



SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMISSION

EAC November Meeting Agenda

November 29, 2023 7 PM – Springfield Township Free Library

Attending

- Committee & Associates:
- Guests:
 - None scheduled

WELCOME TO MEMBERS & GUESTS

ATTENDANCE & APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- October Minutes - Stephen

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT/OPEN FORUM

COMMUNICATION/OUTREACH

- Review any communications received by or disseminated from the EAC. - Aaron

NEW BUSINESS

- 2024 Planning - Martin
 - Review proposed new ideas for 2024 efforts.
 - Review ongoing efforts from 2023 that need to continue in 2024

TOWNSHIP UPDATE/QUESTIONS

- Updates - Peter
- Open Space Fund - Peter

Set up for next month's meeting

- We ask for volunteers to set up the meeting room for next month's meeting. We will document the volunteer in the minutes.
- Set up includes arranging tables and chairs for 12 Committee members and chairs for attendees from the township or visitors.

OLD BUSINESS

- Updates below were received from Committee members by email and will appear in Meeting minutes as well.

Discussions on Open Space Planning

- Gail Farmer, Commissioner Ratsavong, and I met informally this month to talk about open space preservation in the township. Gail will share the properties evaluation scoresheet that Wissahickon Trails uses with Susie, and include which properties in the township Wissahickon Trails has on their list of land worth preserving. Gail and I also met with Amanda Helwig, chair of the Township Planning Commission, to discuss how we can better coordinate our efforts. We'll meet regularly every few months.

Renewable Springfield

- **Solar on Municipal Buildings:** The EAC requested in August that the 2024 township budget include putting solar panels on the roofs of Public Works and Police/Admin buildings. Much forward motion has happened since, and I'm delighted that both the Commissioners and Staff are taking this seriously:
 - Resident and solar expert Ron Celentano has given us many hours of his time evaluating how much solar power the two roofs might generate, and compiling a comprehensive list of all the factors that the township needs to consider.
 - Commissioner Lee, Mike Taylor, Craig Lloyd, Ian Hammer, Ron and I met on November 3 to review Ron's list.
 - Mike is overseeing the next step: hiring a structural engineer to determine if the roofs will safely hold the panels.
 - We discussed financing options at the Nov 3 meeting.
 - The Commissioners and Staff are leaning towards conventional financing based on a bank loan.
 - The 30% Direct Pay option of the Inflation Reduction Act (passed last year) looks to be critical to making solar affordable for the township.
 - Staff is exploring using Co-Stars (the state purchasing program that offers discounts to munis), including talking with Susquehanna Township, who installed solar using Co-Stars.
 - Ideally we'd like to install enough panels to meet all the electricity needs of these two buildings plus the library, some portion of the to-be-built Rec Center, and the anticipated infrastructure charging needs as we electrify the township fleet.

Volunteer Ben Schimineck is analyzing our fleet vehicles and annual miles traveled to estimate how much power will be needed for the charging infrastructure - a significant amount!

- The township has not made a formal commitment to solar yet, but I'm encouraged at this point.
- The Muni Bldgs subcommittee (Peter, Pat H, Ron, Ben, and I) continue to seek ways to lower our energy consumption and expenditures in these buildings to make the transition to 100% renewables easier.
- Updating and completing the **Energy Transition Plan**: Desiree wrote the Transportation Plan in 2021, and updates it annually. I'm working with volunteer Bernadette Fox to write the Municipal Buildings Plan, and then the third piece of the overall plan, Community Engagement. We need to make sure our plan is consistent with other township plans (see my email to EAC on 11/24).

Proposed Rec Center

- The advisory committee has issued the RFP and is awaiting responses from vendors. It is my fervent hope that the Commissioners will approve a 100% fossil-free building; Having a completed Energy Transition Plan calling for this should be helpful. I'm encouraging the advisory committee to use the services of Practical Energy Solutions (who did our energy audits) as energy contractor during the design and construction phase.

School District

- Dr. Yannacone, Jeff Bedard (school board president) and I met on Nov 27 for our quarterly check-in.
- Middle school addition/rehab: They plan to begin work mid 2024. They are going to extend the geothermal installation and incorporate other sustainability measures with the help of the Inflation Reduction Act direct pay option.
- They have adjusted the way they deploy smaller vehicles for after-school activities, relying more on hybrid and electric vans than traditional school buses when there are fewer students to be transported. This reduces pollution, as well as offering more flexibility for drivers (always in high demand), since more drivers are licensed for vans than school buses.
- Chartwells, the district's food service provider, is focusing on greening their trays and utensils, among other measures.

High School Sustainability Club

- Martin, Desiree and I meet monthly with the co-chairs of the High School Sustainability Club. The EAC will co-sponsor their second annual clothing swap on January 27. And they will co-sponsor our Junkluggers e-cycling event, tentatively scheduled for March 30 at Enfield School parking lot. "Co-sponsorship" means we will each promote the other's event, and offer volunteers as needed. Aaron S. is the EAC point person for the E-cycling event.

- The club will help us find interns/volunteers for two tasks: EAC social media posts, and data entry helpers with energy benchmarking on the muni buildings.
- We're helping the club collect plastic bags for their second bench.
- Club members are interested in encouraging the district to make the addition/rehab to the Middle School as sustainable as possible. I met with two students to suggest how they might get the word to the School Board.

ADJOURNMENT

UPCOMING EAC EVENTS

- January 24th, 2024 7 PM – Springfield Township Free Library

Please note, EAC agendas are subject to change without notice.