

Swarthmore Environmental Advisory Council

November 27, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Present: Members: Elizabeth Jenkins (Chair), Annie Fox, James Verdi, Corey Ullman, Matt McCabe, Borough council liaison Lauren McKinney; Swarthmore College liaison Melissa Tier; associate members: Susan Kelly, Allen Prindle, Jen Pfluger, Nancy English.

United Nations Conference on Climate

Melissa started the meeting with a discussion of her upcoming trip to Poland to attend the UN conference on climate. The conference is being held three years after the Paris Accord and is designed for nations to discuss progress towards the commitments in that Accord. Melissa will be attending along with several faculty members and students.

In addition to a planned blog and Skype link aimed at the campus community, Elizabeth suggested the attendees consider submitting an article to the Swarthmorean.

Carbon Emissions Cap & Trade Proposal

Elizabeth updated the group on the carbon cap and trade proposal that is being put forward by the EAC for support from Borough Council. Elizabeth and Annie will be presenting the proposal on behalf of the EAC on November 28th to the Council's Environment Committee.

If supported by the Environment Committee, Borough Council will consider the proposal at its next meeting in December.

Elizabeth urged other members of EAC to attend. Lauren explained that Council support was not a sure thing and the Environment Committee's support would be essential. Elizabeth mentioned that Annie had been working to have members of the Clean Air Council attend.

Borough Council Update

Lauren raised the new rules that Borough Council had approved pertaining to all borough property.

The rules were proposed in response to issues that have arisen with respect to the "rammed earth" wall in the center of town. The wall has been degrading and requires frequent attention, especially clean-up, but the public works team. When the wall was approved, and funded by the Centennial Foundation, no provision was made for maintaining and repairing the wall. In this instance, the Centennial Foundation has now agreed to repair with a stone, or slate, overlay.

As a reaction to the rammed wall experience, Borough Council approved a new procedure that applies to any improvement or installation on borough property. The procedure requires completion of a form which contains a number of questions to be answered. The completed form must be submitted sixty days prior to the proposed installation or improvement.

Jenn asked whether this new procedure would change anything, asking in particular if it would have prevented the rammed earth from being installed. Susan thought the procedure may have led to more questioning around the wall's installation, but Lauren pointed out that there was considerable support for the rammed earth wall.

Elizabeth asked about how the Borough would implement a requirement that the improvement or installation be maintained. Lauren explained that the procedure was a resolution, not an ordinance, and accordingly individuals could not be fined if the procedure was not followed.

Growing Greener Grant

Lauren updated the group on the ongoing work surrounding improvement to water flow at the Swarthmore Swim Club. Lauren mentioned that a neighbor to the Club was upset that the a proposed new channel would remove a small waterfall from his backyard, and that he would be presenting on the issue at the Environmental Committee meeting on November 28th. Susan explained that the current channel is falling apart and that the engineering firm, KCI, has gotten almost all necessary permits to start the work. Next steps will be to secure grants necessary to complete the project which will improve water flow all the way to the Delaware River.

CORPOS Plan

The group briefly discussed the CORPOS plan. While the plan itself has been difficult to access, a copy is going to become available in the public library. Further discussion was postponed until the next meeting.

Farmers Market Table

Jenn summarized the recent EAC table at the Swarthmore Farmers' Market. The table was running for two hours.

The first hour focused on composting. Master gardener Sam Barnett answered questions on backyard composting. Jenn explained that Sam has a one-hour Power Point presentation and suggested that he be invited to present to EAC in the spring. In addition to discussing composting, Sam answered questions on the Spotted Lantern Fly.

The second hour focused on mosquito and tick control tips control tips. During this hour, Colin Purrington was available to provide advice and answer people's questions.

Overall, Jenn thought the table was successful and provided people with valuable information. Sam's materials were better suited for an indoor presentation. Colin's handouts were popular and he discussed what actions towns can take in addition to homeowners.

Another successful element of the table as a raffle for Jenn's compost cone and a similar feature should be included in subsequent table events.