

**Attending:** members Elizabeth Jenkins, Tom McCabe, James Verdi, Corey Ullman, Annie Fox, Claudia Cueto; associate members Susan Kelly, Alan Prindle, Danielle Callahan, Nancy English, Melissa Tier, Phil Coleman

**Order of business:**

Elizabeth makes a motion to approve the council's April meeting minutes. All approve.

**Green Power Partners**

Elizabeth updates the council on efforts she has made to determine how many Swarthmore residents are using green energy so we can get an accurate assessment for the EPA's quarterly Green Power Communities rankings.

Swarthmore currently ranks 9th among communities in the country, with a 30 percent usage of green power (as of 4/25/18).

However, Elizabeth says that is primarily due to Swarthmore College using 100 percent renewable energy. The borough may be using a much higher percentage of green energy but it is difficult to determine residential usage as there are 12 providers of green energy and each one had to be contacted to find out number of kilowatts they sell to Swarthmore residents.

Of 12 providers Elizabeth contacted, only three responded, showing that 1 percent of residents are using renewables. She says the true number is very underreported and the council needs to work on making relationships with the providers more robust. Elizabeth says she will work on finding the right people to talk to so we can get accurate numbers.

Based on his past experience tracking the numbers, Phil estimates that 20-25 percent of borough households are using renewable energy.

**Major recycling changes**

Elizabeth notes that the Borough Council's Environmental Committee is meeting tomorrow about the proposed changes to the borough's curbside recycling program.

China has been limiting the amount of recycled material it will accept from the United States and cracking down on contamination levels (.5 percent from 3 percent).

Tipping costs are climbing from \$3.44 per ton to \$65 per ton.

The practical implications for the EAC are that we may not have mixed curbside recycling and even if residents separate their material, the borough might not collect all of it. The market for glass and plastics has bottomed out and it may only be aluminum that will be collected.

Residents may have to take their items to the town recycling center and will need to be educated about contamination standards.

Elizabeth asks Melissa what actions the college is taking and Melissa replies that she hasn't heard of any changes and any information the sustainability office has received regarding recycling has been much less dire.

Melissa notes that the college has greatly reduced waste — from about 18 percent to 15 percent. She notes that all the takeout containers, cups and cutlery are compostable.

Annie suggests the borough could make an effort to encourage composting, perhaps offering regular challenges to residents to commit to small changes.

Alan suggests that the borough should ask the public for suggestions on how to work on reducing waste.

Elizabeth encourages all EAC members to attend the meeting; more details will be shared with the council following the meeting.

### **Review of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Study and Action Plan**

Phil Coleman presents an overview of the Swarthmore Area Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, completed in 2010 by the Temple University Center for Sustainable Communities, and conducted on behalf of the municipalities of Swarthmore Borough, Nether Providence Township, Rose Valley Borough, Rutledge Borough, Swarthmore Borough, Swarthmore College and the Wallingford-Swarthmore School District.

The study was part of a \$80,000 grant from Pennsylvania's DEP to help municipalities conduct emissions inventories and develop action plans for reducing emissions. The Multi-Municipal Environmental Advisory Councils (MMEAC) were instrumental in kickstarting the study, which was conducted by Temple University's Center for Sustainable Communities.

Phil says the study (which analyzed emissions for the years 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008) reported that 40 percent of greenhouse gas emissions recorded in the footprint of the Wallingford-Swarthmore School District came from residential sources, 40 percent was due to transportation (motor vehicle traffic), 8 percent came from Swarthmore College and 3 percent was attributed to the school district.

The study established a baseline from 2005 showing total greenhouse gas emissions from the area equaling 229,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents.

Phil says they then looked at what would happen by 2020, noting that the goal was to cut the 2005 baseline by 20 percent by 2020.

An action plan was developed on how to reduce emissions in order to reach the 20 percent target. The organization [AFewSteps.org](http://AFewSteps.org) was spun off with that goal in mind. Phil says the group took action on several fronts, including offering environmental audits of people's houses and pushing green power very hard. (Swarthmore became second in the country in terms of green power usage.)

Phil says eight years later the group is less active than it has been due to life changes among members. However, the group is still active and continues to advocate for emissions reduction and commitment to green power and recycling.

[AFewSteps.org](http://AFewSteps.org) maintains a website featuring advice on the best ways residents and organizations can but their carbon footprint.

He says the group advertises that it collects residents' electronics to take to Best Buy for recycling and Phil is working on developing a course that teaches people how they can save on home energy bills. He also gives presentations on how this can be done, noting that he saves \$2 thousand yearly on electric and gas bills.

Phil notes that the four municipal EACs helped drive the emissions reduction effort. He says the councils met several times, formed committees and determined they would work on energy usage. Phil led one of those committees which developed into [AFewSteps.org](http://AFewSteps.org).

Elizabeth notes that since the 10-year anniversary of the report is approaching, perhaps there could be a discussion with Swarthmore College about revisiting the study in 2020. She says that it may be a great project for the fellows in the Office of Sustainability Office and needs to be discussed with Aurora.

Several members of the council say it would be worthwhile to have Phil give his presentation at an EAC-sponsored event soon.

**Housekeeping:**

- \* An article informing residents about the menace of the Spotted Lanternfly needs to be written for the Swarthmorean. Corey says she wrote the article and submitted it to the paper.
- \* Borough mulch has not sold as well as previous years. We are nearing the deadline for its sale to the public.
- \* An EAC-sponsored presentation on composting needs to be organized. Elizabeth says we are waiting for Jennifer Pfluger's input — she has some contacts at Penn State Extension's Master Gardner's program that may be willing.
- \* Need to continue discussion on Open Spaces initiative. Waiting to hear back from Lauren McKinney who was to explore a program run by the Keystone Conservation Trust, which offers guidance on the issue to communities. Elizabeth notes that Thursday's Natural Lands presentation on open spaces for the school district might be a good idea for grant ideas and conversation.
- \* Annie says she will sign up Swarthmore Borough for the Audubon Bird Town program.
- \* Elizabeth says she and Jen Pfluger are still brainstorming how to best present information to the public from Colin Purrington's talk at the April EAC meeting detailing ways to reduce tick and mosquito populations in town. EAC webpage and possible Farmer's Market presentation under consideration.
- \* The college has released its final Crum Woods Restoration and Stewardship Plan. Would be worthwhile to present it to the public, possibly at an EAC meeting. Melissa notes that it will be presented to the public at the college in September.
- \* Melissa says she has a student working with her this summer on composting projects, specifically with local businesses, and she is open to working with private organizations.