

Swarthmore Environmental Advisory Council
Tuesday, April 26, 2022
Minutes
Approved May 24, 2022

Present: Margaret Betz, David Boonin, Phil Coleman, Hannah Covert, David Director, Elizabeth Drake Sue Edwards, Nancy English, Elizabeth Jenkins, Scarlett McCahill, John McKinstry, Carol Nackenoff, Susie O'Donnell, Jennifer Pflugger, Allen Prindle, Alice Sun.

The April 26, 2022, meeting of the Swarthmore EAC began at 7:30 pm on Zoom and in person in Borough Hall.

1. Public Comment

There were no public comments. We welcomed Alice Sun.

2. March Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the March, 2022 meeting were satisfactory to everyone. We will formally approve those at the May meeting.

3. Recognition of Community Leader

We hope to recognize Sue Kelly for her work as a community leader. There was support for Elizabeth's suggestion that her name be attached to the gazebo in Little Crum Creek Park.

4. Borough Council Update

Elizabeth will attend the next meeting of the Environment Committee to report on the work of the EAC. Scarlett will give a shorter report on the EAC to Borough Council at Council's next meeting.

There are new email addresses for Borough Council members: each member's first initial, last name followed by @swarthmorepa.org. For example, Scarlett's email is smccahill@swarthmorepa.org

Scarlett introduced David Boonin as the newest member of Borough Council.

EAC Membership Renewal Process

Scarlett shared how she proposed recruiting for the EAC and Tree Committee to ensure a full complement of people in the future: In October, the chairs would share with Scarlett who will be returning the following year. Through the rest of the calendar year, each committee would look for new people to invite to join so that by the February Council meeting, names to fill vacancies would be ready for Council's approval. The goal is to have full membership by February so there are no gaps in the membership.

She asked whether there might be circumstances why someone would be asked to step off. One circumstance might be if there is someone not working within the authority of the body.

One person asked if this process is being used for other groups that support the work of Borough Council beyond the EAC and the Tree Committee. Scarlett said it was not, but that it could be

expanded to those other groups. Scarlett invited people to contact her.

5. Native Plants

a. Birdtown Designation

Margaret reported on the Audubon Society's Birdtown designation. Much of the information she obtained from Heidi Shiver, the Bird Town Working Group Chair and and Executive Board Member of the PA Audubon Council.

The Audubon Society has recently created an application whereby a municipality can be designated a Birdtown. There are many tiers of being a Birdtown, and if we want to move up the tiers after getting in at a lower designation, we could do it.

At a minimum we need to *inter alia*:

- Form a Birdtown Committee of at least three people. (A question was raised whether all of them need be from the EAC. Margaret will check on that.)
- Pass a Birdtown Resolution through Borough Council which would include particular language agreeing that we will make Swarthmore a Birdtown.
- Make a pollinator garden
- Have programs/activities for elementary and secondary students

Once we do that, and Audubon designates us a Birdtown, Audubon would provide us signs to post, and help with media events.

Margaret will invite Heidi to speak to the EAC next month.

b. Incentives for landscapers to be certified in sustainable landscaping

One suggestion was to lift up on the EAC's website a list of those who get their sustainable landscaping. It was suggested that this could be part of the revamped Webpage

Elizabeth suggested that we write a letter to *The Swarthmorean* encouraging homeowners to get electric leaf blowers and hire sustainable lawn contractors. David suggested that when we make a pitch for electric lawn equipment, that we encourage people to buy 100% green electricity. Elizabeth will draft that article. People who want to help her should contact her.

David suggested that we encourage townspeople to encourage their own contractors to get electric lawn equipment.

Carol offered to write up Solarize Delco and grants for those with lower income.

c. Home Eco-Audits

The Home Eco Audit program, a joint project last year of the EAC and the Swarthmore Horticultural Society, was successful, resulting in audits of 14 yards. We will repeat this this year. Priority will be given to the 10 people on the waiting list from last year. We could promote it during pollinator week and make it flexible as to when the audits happen. Jennifer Pennington and Susie O'Donnell will be talking to Rotary Club about this soon.

There was discussion as to how to publicize this. It was recognized that we need to invite people with plant expertise to help with these audits.

d. No Mow May

We may mention this. There was recognition that it is good to provide flowers for pollinators longer, but as Doug Tallamy mentioned in the Q&A, there should be no mowing at all in June

and beyond, so the insects continue to have flowers. <https://beecityusa.org/no-mow-may/> No firm conclusion was reached.

6. Ready for 100

a. Borough Solar Update

Phil reported what AFewSteps has ruled out as far as options for Ready for 100: Electric vehicles for the Borough; more EV charging stations. (The SEPTA lot might still be a possibility.)

Regarding more solar panels on the roof, there might be some possible additions on the edges of the borough hall roof. This might give 30,000 Kwh, saving \$3600/year. We could sell sREC which could give another \$1000/year. If we could get private investment using a power purchase agreement, then it could make the payback period shorter.

David Director suggested pursuing community solar where people in a community buy into a local community solar program. There is legislation before the PA House, HB 1555, that would assist in this. Jen O'Mara is a sponsor of it. David Moonin thought that Borough Council could pass a resolution in support of this. It was recognized that a local community solar program could be created even without the legislation.

Phil suggested that the EAC encourage Bill Webb to look into installing more panels on the new roof.

b. Electric School Buses

Elizabeth ; PHILADELPHIA is going to update their school bus fleet and make them electric. The SRS sustainability committee will report to SRS about this and then take it to the WSSD board about electric school buses.

Recycling

-Status of recycling bins in public spaces (parks, Borough Hall, etc)

Elizabeth said that there was a question from Borough Council regarding the recycling requirements for biz in code? How is it enforced if so?

Elizabeth reported that business under the borough code is supposed to recycle, and this is enforced. The businesses sometimes find it hard to find good vendors. Perhaps the EAC would generate a fact sheet for businesses in conjunction with Town Center. It would include best practices, vendors, etc.

-Recycling fact sheet for new residents

Margaret reported that the recycling center steps to the dumpster are not safe. She fell off it and hurt herself badly and feels they need to be improved.

David reported that the County is having a public meeting on a new waste management plan. See delcopa.gov/workshops.

The meeting adjourned at 9:01.

Respectfully submitted.

John McKinstry
Co-Clerk