

## **Borough of Doylestown**

### **Environmental Advisory Council**

#### **Minutes of the meeting held Tuesday, February 16, 2021**

**Attendance:** Grant Alger, David Kapturowski, George Mullikin, Karyn Hyland, Wendy Margolis, Kristin Winters, Scott Fraser, Steve Nelson, Jennifer DiCriscio (West Chester U. student), Jack O'Brien, Karen Graziano, Victoria Holderer

**1) Call to order:** George M. called the meeting to order at 7:34 pm. George M. introduced Steve N. as the EAC's newest member.

**2) Approval of minutes:** Grant A. moved to approve the minutes of the last meeting, Kristin W. seconded, and the minutes were approved as written with Steve N. and Dave K. abstaining.

#### **3) Trash and recycling**

- George M. provided some background on the topic. Some questions had come up regarding which waste companies are separating or combining trash and recycling. At the last meeting we talked about reaching out to current providers to see what they are offering in the Borough and to get more info. This would supplement/update the list we did in 2018.
- George M. contacted Whitetail and Republic. He was not able to get in touch with anyone at Whitetail despite staying on hold for quite a while. The website gave him some info and indicated they recycle quite a range of plastics, numbers 1-7; he hasn't been able to confirm this with the company. They offer single stream recycling. Recycling is sorted by CRI out of Hamburg, PA. Whitetail offers some education about recycling on the website
- George M. spoke with national and local representatives for Republic. He used to have Republic and was surprised by their info; they seem to be back into a residential model. On the website they have a lot of helpful videos about recycling and a lookup service. For single stream Republic will recycle numbers 1-7 plastic (confirmed). They have a boxed mail-back service for electronics. Residential waste goes to a landfill; none is trash to energy. Recycling is sorted in-house. Republic has a 20% nationwide goal for natural gas trucks, but none locally yet. They offer a separate service for composting/clean organic waste with a local facility near Telford. The company has a Blue Planet 2030 program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase recovery rates and the use of biogas from landfills.
- Wendy M. asked Jack O. about pricing. Jack O. reported for Whitetail that when he signed up with them they guaranteed pricing for those over 65. The price for trash has held but has gone up for recycling due to issues. He has been satisfied with their service. Dave K. noted that he spoke directly to the operations manager at Whitetail a few months ago and he was helpful and provided a lot of info. Dave K. can call the operations manager back to get the survey info; George M. suggested confirming the type of plastic they accept, finding out where trash waste goes, and asking how recycling is handled. (Is it sorted there? Sent to someone else for sorting?) George M. added these questions to the template so others can ask the same questions. George M. will share the link with Steve N.
- Wendy M. said some providers seem to be using plastic bags for collections, so this would be another question to ask. Those who ask should also clarify if the bags need to be used for recycling or just trash. There may have been some differences early on in the pandemic due to staffing issues.

- Victoria H. spoke to Enviro Green. They collect from homes and businesses. Recycling is single stream. All trash goes to a steam facility (trash to energy). They don't offer any non-standard recycling. They said compostable items should be put straight into the trash. Enviro Green collects and chips Christmas trees for mulch. They don't do electronics. They use standard trucks.
- Victoria H. also spoke to Leck. They do single stream recycling and waste to energy. They accept electronics and use biodiesel trucks. There is a sustainability tab on the webpage. Wendy M. asked if they were residential or just commercial; Victoria H. will check.
- Everyone who gathered and continues to gather info should input it into the Google spreadsheet. We may have gotten enough data that we can create a more robust info source on the Borough site. Karyn H. said to contact her if there are any issues with the Google spreadsheet. Grant A. said he didn't have editing capabilities for the spreadsheet. Former EAC member Joe Wallace is the owner of the questionnaire and may need to provide access.
- Karen G. asked if the EAC will promote the info when it is posted. Karyn H. said we can mention it in the newsletter and on Facebook, and will include it in the new resident section of the Borough website.

#### **4) Bring Us Your Trash event**

- Wendy M. found information about an event in Bucks on June 27<sup>th</sup> at 8 am, during which a variety of different items will be collected. The event is listed with a Facebook group called Bucks Upcycling and Repurposing Connections. It will be held at Action Karate in Jamison and will serve as a way to trade items that would otherwise be thrown out.
- Volunteers can help at the event. Jack O. located the event on Facebook during the meeting and Karyn H. sent the info to the group.
- George M. said it reminded him of a group called Stop and Swap in NY. Wendy M. said it might be good to associate the EAC with it somehow.
- Wendy M. said TerraCycle is also a good source for collecting all kinds of items. George M. will get in touch with TerraCycle to get more info about how we could partner with them. Wendy M. noted it would be a good idea to have a collection location for TerraCycle in the new Borough building. Kristin W. said her workplace collects for TerraCycle.

#### **5) Green Points evaluation**

- Karyn H. summarized the Green Points program. It is a fee reduction program to encourage green building practices. The elements are voluntary and must exceed the building code. Right now the 2018 building code is about to be adopted by PA. Our Green Points program is two cycles behind, so we should look at it to make sure it is updated.
- There are many different types of items to be updated, and we can consider adding some new items. Karyn H. sent the group our current list. She reported that this has been a successful program and serves as the Borough's response to LEED certification (which is very expensive) for the average resident. There can be innovation points for some items. There is now a green building code that is being put into place. We can consider putting some items in our Green Points program that are more attainable for average residents.
- Karyn H. will send out a link that includes the 2018 code. It would make sense for the timing of our updates to follow on the heels of the PA adoption of the 2018 code.
- The maximum fee reduction with the Borough's Green Points program is 50%, and this is related to what type of permit it is. We can choose to restructure this as the building codes are updated.

- Karen G. asked how residents find out about the program, and if the program relies on the contractor to make residents aware of the points that would be available. Karyn H. said the program is on the building permit page of the website, so whoever is on there would be the one to see it. George M. noted that the contractor might not have an incentive to make the homeowner aware of the program. Karen G. asked if there was good usage of it. Karyn H. said some contractors use the program more than others, and it's especially used by builders; she gets about 5 applicants each year, often for solar.
- Wendy M. asked if there are Green Points for native landscaping and other site elements. Karyn H. said there are some elements that get points, although site work isn't always tied to a permit.
- Grant A. asked if this is a Doylestown thing or if other municipalities have a similar program. Karyn H. said we initiated it and some other municipalities have adopted it. Phil Ehlinger in Public Works and Karyn H.'s predecessor were responsible for creating it. Grant A. noted that it is positive that Doylestown is a model. He asked if it's hard to manage; Karyn H. said at this volume it's not, and it's mostly for big projects. The program is done in the form of a refund.
- Victoria H. asked if the program is for both residential and commercial projects. Karyn H. said it's currently for residential, although commercial could be done. Commercial building codes are much more complicated and relate to public safety.
- Grant A. suggested putting the program on the new residents website, so residents could see it and ask the contractor about it. Wendy M. asked if we could add a section to the website where we could put all of this info and other environmental info. The group agreed that this is a good idea. Karyn H. said links could be put in multiple places. The group discussed putting various types of info on the website with links. Events could go here too, and Karen G. suggested also including spotted lantern fly info. Karyn H. said a lot of what's currently on the EAC website is related to questions that have come up.
- The group discussed Christmas trees; the Borough does put out a lot of info about this during the holidays.
- Karyn H. will tinker with the website once the trash info is updated and also when the Green Points program is updated. We can also put an article in the newsletter, although that doesn't get mailed out anymore.
- Grant A. asked if we need an action plan on the Green Points. Karyn H. said having someone in charge would be a good idea. The scoring system is tied to the building code. (0 points are given for simply complying with building code, then points are given for anything above that, resulting in a fee reduction.)
- George M. can look at the 2018 codes and put some suggestions together for us. Karyn H. said it would be good for the group to look through the Green Points document and familiarize ourselves with the scoring. George M. might have some spreadsheets he could update and share with the group that would help.
- Dave K. said he believes the adoption of the 2018 codes is imminent. George M. said PA tends to write in some exceptions, so we might need to adjust for that. Karyn H. said the numbers can be adjusted. We should be able to get a basic copy (the codes themselves) for free but would have to pay for any analysis or other info.
- Grant A. asked if Energy Star is related to this. Karyn H. noted that Energy Star is a certification that is recognized in our Green Points. Dave K. summarized some of the Energy Star standards – it's also a point system. He said that their standards are updated regularly as well. George M. said that Energy Star is a good standard and they keep updating it to make it better; it's definitely focused on energy.

- For the next meeting George M. will put together the worksheets that we can edit as a group and will take a pass at the energy section. He may ask Dave K. to help with the energy section. That will be a good amount of the document.

#### **6) Old business/new business**

- Wendy M. asked if the charging stations are currently working. Dave K. said the Pine Street one is currently buried in snow.
- George M. reviewed the Sustainable PA program. It was started by PML. George M. put it on a Google doc and ran through the points, taking a fairly conservative approach. He was pleasantly surprised to find that the Borough had a high score that would earn us a bronze. If we can get 6 more web citations we'll be at a silver. Karen G. asked about the criteria for Sustainable PA; George M. will share this again with the group. Grant A. noted that it seems fairly comprehensive. George M. said the Borough is doing well and this would be a vehicle to advertise it to the community. The downside is it would take some time for Borough staff to make a formal application; so there is a cost in staff labor but no fee. If we can find a few more citations we can pass it to staff and they would just have to do data entry. Karyn H. said staff unfortunately don't have the resources right now to put it together. Staff have talked about it a lot and at this point don't plan to submit an application. The EAC can prepare the docs so that when there is time to submit it the information is ready to be entered. George M. will try to find someone who has done the application to find out what the time constraints are.
- Steve N. said he has been volunteering with other local EACs on Sierra Club's Ready for 100 campaign. He asked for permission to represent the Borough with that group, which works on many different energy initiatives. Kristin W. moved and George M. seconded; Steve N. will represent the EAC. He will give us updates and will provide more info at the next meeting. Karyn H. asked what is needed to be a member; Steve N. said it is simply based on interest and is a grassroots group that anybody is welcome to join. He doesn't need any administrative permission to be our EAC's representative and it's very informal, he just wanted to make sure it's ok with us that he represents us there. Steve N. noted that in the Philly metro area the campaign is organized by county.

**7) Adjournment:** Victoria H. moved to adjourn the meeting and the meeting was adjourned by common consent at 9:01 pm.

**8) Next meeting:** The next EAC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 16, 2021 at 7:30 pm.