

UPPER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

EAC MEETING MINUTES

February 3, 2021

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Jon West at 6:02 pm. The following were in attendance.

Jon West	Chairman
Erica Antoine	Member
Joanne Walker	Member
Scott McCartney	Member
Tom Alvarez	Merck Representative
Sandra Zadell	Township Manager
Denise Hull	Commissioner
Martha Simelaro	Commissioner
Deanna Logan	Administrative Assistant

Mike Fellmeth was present from the public.

Mr. West spoke about the salt program from the Isaak Walton League. He took chloride readings at Haines Run to see how the stream is affected by the salt placed on roads during a snowstorm. The base reading prior to the storm was less than 25 ppm chloride. Following the storm, he got a reading of 79 ppm chloride and will take another reading during the snow melt period. Mr. West said 230 ppm is toxic to stream life.

2. Minutes Approval January 11, 2021

Hearing no questions or comments, upon motion by Mrs. Antoine and seconded by Mrs. Walker the minutes of January 11, 2021 were unanimously approved.

3. Meet and Greet with Planning Commission

Mr. West welcomed members of the Planning Commission, John Lancaster, John Tierney, Scott Bachman and Gail Ramsey. Each member of the EAC and Planning Commission introduced themselves and gave their background information.

4. Plan Review

Mrs. Zadell announced that Merck incorporated the suggestions made by the EAC into their plan with using native plantings for Building 50.

a. Roosevelt Court

The review letter from our Township Engineer has not been received. Mrs. Zadell suggested this be reviewed in March when all review letters are in. Mr. West said the EAC looks at plans with an environmental perspective and makes recommendations based on that. A discussion ensued regarding the review process by the EAC and the comments/recommendations that are made.

The council members have some questions regarding Roosevelt Court to address tonight. The review will be completed in March.

- How will the rain gardens be vegetated? What will the seed mixture be composed of?
- What kind of energy will they be using in the development? Clean energy, renewal energy, etc.
- Is Belgian Block porous? How does that figure into storm water? Will vegetation grow between the blocks?

Mrs. Zadell said this Belgian Block is typically not porous and is cemented between the blocks.

5. Old Business

a. Initiatives

Mr. West explained to the Planning Commission some of the initiatives that they are working on this year.

i. Environmental Education and Outreach

1. Website/Newsletter

Mr. West explained this is establishing relationships with organizations, the Township and the community by having a presence on the website and through social media, newsletter and educational sessions. Mrs. Walker will write an article for the newsletter.

2. EAC logo

Mr. West said we are having a contest for the EAC logo. This has been posted on the website and on social media. Submissions are due by the middle of February.

Mr. West received numerous environmental education materials and is looking for space ideas. He will create a Dropbox for the EAC.

ii. Tree City/Birdtown

Mr. West said the EAC is interested in establishing Upper Gwynedd Township as a Tree City / Birdtown to have some publicly visible ways of meeting goals. A discussion ensued about activities for Earth Day and Arbor Day both of which are in April.

Mr. West said he is looking for a volunteer to research the Arbor Day Foundation to see what they are doing. Mr. Alvarez and Mr. McCartney will handle the task. Mr. Alvarez will also look into a possible partnership with Merck for an Arbor Day celebration.

Mrs. Zadell said Parks & Rec is doing a Community Garden for Earth Day and suggested the EAC do some plantings for Arbor Day. She will coordinate with Sarah Prebis on where trees need to be planted. Mrs. Zadell will invite Mrs. Prebis to the next meeting.

1. Shade Tree Commission

The EAC needs to research what ordinances the Township currently has with respect to trees and native species.

iii. Watershed Friendly Property Program

Mr. West did a presentation of the Watershed Friendly Property Program. This is a partnership program with PA DEP and featured organizations, Nurture Nature Center and the Penn State Extension Master Watershed Steward Program.

PA is the 2nd ranked state in stream miles and wetland miles (second to Alaska). We have 85,000 stream miles with 18,000 miles impaired (unable to support aquatic life or be used for recreation, fish, consumption or drinking water). There are 6 major watersheds in the Commonwealth.

By fulfilling certain requirements, property owners can be certified as a Watershed Friendly Property. This is a commitment to freshwater resources and adoption of best practices in the areas of reducing stormwater runoff, reducing water pollution, conserving water and supporting wildlife.

Once property owners receive their certification, they can purchase a sign designating their property as watershed friendly. Mr. West suggested that the EAC cover the cost of the Watershed certification sign. Mrs. Walker asked if the Township has any ordinances on signs. Mrs. Zadell will check with Zoning Officer about sign sizes but feels these signs are small enough.

Residents can submit their certification and the EAC will reimburse the cost of the sign. Mrs. Hull asked if the Township should go through the certification process to get the sign also. Mr. West said we should limit it to the Administration Building only and make some changes with native plantings and rain gardens. Possible unveiling of the sign at Earth Day 2022 of the improvements made to the Administration Building to be Watershed Friendly.

Mrs. Antoine will research the price of the signs.

iv. Renewable/Sustainable Energy

Mrs. Zadell provided information to the EAC regarding the program the Township is involved in.

b. Comprehensive Plan

Mr. West reminded everyone the Comprehensive Plan Workshop will be held on Wednesday, February 17, 2021 and encouraged all EAC members to participate. Mrs. Zadell said you have to pre-register for the event.

6. New Business

a. Rain Barrell Workshop

Mrs. Zadell said the Township is a member of the Perkiomen Watershed Association and they will conduct a workshop on how to construct a rain barrel to our residents. She asked if the EAC wants to sponsor the event to bring the cost of the rain barrel course down. The current cost is \$50 pp for the workshop. The workshop will occur in June 2021. Registration will be through the Parks & Rec Department. It will be advertised in the newsletter.

Mrs. Walker suggested putting a cap on the amount of money the EAC subsidizes. It was decided the EAC will contribute \$15 per barrel up to 25 barrels.

Hearing no questions or comments, upon motion by Mrs. Walker, seconded by Mr. McCartney the motion to contribute \$15 per rain barrel up to 25 barrels was unanimously approved.

b. Montco. Stormwater BMP Inventory and Mapping Program

Ross Snook of Penn State Extension received a Penn State Science to Practice Grant Project. This project creates a comprehensive inventory, functionality rating and GIS mapping of stormwater BMPs in Montgomery County. The program aims to provide essential stormwater BMP information and education used by municipalities for enhanced watershed planning and future projects. Mr. Snook is running an 8-part webinar series beginning February 24th. If the council is interested in the program, Mr. Snook would like to join the next EAC meeting.

c. Upcoming training and workshops

Planning Commission meeting on February 10, 2021 at 7:30 pm

Meaningful Engagement and Local Government Decision Making Webinar series on February 11 & 18 and March 8, 2021.

7. Adjournment

Mrs. Walker made a motion to adjourn meeting, which was seconded by Mr. McCartney. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Next Meeting Date; Wednesday, March 3, 2021 at 6:00 pm