

Tredyffrin Environmental Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
12 December 2017

Present: EAC members Jim McLaughlin, Thomas Szwech, Mary Westervelt; Erin McPherson (Twp Liason), Signe Hansen, Priyanka Kapadia, Rutger Boerema (Guest- Tredyffrin Resident), Jennifer Cox (Guest- Tredyffrin Resident)

Not present: Doug Anestad, EJ Richter (BOS Liason),

Start Time: 7:05 pm

EAC Introductions for guests

October meeting minutes were reviewed and accepted

New Business/To Do

1. Subcommittee/task force proposal: Addressing climate change (Rutger Boerema)

- Jennifer shared personal experience with alternate energy, switched from PECO to wind. Found it to be less expensive monthly, has received numerous inquiries from neighbors. This indicates that there is interest in the community in switching from carbon-based fuels. Please see the following link for more information about what a non-carbon-based energy mix could look like for PA (or other states): www.TheSolutionsProject.org/infographic
- Neighboring local cities have signed pledges to move to renewable energy. Pledge is a symbolic gesture to commit to reach goal of 100% renewable by 2050. Jennifer and Rutger propose EAC subcommittee to analyze pledges, write drafts, suggest to EAC in February/present plan to BoS in April. Promote educational events in community in advance of presentation to BoS.
- Option mentioned to band with nearby township/municipality to work with power companies
- Priyanka inquires if there is any current similar initiative in our township.
- Tom thinks this initiative can fall under general EAC's "Green Initiatives or **Clean Energy**" subcommittee.
- Priyanka volunteered to be point person, Tom volunteered to be part of committee.
- Tom mentioned Green Mountain as a locally-HQ'd energy company worth involving.
- Priyanka mentions hesitation of fire companies to extinguish fires with solar panels, this affects home insurance. Risk is potential toxicity of ignited paneling materials, may be unfounded. More research needed to see if this is a viable concern.

2. Stormwater Subcommittee

- a. Mary went to two workshops recently with the objective of identifying resources to provide "green" property assessments and options for potential grant funding (PA Department of Conservation of Natural Resources offers matching grants).
 - Points made: expand upon the good that people are already doing, move ideas from abstract issues to points that directly affect the individual(s).
 - Signe mentioned that at the recent EAC Summit, an "enviroscape" was shared illustrating runoff, sounded like an effective demonstration.
 - Erin reported that as part of MS4 measures, township estimates to spent \$5M in 5 years on

projects to reduce pollution locally. An estimated 1/3 of our township is impervious. Our Twp has one of strictest stormwater regulations in PA for new construction (including remodeling and additions) but still needs to find ways to address runoff and stormwater pollution emanating from existing built-up properties.

- Mary volunteers to lead stormwater task force and Katherine volunteers to support. One of first actions is for Mary to follow up with Steve Burgo regarding MS4 requirements and what is proposed to meet them.
- Signe will look into enviroscape model showing runoff.

3. Marketing and Communication Subcommittee

- Tom suggests we increase our communication and improve effectiveness of our communications to the public.
 - Emailing current list of volunteers from various activities with invite to join EAC Facebook would be a first good step to increase traffic. Mary to work on this since she has been in contact with volunteers in the past.
 - Volunteer lists for subsequent events could grow as a result of better/more frequent Facebook communications.
- Perhaps advertising the EAC Twp website in Twp e-newsletters will redirect traffic to our page. Possibly EAC page could include a repository for articles.
- This would be a concurrent effort to our Facebook page and NextDoor, which advertise events and solicits volunteers.
- Jim will take lead on a Marketing/Communications subcommittee.
- Signe suggests Lyme disease-related communications. Mary will take lead on development of an article ready for Spring.
- Mary questions whether we should make a note to attend BoS meetings to ensure BoS and EAC are in tune with initiatives discussed. Tom suggests we proactively approach a candidate of choice to accept the upcoming EAC Liason position opening.

4. Tree Initiatives

- Before the October 18 tree-tube maintenance activity, Doug spoke to Public Works regarding maintenance of planting areas in WFP. Public Works' understanding had been that EAC would prevent weeds growing up between trees in tree-tubes. EAC was not aware of that responsibility; Public Works perhaps mistakenly clear-cut all vegetation to the lake, leaving the edge exposed and subject to runoff. EAC communication to Public Works would be helpful to prevent reoccurrence.
- Tom offered to lead this subcommittee at least initially.
- Mary recently walked Crabby Creek, where we righted and repaired tree tubes and stakes on Oct. 28th. She noticed many recently-righted tubes were already down, perhaps as a result of high wind but more likely vandalism.

5. Sustainability Subcommittee

- Support education- for example, Haverford EAC sent letters to residents outlining recycling guidelines
- Rumor that local schools are **not** effectively recycling. EAC could offer visual tools for schools to educate and promote a recycling culture.
- Action item: inquire with schools regarding current program

Activity Report Recap (details for all but item 2 were sent to EAC members ahead of the meeting and are included here):

- 1. Tree planting at Open Land Conservancy's Cedar Hollow Preserve, 14 October (Mary, Tom, Signe, Rutger).**

Large group, many trees planted. OLC donated a bundle of 25 stakes and a bunch of orange flags for our tree-tube maintenance projects and the planned tree planting at Westover Bird Sanctuary.

- 2. EAC Summit 18 October 2017, Haverford Community Rec & Environmental Center (Tom, Katherine, Priyanka)**
 - Tom indicated that much was learned; in sum, other EACs face the same challenges we do with regard to engaging the public and staying in communication with supervisory bodies.
 - EAC would like to collaborate with other Twps for efforts with grants and initiatives (such as rain gardens and public meetings with residents on various environmental topics).
 - As an example of communities working together, Signe indicated that NJ has a well-developed website broadcasting multiple communities' efforts (Sustainable NJ).
- 3. Meeting 18 October with Steve Burgo, Erin McPherson, Darin Fitzgerald, Carreen Wright, Hilliary Mallory at Westover Bird Sanctuary to discuss signage, planting (Mary, Erin)**

Unexpected (by me, anyway) was the attendance of neighbor Tommy Carbo. He proposed that he purchase and plant trees to shield his property from the road and what used to be the parking area. He also wanted to bring large boulders from Mill Rd. Park to delineate a parking area and keep people from driving further into the park.

Although the current official word is that there is to be no parking area, all discussion of the Bird Town Group's proposed planting around the non-parking area came to a halt. Also halted was discussion of where to install the historical sign the Bird Town Group has spent two years designing, funding, and ordering. (Tommy has since planted arbor vitae near his house on the Westover edge. No boulders or other plantings have appeared.)

We did visit the area where a Girl Scout group plans to develop a path. We established that this area is not a 'wetland', as they unfortunately called it in their initial proposal, so they can go ahead with a path. We discussed where the path would go, and we discussed where in the area Jenkins Arboretum volunteers might weed and plant trees on 19 October (all marked with the flags donated by OLC, see (1).) Shade in the 'wetland' area limits how much can be planted there with any hope of survival.

- 4. Weeding and planting at Westover Bird Sanctuary 19 October, Jenkins Arboretum volunteers (Mary)**

Steve Wright of Jenkins Arboretum and Gardens prepared an environmental evaluation with planting suggestions in July, 2016. This summer he contacted the Bird Town Group to offer a day of Jenkins Volunteer work and a collection of trees and shrubs from the Jenkins collection to be planted at Westover. On 19 October, the volunteer team weeded and planted an estimated 50 – 75 shrubs and trees. Steve sprayed the vulnerable plants with deer repellent, which he said would give us a month or two to arrive at a more permanent solution for deer protection for the tender plants.

- 5. Tree-tube maintenance 28 October, Crabby Creek Park and Wilson Farm Park (Mary, Jim)**

We had a team of four at Crabby Creek Park. Others went to Wilson Farm Park. Tubes were righted, stakes driven in or replaced, net caps replaced.

If trees were dead, the related tubes/stakes were collected and piled in an easy location for pickup. I (Mary) have since been back to both locations to scrounge all usable tubes and stakes, have sharpened the broken stakes and poked new, lower holes in the tubes as needed, and have used them at Westover. I also donated 15 tubes and stakes to the Darby Creek Valley Association.

6. Tree-tubes installed at Westover with volunteers 10 Nov., Girl Scouts, 17 Nov, and misc. dates into December (Mary)

Volunteers who showed up to help with this were enthusiastic about the potential of Westover as an attractive, bird-friendly spot in the developed part of Tredyffrin. The fact that Jenkins was willing to contribute consulting, plants, and volunteers is another sign that there is considerable enthusiasm for the project.

7. Area Bird-Town meeting 9 December (Mary):

Representatives from Schuylkill Twp, Radnor Twp, and Tredyffrin Twp met to discuss ways that we might support the environmental efforts of each Bird Town group as follows:

- by publicizing events and opportunities in our townships and outside;
- by putting together a list of open spaces in the townships and around them where people could visit, see birds, and learn about native plants and ecosystems;
- and by developing materials that the libraries could use for outreach and children's programs.

The annual Back-Yard Bird Count in February (Presidents' Day Weekend) will provide opportunities to educate the public regarding bird-friendly habitat, which is also nature-friendly habitat.

Other Business

- Priyanka recognized as Treasurer of EAC, voted and seconded. She received the envelope with \$84 from pretzel sales at September's Party in the Park.
- The EAC recognized EJ Richter for her many years of service acting as EAC liaison for BoS. This is EJ's last month in this position, her efforts and passion helped to develop many local environmental initiatives over the years, most notably Tree-Dyffrin. Thank you, EJ!

Meeting adjourned at 9:07.

Next meeting: Tuesday, 13 February 2017, 7:00 p.m., Tredyffrin Township Building.