

2/28/23 Swarthmore EAC Meeting Notes

Attendees: *Elizabeth Jenkins (Co-Chair), Jennifer Pfluger (AM), Shirley Dodson (AM), Sue Edwards (AM), Scarlett McCahill (Borough Council), Susie O'Donnell (M), Allen Prindle (AM), Margaret Betz (M), Phil Coleman (A Few Steps/AM), Julie Ellis (M), Hannah Ulloa (Swarthmore College Dept of Sustainability), David Boonin (Borough Council), Hannah Covert (M), Susan Kelly (AM), Carol Nackenoff (M)*

M = Member

AM = Associate Member

Guests: Howard Sherman, from Sierra Club's DelCo Team; Anna Benner, local student

Public Comment

Howard Sherman - Sierra Club DelCo Team: Presentation on the benefits of a Sustainability Municipal Grant Writer for Delaware County.

-Especially critical with the Federal funds coming down to the state for distribution. Many municipalities in the County are very small and don't know or have the resources to apply for all of these grant opportunities. Could we hire someone at the County level to assemble the grants, then reach out to the municipalities to figure out their needs, then help the municipality to apply and set up a mechanism for data collection. Could also let municipalities know about programs for individual residents. Can Swarthmore Borough recommend to the County Sustainability Committee and/or the County Council that we support this action?

-Questions:

Carol – What might it cost?

Howard: Not sure. Haverford Township has voted to fund a full-time grant writer – salary they've advertised is \$60k. Media already has a grant writer, not sure of her salary. DelCo is considering hiring a County Grant Writer for the County's needs (wouldn't necessarily be looking to the needs of the individual municipalities)

David – Could there be internal competition/conflict of interest? How does the grant writer prioritize different communities given her limited time?

Howard: At least they would learn about it, not necessarily something that happens now. Could reuse some language b/w applications. Grant writer would just have to do her best but likely higher quality application. Would likely be first come first serve. Might depend on who the supervisory department would be.

Susie: Would offer opportunity vs. competition. Advantage to coordination.

Phil: That's why we got the GHG grant a decade ago. Because we were multiple communities.

Hannah: \$60-70K salary. Any good grant manager would put together policies to prevent conflict of interest and issues re: timeline/queue etc.

→Howard will send the updated language to the group and vote next month

EAC Housekeeping

-Thanks and appreciation to Susie and Julie for signing on to a 3 year term as EAC Members and to Phil for joining us as an Associate Member

-Approve EAC Meeting Minutes - Yes

EAC Events and Updates

-CCA for PA MOU (that we recommended) passed Borough Council – yay!

→John has been reaching out to other communities sharing the news and encouraging them to sign their own MOU

→Scarlett: Next steps? Scarlett has checked in with Joule re: their timeline. Our Ready for 100 goals require a quarterly public meeting. Would like to have a public meeting as a part of a quarterly check in

-Birdtown Ceremony: Overall, very positive experience. Everyone was so pleased. Signs went up within 48 hours. We now have access to all of the resources – pamphlets, citizen science programs, resources

-Scott Weidensaul's A World on the Wing Book Club (13 people registered): March 1 - Register at <https://delcolibraries.libcal.com/event/10095319>

-Scott Weidensaul virtual talk and Q&A: March 9 (86 people registered) - <https://delcolibraries.libcal.com/event/10292301>

-Little Crum Creek Park bought 2 signs to celebrate

-Birdtown Committee: Meeting quarterly

-Monarch Talk with Dr. Chip Taylor, 4/27, 7PM Zoom – talk about the monarch butterfly in general and why monarch waystations are beneficial

→Put in Swarthmorean, advertise, partner with SHS

→Monarch Watch – organization that he started was celebrating its 30th year. Really great event that Julie attended that highlighted a lot of great opportunities for our community to connect to

-SHS Planting in Borough parking lot – looking at having it be a monarch waystation – waystation approach allows butterflies to go from patch to patch of plants that support them.

Zero Waste

-Update (Jennifer) and strategy around proposed single use plastics ordinance

-Bill Webb has brought forward a single use plastic ordinance for straws and Styrofoam as well. Would like to do it asap because he thinks it would help reduce the overflowing trash bins in the downtown.

-EAC team and Scarlett are going to combine it with Nathan's draft ordinance

-Will work on this month – will get approved at the EAC meeting for next month; also going in front of other committees

-Met with PennEnvironment community coordinator. 19 other communities are doing it in PA.

-Reviewed results of Merchant Biz Survey and Community Biz Survey

-Approve the development of a single use plastic ordinance with a 15 cent fee for compliant bags that the biz can charge and keep the fee for themselves, regulate single use utensils + straws and Styrofoam

-Final Report on Plastic Survey for Businesses → How could we advertise? Put on the EAC webpage? Attach to this month's meeting minutes.

-Swarthmore Bookstore had the most concerns in the original survey; however, the new director was much more positive

-Yellow highlighted in document would be legislated:

-Ordinance of plastics and straws/utensils: 50% who use supported

-Fee: 60% of all who use supported

Community Survey

- 205 responses: From the general community, deliberately didn't reach out to environment groups to advertise to their membership
- Ordinance single use plastics: 67%
- Ordinance straws: 65%
- Fee: 63%
- 73% Didn't feel it important for single use plastics, straws, utensils, etc.

ASK

- Development of ordinance language: Sub-committee group to meet next week – Susie & Hannah. Elizabeth and Carol do a final review.
- When would Faran (PennEnvironment rep) be the best resource? At what type of meeting → Environment Committee, Borough Meeting.
- Want to have it be settled before the general government committee meeting (Sarah G., Chair) – March 20th. Bill and the Public Works Committee would be the ones to enforce so also need to be kept in the loop.
- Want to make sure that we're all able to get onto the same page with a strong draft in alignment with the County and State
- Would be likely passed in April (Discussion of final language - April 3rd), April 10th – vote to advertise, required by law; then vote into action on May 1 and May 8th
- Would be helpful for the EAC to show up for public comment – March 6th Council Work Session (first time full Council will see), next most impactful meeting April 3rd meeting, plus March 13th and April 10th if possible. Work sessions are the most impactful.
- Styrofoam – don't have the data on it but predominantly take away
- All Full Members in favor
- Scarlett is going to be trying to turn out other supporters in the food and bev sector. We should all listen and pay attention to incorporate their needs.
- How can we incorporate composting?

Curbside Composting in Media Borough

- Guest Speaker: Anna Benner
- >Media Borough's Grant Administrator, Karen Taussig-Lux had a conflict and will be joining us in April
- Could we do what Media is doing with a curbside composting?
- Humanitarian ethical issue – so much food waste; good for the environment and good for humankind too
- One of the biggest challenges is the methane in landfills – not as well known but contributes a big part of global warming
- Local connection: 37% of food waste is coming from households
- Benefits of composting can help counteract that – good for farming, carbon sequestration, reduces methane in landfills
- 2,094 households in Swarthmore – Average household in the US 700lbs per year. 60% is compostable; would significantly reduce the amount used
- Media's program: 25% of Media's households
- Mostly from Media's regular funds but got a grant from the Environmental Protection 902 Program; cost savings using Public Works staff
- 3 Year Pilot

-No added costs to the Borough but did create longer pick up times. Went from daily pick up to weekly.

-Other costs: Buckets, education materials – 90% was covered by the grants

-With a once a week pick up are there any concerns re: animals: Lots of educational videos online, special lid

-Is it mixed with yard waste in the truck? Anna thinks so.

-Ended up being a money saver because less costly than picking it up for trash

Next Steps: Anna will reach out to Bill and report back – County program that might be good to research

2022 Review and 2023 Planning – Will review next meeting