eagle.

Ms. Rauenzahn suggested that they be invited to a future meeting.

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

The next meeting of the Environmental Advisory Council will be held on **Tuesday, May 25** at 5:30 pm in the Council Office.

Respectfully submitted by
Shelly Katzenmoyer
Deputy City Clerk