

Borough of Doylestown

Environmental Advisory Council

Minutes of the meeting held Tuesday, June 21, 2022

Attendance: George Mullikin, Steve Nelson, Kristin Winters, Wendy Margolis (Borough Council), Karyn Hyland (Borough Staff), P.R. West, Grant Alger, Dennis Livrone (Borough Council), Jim Baldassari (Doylestown Township EAC)

1) Call to order: George M. called the meeting to order at 5:34 pm.

2) Approval of minutes: The minutes were approved by common consent.

3) Single-Use Plastics – Public Outreach:

- George M. summarized the 6/2 meeting with Environment and Recreation. The ordinance and outreach plan were generally well received. Some good objections/questions were raised, in particular:
 - There are studies mentioned in the findings. We should reference the studies if possible.
 - Outreach should include how to address concerns raised by businesses on the border with other municipalities that don't have the regulations.
 - What would the economic impact be for businesses? What is the cost of replacement bags? Is the fee (that goes back to the businesses) adequate for the cost of paper bags?
- The letter P.R. W. put together is good and we can use it as our template for the letter to businesses.
- We discussed having a public meeting before the ordinance is brought before Borough Council, and agreed this would be a good idea.
- John Davis/Borough staff will put together a list of businesses in the Borough. Karyn H. said this is currently being worked on, and it will be generally comprehensive and accurate. We should allow two meeting cycles (starting with this one) to get the list put together. Some businesses don't use bags, but it may be easiest to just send the letter to everyone.
- We discussed that some of the studies may be from the movie *Bag It*, but we can just ask Penn Environment for references – they have a lot. The Borough solicitor was comfortable with a general reference to studies in the ordinance, but it would be useful for us to have studies to cite if questions come up. There are also other places we can look for references (NJ DEP, other municipalities, other EACs).
- Steve N. noted that Environment and Recreation asked who should be responsible for outreach tasks. Steve N. reduced the text in the outreach plan but kept all of the tasks, then added “who” and “when”. He highlighted which ones are most important and ones where he thinks the EAC should be involved. We reviewed the doc, priorities, and potential responsible parties.
 - Environment and Recreation approved the outreach plan as written, so we can start doing the tasks. Wendy M. said the committee recommended by consensus moving the ordinance forward to Council, but we should have all of these other pieces in place first.
 - Wendy M. noted that Doylestown Township has been working on their own plastics reduction plan. Jim B. said that a survey in the Township showed support. He said chain stores are on board; “mom and pop” businesses are different but there have not been a lot of complaints.
 - Wendy M. said there is concern about the business response, so the letter is important.

- We should pick a date for the public meeting. September is the absolute earliest we could have a meeting; Karyn H. noted that our letter and our advertisement for the meeting need to be out there with enough time for people to plan to attend. We may have the meeting in October.
- We will meet with business groups and host the public meeting to answer questions and gather support before the ordinance goes to Council.
- Karyn H. said the business letter should be sent in August. We will have the business list by then. The same time the letter goes out info can be uploaded to the website; then a day or two later the info can be sent via DMail and social media and a press release can go out with info about the public meeting. Grant A. will start working on info for the website.
- P.R. W. asked about additional info for the letter (e.g., where to buy paper bags, etc.), and the group agreed that these kinds of details will be sent to the businesses in a second letter after Council approval. The first letter before approval will not have this level of detail.
- Steve N. suggested we create a subcommittee to work on the letter and some of the other tasks. George M. agreed that it would be helpful to have a group work on some of the details.
- Grant A. will work on creating a page for the plastics info on the Borough website. Karyn H. said there will also be an announcement on the news page for the public meeting.
- P.R. W. will look for references. The ordinance template came from Penn Environment, so they will probably be the best resource for studies.
- We will work on individual tasks over the next month to get started. We will sign up on the Google Drive. We can communicate with Doylestown Township with questions and should refer to our own survey and docs for info.

4) Comprehensive Plan Priorities:

- The Bucks Co Planning Commission (BCPC) is leading this. Kristin W. and Steve N. are attending meetings, and others are welcome.
- As previously discussed, our plan is to develop a prioritized list of topics of concern to send to the BCPC as suggestions to be included in the survey. The next comp plan meeting is 7/12.
- We brainstormed a list of topics, discussed them, then voted for priorities. We then grouped the results into some broader topics.
- George M. will send a memo with our information to the BCPC and will note that Steve N. and Kristin W. will be at the meeting to present any info and answer any questions. Steve N. moved and Grant A. seconded for George M. to do this, the group voted in favor, and the motion passed. The info is in the Comp Plan folder in the shared Google drive.

5) DEP Local Climate Action Program:

- George M. described a PA DEP program called LCAP to encourage and help local municipalities who want to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change. The LCAP helps municipalities do research, create an inventory, and create a plan to address climate change. The process includes programs that help gather the info and model plans and also includes partnerships with colleges/students.
- The state offers the software/resources for free and the students are volunteers. Currently the students are from Penn State.

- Jim B. said the Township has applied for the program, and there may be ways we can collaborate.
- We discussed if we want to apply for the upcoming program; applications are due within a few weeks. Grant A. asked if participation from others outside the EAC would be needed – by staff, for instance. George M. said that much of the work will be done by volunteers, but there will be a need for some staff input. Jim B. said the application estimates the time that will be required; in addition, Warrington went through this program and we can learn from their experience.
- Steve N. said that he feels we should apply now because the fall semester inventory will quantify our greenhouse gas emissions and the spring semester will develop interventions, both of which can fit in well with the comprehensive plan. Steve N. has some experience doing this kind of project and will be happy to help as needed, perhaps taking some of the load off of staff. Dennis L. noted that BCPC is doing an implementable comp plan, so this could be helpful with that.
- The EAC can do the application. Karyn H. said that staff availability is limited. George M. said he would be the lead volunteer and Steve N. said he would be the second; other EAC members would also be happy to help with tasks.
- Jim B. said the application is very simple – you need a lead and second, then there are a series of multiple-choice questions. There is an attestation that the community intends to follow through. We can make this an EAC-led project, so we are the community that needs to follow through.
- Penn State manages the students, but the students meet regularly with the community members. The group discussed which student guidance model to choose and agreed that a co-leading arrangement would be best.
- Karyn H. said she needs to see more info/details and talk to John Davis before she can commit to doing this, since staff is very stretched. George M. suggested speaking to the DEP representative to get a better idea of the time commitment. Karyn H. said she will not be able to commit 5.5 staff hours (estimated in the program description), and it's likely that this would fall on her. George M. said this 5.5 hours might be split with the volunteers. Karyn H. noted that in her experience these projects tend to require a significant amount of time. George M. will contact the DEP to get info about the time commitment and will get back to Karyn H. this week.
- Jim B. said the Township Assistant Manager is working with the EAC and has done a similar plan before; it also might be helpful to talk to Warrington, and Jim B. will speak to them and share their info with us. He said that for communities that complete the plan, there are many information resources provided on an ongoing basis.
- Steve N. made a motion that the EAC support an application to the DEP's LCAP if staff is willing to commit the resources. The group approved.

6) Reports:

a. Farmer's Market Report

- George M. received an email from Karen G. and she said that she had several conversations with the Farmer's Market reps re: the Master Gardeners table. The table will be set up starting on July 2 in our old spot, then inside the market starting in September.
- Topics will include soil testing. Karen G. picked up supplies and will bring them on 7/2, then 8/6. She hopes to possibly combine with Bird Town for the August date. She will start mapping out more activities.

- Kristin W. connected Karen G. with Heidi Shiver through email to coordinate Bird Town-related activities at the market.

b. Outreach & Communication Report

- Grant A. made updates to the Bird Town info on the website.
- He is thinking about some changes for the plastics info on the website and will review it with us as we go along; no changes will be made for now.
- Grant A. said there are a few assignments on the spreadsheet that we should look at to see if we need to get info to him. Steve N. will work on his info.
- Grant A. will get info from Karen G. for the website re: the Master Gardeners table at the market.

c. Bird Town Report

- Kristin W. reported that the bird walk took place on June 4th in Chapman Park. Heidi Shiver was there and coordinated, and she sent a follow-up email to all participants with additional info about their sightings. Kristin W. and Heidi S. have discussed hosting another bird walk in the fall.

7) Old/New Business:

- Steve N. and Karyn H. reached out to Lindsay T. to check interest/if she is receiving emails. George M. can reach out to her if she is.
- Kristin W. is unable to attend the August meeting. We will make sure in July that the Zoom works so she can do the August minutes.

8) Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by common consent at 8:28 pm.

9) Next meeting: The next EAC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 19, 2022, at 5:30 pm.