

EAC January 23, 2024 Minutes

Members in Attendance: George Mullikin, Grant Alger, Steven Nelson, David Reidel, Dan Ford, Karen Graziano, P.R. West, and Building and Zoning Director Karyn Hyland. Borough Council Members Liz Wyckoff and Dennis Livrone were also in attendance.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm

Reorganization: George Mullikin and Karen Graziano were voted to remain Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively.

Approval of Minutes November 21, 2023: Minutes were approved as amended.

Reports

DCAP (Steve): The DCAP steering committee did not meet in November or December, but there was a Zoom meeting in January. Steve updated the group with the current actions that should be included in the climate action plan. An extensive list of possible action items that need to be narrowed down is included. Steve would like to see the DCAP included with the Borough's Comprehensive Plan, which means narrowing down the list of individual actions is essential. Steve has given April as a goal date to have this done so that the Planning Commission can be invited and a discussion among both groups can be held.

Farmer's Market (Dan): Dan would like to define which Farmer's Market dates are the most important for EAC representation. Having representatives present at the Earth Day Farmer's Market would be a priority. George suggested that this subcommittee formulate a plan and present it at the next EAC meeting. Dan sees the benefit of the Farmer's Market to broaden communications with the public. He thinks it could be part of the Outreach and Communication subcommittee. The notion that having fewer subcommittees would mean less redundancy was talked about among the group. The decision to combine the farmers' market with outreach and communication was agreed upon.

Outreach and Communication: None

Bird Town (Grant): Grant spoke to the group about joining a pilot sponsorship program to help fund Bird Town activities. Grant would like to identify 15 borough businesses to start with. Grant shared a draft of the sponsorship letter with the present members. After a discussion, the EAC agreed that the sponsorship program was a good idea and proceeded. Grant also gave a brief overview of the annual Bird Town report from 2023 to the present members. Karyn spoke to the EAC about the Street Tree planting program, which can be included in the report. It is a multiphase program, beginning in Maplewood, where we offer a free street tree to residents interested in having a tree in their yard. This is a big deal, along with the Shade Tree Commission's vision to help provide shelter for migratory and native birds.

Comprehensive Plan Update (Steve): Steve was at the January meeting. He told the EAC where the Planning Commission is within the process of the Comp Plan and the similarities between the Comp Plan and the DCAP. There will still be one more workshop meeting, although the date has yet to be announced. There will be no 2nd Tuesday meeting in February.

Index of Open Areas (Dan): Dan is creating a list of Borough parcels that meet specific criteria, such as Borough-owned properties. Dan uses county records to go through the open space areas, HOA-owned properties, and land trusted owned, and two properties are preserved with protective documents (deed restrictions). Dan will also then use environmental layers to see how that intersects with the privately

owned properties. One example is Center Square Towers, which owns property that cannot be built on because of the creeks that run along there. Dan hopes to have a more complete report for the group by the next meeting. The goal of this project is to make this information readily available to the EAC and other members of the public who would be interested in this data.

Old/New Business:

CCA Discussion: George would like to talk about recommending to the Environmental and Recreation Committee to show intent to join a CCA by signing an MOU (memorandum of understanding). CCA, Community Choice Aggregation, is a program that allows municipalities to procure power from alternate suppliers while still receiving transmission and distribution from PECO. The Borough can agree to buy clean and renewable energy. It was represented that this may result in lower rates. The way this organization is set up, the CCA for PA would administer the program on behalf of the Borough. Several local boroughs, including Narberth and Hatboro, have signed MOUs with CCA for PA. The MOU is a nonbinding agreement for the program, and there is no obligation to sign a proposal or do anything we do not want to do.

The members of the EAC discussed the pros and cons of a program like this. Karyn spoke with the manager of Media Borough, who had shared concerns about how the program will look moving forward and if it will have both environmental and financial benefits. The Council believes, ultimately, this comes down to cost. It may be worth considering if the CCA can provide cleaner energy at a better price than PECO or another electric supplier. Several members of the EAC mentioned that using a program like CCA for PA would align with the DCAP program, as it's been acknowledged that the Borough would otherwise struggle to reduce carbon load from private property. Steve would like to see an MOU before making a recommendation to the Borough Council. Karyn will speak with the manager to determine the proper committee.

The members of the EAC have agreed that more research and due diligence are needed before this is recommended to the Borough Council. George will ask Dennis at the CCA of PA for a sample MOU to help draft the Borough's document and work with Dennis on a timeline.

Earth Day Planning: There are approximately three months before Earth Day. The Council agreed they need to decide this year's goal and what activities should occur in conjunction with Earth Day. This year, the Farmer's Market will open on Earth Day. The Communication and Outreach committee could generate some ideas. Bird habitats and pollinator-friendly gardening were two ideas discussed during the meeting. Information about building bird boxes or providing seeds to create a pollinator garden may be some options for the Farmer's Market table.

Adjournment: With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 9:11 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Erika Fellman
Minutes Secretary