

**Swarthmore Environmental Advisory Council**  
**Tuesday, May 24, 2022**  
**Minutes**

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

The May 24, 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.

**2. Bird Town presentation by Heidi Shiver, Audubon Bird Town Working Group Chair**

Heidi Shiver talked to us about how to apply to be a Birdtown with the Audubon Society. Audubon has new website.

**What is Bird Town**

Bird Town is a working partnership of Audubon and municipalities in Pennsylvania to promote conservation and community-based actions to create a healthy, more sustainable environment for birds and people. Audubon provides the tools for the municipality to engage their residents, schools and businesses in making more ecologically-friendly decisions, conserving energy and in the process, saving money. A Bird Town makes efforts to restore valuable ecosystem services to create a culture of conservation where everyone is a potential steward of nature in their backyard and beyond.

**Advantages of Being a Bird Town**

When you become Bird Town, you have access to the back page, which has many resources. They have a Bird Town e-newsletter. They have tips for people on how to enhance their yards. Being a Bird Town offers a town a network where one can tap into lots of ideas to engage community and schools.

**Application**

There is now a new application process. You come in a first level (green) with a municipal resolution, an application and a committee established to support the activities of being a Bird Town. This first level has different strategies to become a Bird Town. Highest level is Gold. For Green level, a municipality must fill out application. To get to higher level, Bronze, the municipality must perform four activities. Every year, the municipality must submit a report. To reach the next level, one must submit the next application.

In preparing the resolution she recommends working with Borough Council ahead of time to prepare them for the resolution. We should also involve the Swarthmore Horticultural Society

and the Friends of Little Crum Creek Park. Heidi said that she is willing to attend the Borough Council meeting when the resolution is before it.

We will take another pass at the application. We should reach out to Sue Kelly and the SHS. John will reach out to Sue Kelly re Friends of Little Crum, cc Margaret Betz. Carol would be willing to reach out to the Scott Foundation, cc Margaret.

### **3. March and April Meeting Minutes**

The minutes from the March and April 2022 meeting were APPROVED.

### **4. Calendar Items:**

Sunday, June 5, 4pm:

There will be an event during Swarthmore Horticulture Society's open garden at Hedgleigh Spring (32 Amherst Avenue) the home of Charles Cresson. This particular event will be at 4 pm and is a brief gathering of EAC and Tree Committee members to meet new members and thank all members of both committees. We encourage all EAC members to attend, as this will be like a great opportunity to educate people about EAC's and Tree Committee's work and encourage others to join us in our work.

Wednesday, June 8:

SRS walk and bike to school day. SRS student council is asking the school district to purchase electric busses.

EAC will have a table in July with lots of information at the Farmers Market. We need volunteers to man that table.

The Swarthmore Fun Fair will be in person in September. The EAC can have a table either with or next to AFewSteps.

### **5. Solar on Borough Hall**

Phil Coleman reported on the prospect of installing more solar panels at Borough Hall. A member of Beth Israel Synagogue is putting up a solar array at that temple. Tax credits make putting up a solar array more attractive, reducing the payback period. Beth Israel created an LLC for a high-earning congregant, so he could get tax credits in exchange for his investing a substantial amount of money. That could improve the payback by a few years.

Phil suggest that we solicit someone in town who could benefit from the tax credit. Steve from the Beth Israel will help us set it up. Phil will also talk with Bob Scott about how to set this up.

The EAC APPROVED investigating this as an option and is supportive of the concept. Elizabeth will attend tomorrow's environment committee to explain the concept.

### **6. Solar Over Parking Spaces**

Phil also reported that he met with a company that used to be at the Navy Yard. They created a model where they created a solar parking canopy that is associated with an office building. An

EV driver can park under the canopy and plug his or her car in to charge. Any power that is not taken by the EV is fed to the office building. Phil will invite them to meet with us and get a tour of the possible parking lots (either north of the tracks owned by SEPTA or south of the tracks owned by the Borough. The electricity would be used by perhaps the Co-Op or Dartmouth House apartments. John offered to help Phil with this to talk with the Dartmouth House Apartments.

### **7. West Chester Borough Code**

Carol reported that she talked with the Borough of West Chester regarding its plastic ban. The West Chester Borough ban was put on hold during COVID when the state temporarily pre-empted the ban.

Another option is a sustainable store initiative, under which stores, restaurants and bars are presented with a menu of options to reduce waste, as opposed to a prescription of just one or two items.

West Chester was able to implement its plastic bag ban in January of 2022, exempting delivery and take-out options. They are getting a lot of pushback: it is unpopular now, even though there was a long period before the law went into effect.

The person in West Chester suggested that a plastic bag ban be enacted at a county level, so as to avoid having communities create competitive disadvantage versus adjacent towns. He also thought the bans on gasoline lawn equipment were premature: he said we should wait until technology has improved.

Elizabeth and Carol have drafted code recommendations.

### **8. Recycling/Waste Reduction Update**

Businesses are required to find recycling haulers. Would anyone be willing to do that research? Jennifer offered to do that research. Elizabeth Drake could share information about glass recyclers used by the college

Jennifer Pfluger presented information on waste reduction. Zero Waste refers to a movement to reducing waste as much as possible. It refers to responsible production, reuse and reduction.

Zero waste hierarchy:

Highest: rethinking and redesigning. Then reduce. Then reuse. Then recycle/compost. Then material recovery. Residuals Management. The bottom is unacceptable: which is incineration. (Incinerators go against zero waste, because for an incinerator to work, you need a constant stream of trash.)

There have been resolutions (including Swarthmore 2021-04) is about zero waste. The resolution has many things in it: It asks the county to do an audit of waste in Delaware County. There was a lot of corruption at the County waste management. It asks county council to help the municipalities in working on waste. (The county is busy right now, but it looks for help from forward-thinking municipalities such as Swarthmore.)

Jennifer asked for feedback on the survey she has drafted to be sent to the 50-some Borough businesses. Once drafted in final, the survey will be sent to the Town Center Coordinator who would send it to the borough's businesses. EAC members gave feedback regarding the survey.

Jennifer and Susie will finalize this survey, send this to the Town Center Coordinator who will send it to the town's businesses.

We will be able to share our initiative with Media and West Chester.

Former Borough Manager, Jane Billings has suggested with regard to our initiatives to have more sustainable yards, that we look at a Borough Ordinance that requires lawns to be mowed and weeds to be removed.

Eco Audits will proceed as suits the needs of the individual eco auditors.

The meeting adjourned at 9:01.

Respectfully submitted.

John McKinstry

Co-Clerk