

Borough of Doylestown

Environmental Advisory Council

Minutes of the meeting held Tuesday, November 19, 2019

Attendance: Joe Wallace, David Kapturowski, Karyn Hyland, Steve Rubenstein, Adam Howell, Mayor Strouse, Kristin Winters, Anne Woodbury, Jeannine Mitchell, Alex Skovronek, Terry Skovronek

1) Call to Order: Joe W. called the meeting to order at 7:34 pm.

2) Approval of Minutes: David K. made a motion to approve the minutes, Steve R. seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as written.

3) Single-Use Plastics Outreach

- Joe reviewed what the group has been doing at the farmers market for the past several weeks (5 times). This week is the last week of the season. The group on Saturdays have been having conversations about plastics with visitors to the market and gathered about 30 emails of people interested in learning more. The plastic bag recycling and handing out reusable bags was very popular. Steve R. said how surprising it was that even on our first day many people brought their bags to recycle. They were likely alerted through the D-mail or social media outreach. Adam H. did note that it was somewhat preaching to the choir, but it was good to have the conversations and receive the contact info. Joe W. agreed that it was a good way to get more info out there, even for people who already knew a little bit about it.
- Joe W. sought input on thoughts for the spring. One thing to think about is branding. Some people who arrived at the table thought we were selling something. Better signage will help with this. Karyn H. said we are getting a banner by the spring, perhaps sooner.
- Some residents suggested continuing the bag dropoff through the winter. David K. agreed that as a group this would probably be difficult for us, but perhaps there is some way to set up a kiosk or similar drop off point for plastic bags. Karyn H. said this has been talked about internally with Public Works; an unmanned bin could be problematic (collect a lot of trash, like the Borough's recycling cans do after a weekend), but perhaps a drop off inside at Borough Hall would be easier to control. David K. suggested a kiosk with information clearly indicating it is specifically for plastic bags could be less problematic. Joe W. agreed that an informational kiosk would be helpful; it could have information about our initiative, and perhaps even more topics. The group discussed the spot right by the Hamilton parking lot; Karyn H. said this may not work, but there are probably other locations that would work. Mayor Strouse pointed out that if we limit it to plastic bag recycling, we may be able to attach it to the shed; the big issue would be how to police it. Steve R. noted a kiosk could be for a lot of purposes in addition to the plastic bag recycling. Mayor Strouse said another challenge to the kiosk is that Discover Doylestown would like to build a permanent kiosk at the Hamilton location for info about their events. It is still in the works, but they are focusing on the same location. Steve R. noted we could maybe work with them. The group agreed we'll keep thinking about it.
- Steve R. suggested we put some sort of sticker on the outside of the bags to advertise the EAC and our message so residents have a reminder on the bag they take with them. Steve R. will think about what this would look like.
- Adam H. suggested talking to the new farmers market manager re: getting participation from the vendors. Many of them use plastic bags. Let's make it a community effort.

- Joe W. noted we need a supply of reusable bags in order to continue this effort moving forward. We have some suppliers who have been very helpful and will contribute more, like Penn Community. Joe W. will reach out to Dogs and Cats Rule, Adam H. will reach out to Penn Community. Mayor Strouse suggested we can do the legwork now to build up a supply for the spring. Discover Doylestown is one resource, and Karyn H. has reached out to them, although currently they don't have any bags.
- Jeannine M. said that the Township board member who is the liaison to the EAC is doing a presentation re: soliciting input from residents. They will likely do a survey similar to ours. If the Township is serious about a plastics ban, we could work together to make a co-branded bag ("Doylestown Ditches Disposables" or similar), which the Township and Borough could both use. Terry S. pointed out that it is similar to the shared bike programs in cities; they're all the same, so they could even become a shared product. Adam H. and Joe W. noted that we'll have to think about budget; Anne W. suggested splitting the cost 50/50, which the group agreed could work.
- Karyn H. asked if anyone would like to talk to businesses about reusable bag sharing with a milk crate outside each business (take a bag, leave a bag). Joe W. wondered if maybe we should brand the bags first with a logo and catch-phrase as above; the group also discussed that we could try the exchange non-branded first, then brand later. Mayor Strouse said the Doylestown Bookshop has a tree for a system like this. Regarding communication with businesses about the bag exchange (milk crate), Terry S. said Busy Bee toys would be a good one to contact. Mayor Strouse suggested reaching out to the Bookshop, since they've already got their own program, and Discover Doylestown, since they may reach out to businesses for us or have ideas; Chris B. is the Discover Doylestown contact. We could go to a Discover Doylestown meeting to pitch the idea.
- Terry S. asked what we are doing with the plastic bags we collect. Adam H. explained that we may do the Trex program. We haven't officially signed up for it, but it's fairly simple. We need some storage, although it may be that we can deliver them monthly. Karyn H. said for now we had discussed just bringing the bags we collect to the supermarket, which does Trex anyway; we could sign up in February/March to begin our 6-month collection through the Trex program. Steve R. suggested asking how long it usually takes to fill a bin with plastic bags, so we know what we're aiming for. The group agreed asking one of the supermarkets might be a good idea.
- Joe W. will put together some concepts for "Doylestown Ditches Disposables" or "Doylestown Ditching Disposables".
- The recycling stickers went over well and people liked them. Jeannine M. asked about getting a grant and making it a magnet. We will likely look into getting a grant for something like this. The group agreed that people seem to be responding well to receiving info.
- Mayor Strouse said the EAC could put some info in the Borough Bulletin. We could have an EAC page with articles like the recycling info and the plastics survey, and other messaging like our presence at the farmers market. This could probably be about 2-4 articles, and it will come out at the same time the farmers market starts. We can also tie it to the 50th anniversary of Earth Day in April. We could potentially put an EAC section in every issue of the Bulletin, but this one would focus on getting our projects started and bringing awareness to what we're doing. We will coordinate with Karyn H. on deadlines, etc. We just need to get the content in (don't need to worry about layout). Adam H. will put something together for the next meeting to get us started on this; we can decide how many things we want to focus on.
- Adam H. asked what other events we should be at. The Arts Festival, Doylestown at Dusk, and Pridefest were some suggestions. We will each think about events for the next meeting.

- Joe W. said one idea for an event/activity would be a banner or something that people could write notes on, and it would be best, Terry S. suggested, without post-it notes.
- Adam H. asked about the County Theater presentation. Joe W. will reach out to Wendy Margolis to find out about this - if there is a date, if there is a time frame, and any other information.
- Joe W. asked if we want to buy the milk crates. We should reach out to Discover Doylestown first to see how many businesses would be interested in participating, then we can either buy the crates or get them donated.
- Jeannine M. talked about how Steve R. and she and another person put together materials to roll out Bird Town to the community. The County Theater gave them 6 weeks of public service announcement time to be shown before their movies. The logo, bag, etc. could be on the screen. This would be a good way to get our message out.

Old/New Business:

4) Sustainable PA Communities Program – George was getting more info, so we will table this until December.

5) Doylestown Township EAC – Jeannine M. (chair) and Anne W. are here from the Township EAC. They have a lot of projects going on, including:

- a) The beginnings of a single-use plastics ban
 - b) Ready for 100 (will adopt a resolution to transition to sustainable electricity, heating, and transportation by 2050)
 - c) Native plant demonstration garden, being maintained; has won several awards
 - d) Working with Del Val to get venues and speakers
 - e) Looking into seeking out and certifying heritage trees on residents' properties
 - f) Reviewing construction project planting plans for native plants; they have a native plant ordinance in the Township
 - g) Installed signs in Central Park and other locations with ecological info
 - h) Have put together a native plant brochure for residents
 - i) For last year's bicentennial, did a formal dedication of the native plant demonstration garden (with music, food, dedication – a garden party) and they did 200 years/200 trees for which they planted 200+ trees; people were asked to sponsor oak trees to be planted in Central Park (\$200 per tree, 100+ subscriptions, plus Bucks Beautiful donated 100); some trees were sold to residents; a large number of large trees (2"-3" caliper) were planted; public works augered holes then volunteers did the rest
 - j) Branding; this is something they feel is important
 - k) Concerts in the Park; these are a big opportunity to reach people and the EAC is trying to be out there 3 times each summer; the Borough EAC could potentially join them at the concerts (May through September), and they could come to the farmers market
- The Township EAC is now planning 10 Days for Trees. With Arbor Day and the 50th anniversary of Earth Day approaching, they wanted to do something special. Anne W. developed 10 Days for Trees, which will run from 4/16 through 4/25, and will span Earth Day. They will issue a "passport" with info and participants will get a stamp at each venue; with a certain # of stamps participants will get a free seedling on the last day. The passport will also have a coupon to be entered into a drawing for the Township to plant a large native tree on a resident's property. The current outline for the 10 Days is:
 - i. Day 1 – Heritage Conservancy Speaker/Hart's Woods

- ii. Day 2 – Poetry Reading about trees
- iii. Day 3 – Tree Planting and Tree Concert
- iv. Day 4 – Founder of Old Growth Network – talk and walk
- v. Day 5 – Fonthill Woodlands Project – talk and walk, then County Theater tree movies
- vi. Day 6 – David George Haskell – speaker
- vii. Day 7 – Riparian Planting, then speaker that night from Bowman’s Hill Wildflower Preserve
- viii. Day 8 – Doylestown Cemetery Tree Walk
- ix. Day 9 – Speaker from Bucks County Audubon
- x. Day 10 – Tree Planting at Poole’s Corner

- They want to have a pop-up forest in the Township admin building in April. They’d like to talk to seniors about a tree that has been important to them, then have displays with the stories and images among the trees, with the articles written by kids from the community. This would all be on display during the 10 Days for Trees. The library could also put up a display of books about trees, as could the Doylestown Bookshop. Other community groups are going to do activities/displays/etc.
- Mayor Strouse also suggested a scavenger hunt for the trees Henry Mercer and the Doylestown Nature Club described in a book. He also said somewhere in the 10 Days should be an opportunity to present information about environmental challenges – emerald ash borer, spotted lanternfly, etc. Anne W. noted that at the very least there should be literature about these topics. Jeannine M. said the talk about forest birds will include info like this, and some of the other speakers will discuss it too. Mayor Strouse also wondered if pollinators could be addressed; the Township EAC has discussed this, and it will be included in some of the speaker info.
- Joe W. suggested that in addition to the events scheduled in the Borough, our EAC could help with the Poole’s Corner planting on the last day. A Bucks Beautiful rep said there could be a grant available, but we need to have a planting plan ready. The Township has put in for a PECO grant. They don’t know if they’ll get either. We could help by putting a line in our budget for the event.
- The group discussed the Tree City USA requirements. The Township is a Tree City.
- Steve R. noted that everyone who has a stream on their land would benefit from learning about riparian buffers. This could be included in the 10 Days for Trees somehow. Jeannine M. mentioned how she had been to a live stake training day, and this is the type of info that would be useful.
- Joe W. will be our point person to contact the Township EAC. Two people on the Township EAC are tree growers and landscape architects; Joe W. and Kristin W. may meet them (Don and Marty) to come up with a planting plan. We would also like to include the 2 landscape architects on the Borough Shade Tree Commission and will communicate with them. The Shade Tree Commission’s next meeting is 12/10 at 6:30; Kristin W. can try to go to speak about the 10 Days project, to discuss EAC/Shade Tree collaboration on this and other projects, and to see if Carter or Baldev (the Shade Tree landscape architects) would want to collaborate on the planting plan.
- We are not sure if we can contribute to the budget for the 10 Days project. Anne W. will try to get us more info about a deadline for the Bucks Beautiful grant so we know what the timeline is for the planting plan. Anne W. and Joe W. will communicate.

6) Adjournment: David K. moved to adjourn the meeting, Joe W. seconded. The meeting was adjourned by common consent at 9:29 pm.

7) Next Meeting: The next EAC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 17, 2019 at 7:30 pm in the Doylestown Borough Hall.