

**SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP  
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMISSION**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**June 24, 2020**

**Attending**

Brandon

Peter Wilson

Stephen Heverin

Faran Savitz (Penn Environment)

Desiree Rammon

Chris Richter

Joy Bergey

Aaron Stemplewicz

Jay Smith

Zeta

**Community Guests**

Chris Weth

<unknown user>

Kathy Hodgkiss - curious about what the EAC does

**Meeting Notes**

- A. Approval of previous meetings minutes (April & May)
- B. Penn Environment
  - a. Current state of single use plastics

- i. Works on waste team and looks to change how PA approaches 'disposable' culture.
- ii. Single use plastics end up in our streams and oceans.
- iii. Break down into micro plastics; every week we consume about a credit card size of plastic.
- iv. We have a system that is meant to handle this waste. (landfill, trash to steam, recycling, etc...)
- v. In PA we have a slightly differently in that we feed the fossil fuels used to make the plastics. (Fracking, oil lines, etc...)
  - 1. Gas is so cheap, to make a profit these companies use that to make plastics.
  - 2. Best way to fix this is to get rid of single use plastics. Bans on bags and straws can be effective. PA isn't on board with this legislative action
  - 3. PA legislature passed a ban on local plastic bans. That was extended with the recent budget approval. But its tied to 6 months past the Governors emergency COVID-19 declaration
- vi. Penn Env. Was working on local legislation for banning local plastics
  - 1. CA ban came after over 200 local bans for single use plastics
  - 2. Philadelphia and West Chester have action on board for this (Philadelphia has delayed its ban due but COVID-19)
- vii. Alternative approach to work with waste haulers

b. Questions

- i. Reusable bags - still better then plastic or paper bags. Studies don't factor in transportation as part of the plastic bag manufacturing. And bags are used for years.
- ii. Thicker plastic bags - a lot of bans use thickness language in their bans. But thicker bags which are technically reusable. If you ban both at retail you don't have that issue.
- iii. Fees vs. Bans - Advocate for a ban/fee hybrid method. Seeing what works nationally and leveraging that. W/ a fee of just 10/15 cents changes shopper behavior
- iv. Restaurant take away - ban on polystyrene straight. There are alternatives for paper products, and also thicker plastics which are reusable at home. Restaurants also have a program to take back those containers for wash and re-use.

- v. Responsible individual action is hard to have on a wide spread scale.
  - vi. Bottle Bill - Currently proposed in the state house from Rep. Daley. To get a deposit.
- c. Take away
- i. Come back with some numbers to help us understand the scope of the problem
  - ii. Keep PA Beautiful - they do a litter report
  - iii. A letter (form) to the general assembly speaking out against pre-emption is impactful.
  - iv. Also forward the pre-emption legislation and model ordinances.
- C. Was a ban or something was discussed in the township? Peter believes that around 5yrs ago or so it was brought up but did not go anywhere, but for reasons unknown.
- D. Social Media and Comms Update - had the webinar, up to ~110 members on our Facebook page.
- E. Webinar - ~26 ppl beyond the board members. Youtube link to the webinar - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2V5OaMgemM>
- F. Community Garden - reached about this, Christine had reached out to Morris Arboretum and they came back and believed there was an appetite in the township for this. They have a waiting list and ppl get upset for not being able to get a plot.
- a. Four most important things to think about w/ a successful comm garden.
    - i. Appropriate space
    - ii. Access to water
    - iii. Parking
    - iv. Governance of the comm garden.
  - b. Christine to follow up to get more info on the above recommendations.
  - c. Dan Guest (sp?) is the person who runs the garden there.
  - d. Upper Merion recently put in a community garden.
- G. RF 100 progress - Joy - each municipality which would have an energy transition plan (staff, volunteers, etc..) Can we get someone to step up to look at this type of plan. And the long term plan for having a community solar farm (not in township but likely in county somewhere). If anyone would like to help with that we would love that help.
- a. Brandon - Chester Co. group - program is a hybrid between what they wanted to do (pure volunteer) and a professional plan. This will pair those two together. This program would be paired over ~10-12 weeks. They are requesting each municipality chip in \$50 and sign an agreement, along w/ some additional commitments. He has indicated they

are pretty aggressive on those commitments. It is a commitment for getting ppl time to run with this.

- b. There is an ask on data collection
  - c. Brandon will read through and send out analysis after the meeting tonight.
- H. PA DEP is opening a program for 20 participants to develop a local environmental action plan. Brandon has conversations w/ them and the Montgomery Co. planning commission and our involvement. The Montco Co. manager group and authorized that group to participate. (Consortium of Managers). They would work w/ DEP to develop an environment plan for all of Montgomery County.
- a. Climate Crisis is real this will help to determine threats and mitigation for that crisis to the County.
  - b. There is a public participation part of this.
  - c. This is the 2nd round for this. First round participants were Chester Co., Narberth and possibly State College. - <https://icleiusa.org/20-pennsylvania-communities-develop-local-climate-action-plans/>
- I. Aaron - Raise current issue - intersection - of climate and race. Earth Justice (disclaimer Aaron is part of that) to put something together where there are racial impacts to them greater than other communities. They will develop this webinar, no timeline yet, but would like to bring this back as something that EAC can use and share out.
- J. Next Webinar - Wissahickon Valley Watershed group - they are very interested in presenting - Gail Farmer. We had talked about something to do w/ storm water management.
- a. Possibly some additional content already recorded share out via our FB site.
  - b. Aaron and Zeta to coordinate something for our next meeting.
- K. Partner Update - Charlie - started a document, shared out of people and organizations that could be potential partners. 2nd sheet is EAC members and township staff and related community and other committees. Need to flush out more people and information in these sheets.
- L. Commissioner & Township update
- a. Do your census!
  - b. School - pulled request for the Enfield location. Believe they are less sure what their needs will be in the coming school year w/ COVID-19. Asked for an extension on their development proposal
  - c. Grant for Mermaid Park restoration
    - i. Does the USDA know about this? A: Not Yet, but we should let them know.

- ii. This could be a spot for a community garden (thought this could be complicated b/c it was purchased from Dept. of Interior)
  - iii. Also get input from Audubon society on what plantings would go into this project.
  - d. Finally - Moving to Green phase of COVID-19 plan. Library will be open effective Monday. Masks and social distancing. Along with other municipal facilities.
- M. Linden Trees - On Linden avenue - they are in bloom. One of the largest in PA according to one of the neighbors.
- N. Meeting Virtually - law is vague on this, and township plan is for meeting in person in return to green, but this is a fluid document.

### Mermaid Park Plan

