

Borough of Doylestown

Environmental Advisory Council

Minutes of the meeting held Tuesday, September 21, 2021

Attendance: Karen Graziano, Karyn Hyland, Victoria Holderer, Kristin Winters (via Zoom), Dave Kapturowski, Wendy Margolis, George Mullikin, Mayor Strouse, Grant Alger

1) Call to order: Victoria H. called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

2) Approval of minutes: George M. moved to approve the minutes, Karen G. seconded, and the minutes were approved as written.

3) Single Use Plastics (Victoria H.):

- There are no updates on this topic at this time. Moving forward, Grant A. will take responsibility for this item.
- At the last meeting we talked about putting together a letter to send to businesses. Karen G. will lead on this. Karen G. will also continue the action items from the last meeting on this topic.

4) Bucks County Renewable Energy Purchase Agreement Staff Update (Karyn H.):

- Karyn H. discussed a Patch article that was sent to the group: the County is entering into an MOU (an agreement to enter into an agreement). Four counties are involved in the agreement (Bucks, Montgomery, Chester, Delaware), and they are in the early stages of looking into renewable energy. They are putting out a request for proposals to do a feasibility study to look for a location to supply power to the 4 counties. At a minimum they want to provide power to county facilities. This may also eventually include a capability for municipalities and private property owners to receive energy. Everything is currently still very open ended.
- Karyn H. reported that the counties developed this plan through the Delaware Valley Planning Commission. This is a big project. The property where energy will be generated will probably be in western/central PA. Karen G. asked if it would be a government property or private; Karyn H. said the setup is not clear yet, but it would be owned by the 4 counties.
- They haven't put out the RFP (request for proposal) yet. A lot depends on what the infrastructure bill in Congress will look like. Mayor Strouse explained that everyone is trying to do some planning related to the infrastructure bill.
- Dave K. asked about Borough Hall - particularly our previous discussions about Borough Hall being made solar ready? Karyn H. said she was told that it was built to be solar ready and that probably includes the structural setup, but the next steps are not clear right now. Mayor Strouse noted that the Borough is still in Phase 1 of the construction project, so there will be more info as we get into the next Phase. We might have more info in January. Phil Ehlinger (Doylestown Borough) could tell us if things have been set up a certain way; Wendy M. said Phil said it's solar ready. Our group could potentially take a tour after the building is open.
- Dave K. asked about the Hamilton electric vehicle charging stations; Karyn H. reported that replacements are backordered. Karyn H. said we couldn't get the grant for new stations at Borough Hall because we ran out of time, and they wouldn't grant an extension because the site's not ready. The grant coverage will probably be reduced to 50/50 at this point; the 80/20 program runs out on the 30th. We knew that it might be difficult to get this done in time. The conduit was put in place during work on Borough Hall, so it's there for future use.

5) Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (Karyn H.):

- A letter from the County explains that Act 30 allows the County to help with financing for clean energy projects. A copy was included with the meeting materials. The Borough may put an announcement on its website or Facebook.

6) Ready for 100:

- Mayor Strouse expressed that it might be useful to step back from Ready for 100 since so much has happened recently and there are other interest groups that have a lot to say about what PA and Doylestown Borough might do. To organize where we are we need to catalog what the Biden administration and Harrisburg are proposing, then engage in conversation with Penn Environment. Penn Environment is the environmental entity to engage with in PA. It would have value to chart this out and invite them to share with us what other municipalities are looking at and what we could consider. We could make sure it's meaningful for the Borough. For instance, we are a built-out community; repurposing is something that might make sense for us, perhaps through zoning changes. There are a lot of resources that could be helpful. In terms of sustainability, the Borough has already done a lot of work. Mayor Strouse said his understanding is that Ready for 100 puts a burden on Borough staff, while other options might be different. When the Borough gets into its comprehensive planning work (2022) the EAC could have a lot of input. Karyn H. described some of the scope of the comprehensive plan, which will be a very big job.
- Mayor Strouse said, for example, that a group called Mayors for Solar is looking at an expedited permitting system for solar energy. Karyn H. said the Borough does this; Mayor Strouse will bring this information to the group.
- It's a changing landscape, so we need to look at all of the pieces. We need to have a broad knowledge base from which to provide recommendations to the Borough and the community. As an example, another thing that is currently being looked at is the DART system, which has been expanding. How could it be more robust and useful, and also how can we keep environmental goals in mind with it? Hopefully there will be federal money for things like this, so it's useful to do planning.
- Mayor Strouse also noted that something unique about the Borough is the historic nature; we'd need to craft a solar program that preserves this.
- Wendy M. asked if we can develop other ordinances out of the comprehensive plan besides just zoning; Karyn H. said the plan drives other things as well.
- George M. summarized that Mayor Strouse is expressing that Ready for 100 might be too specific, so maybe instead we want to develop broader strategies. Mayor Strouse noted that it would be good to direct our energy and input to the comprehensive plan. Grant A. summarized the Ready for 100 resolution and said that dates could be adjusted; it's meant to show that we are focusing on the issues and is a statement of intent. Mayor Strouse said that's where a conversation with Penn Environment would be important. He sees the value of putting the hands-on effort in a different direction and thinks the clarity and definition would come from looking at the current comprehensive plan. Karyn H. said that the current plan doesn't have environmental info. You can see which elements would need to be integrated into the environmental concerns we're talking about. The comprehensive plan covers a lot of topics in one place.

- Mayor Strouse said what he is describing is not unstructured. We'd be able to clarify what our goals should be based on multiple sources (federal, state, Penn Environment, etc.) and put it into the comprehensive plan. George M. asked how the public would give input for the plan; he sees value in the Ready for 100 resolution for getting this input. Wendy M. asked if this could be a letter to Borough Council from the EAC - what items we think will be essential in the comprehensive plan and what our priorities would be. There will be a public element of participation, and results will be directly included in the plan.
- Karyn H. noted that Phil Ehlinger will take an outline of the goals from the current plan, determine the budget for the next year, then talk about what the next level of goals should be.
- Karen G. noted that the resolution requires a lot of work, so it makes sense to reorient and look at all of these pieces. We will get contact info for the different levels of input we will be seeking. We should invite Penn Environment to speak with us. Mayor Strouse will help us with some contacts and resources.
- Grant A. will update Steve N. on the discussion.
- Karen G. asked if the same working group (Steve N., Karen G., Grant A.) will work on this, and it was agreed that this makes sense. George M. said we may need to divide this up, since it's a large job.

7) Farmers Market (Victoria H.):

- Victoria H. noted that our table at the market seems to be less of a priority lately, and there have been fewer visitors. Do we want to shift responsibility for the info to another group? Does someone else want to take responsibility?
- The market goes through November.
- Karen G. asked if we've discussed partnering with the market itself? They are selling their own bags, and we're collecting plastic bags. Since they're always there, we could just have the plastic bag drop-off.
- Mayor Strouse said he can introduce someone to the market representative. It might be useful to do this also because they are developing a winter market.
- Karen G. said our main purpose is share literature and collect bags. Wendy M. said the market probably doesn't have room for literature, but maybe the sign or logo.
- Grant A. wondered if it would be better not to lose the table. The group discussed we could always be there just on specific days. If we're there less, we might get more attention.
- Wendy M. said we still need to be consistent with the bag collection. We should talk to the market representative; Mayor Strouse will connect us and Karen G. will email him.

8) Outreach & Communication (Grant A.):

- Grant A. added items to the to-do spreadsheet. He made some adjustments and added a category "Ready for Karyn H."
- Grant A. provided content for a public notification of the availability of the revised trash hauler guide; the group approved. He suggested and the group agreed to update the note regarding DelGuerico's with something like "did not respond to our requests for information." The group discussed that DelGuerico's is operating in the Borough again, although it's not clear if this has also occurred in Maplewood. Mayor Strouse asked about fees, and Victoria H. clarified that we didn't include fees in our info.

- Grant A. updated the links for SolSmart (which has a Doylestown Borough specific page) and hazardous waste recycling and updated the PECO info. An item for PA Act 129 information was added.
- Karyn H. updated the Bird Town info on the website. Kristin W. is now the Bird Town contact and will look at the website to see if there's anything else to be added/updated. The Bird Town group continues to update their website. Kristin W. reported that the annual Bird Town Summit will be on Saturday November 6th.

9) Public Comment:

- Next month we will decide on a new chairperson for the EAC. The group thanked Victoria H. for her time as chair and wished her well.
- Old business: Karyn H. will check on the Hamilton charging stations.

10) Adjournment: George M. moved to adjourn the meeting, Karen G. seconded the movement, and the meeting was adjourned by common consent at 8:51 pm.

11) Next meeting: The next EAC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 19th, 2021, at 7:30 pm.