

## **Palmer Township**

### **Environmental Steering Committee Meeting Minutes**

**March 23, 2022, 6:30PM, at Palmer Township Municipal Building**

#### **1. Roll Call**

- a. The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Tom Grube at 6:31PM.
- b. Present: Tom Grube, Diane Halasz, Ginny Sciorra, Tom Dittmar, Deanna Werkheiser, Paige Strasko, and Michael Brett standing in for Joseph Armato.
- c. Absent: Bill Ruch and Josh Kasenga.
- d. Guests: John Marks from ESP and Bill Hartin.

#### **2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 23, 2022**

- a. Halasz had corrections to the meeting minutes for clarification and word changes. The updates were discussed at length and the current minutes from February reflect all changes stated in the meeting.
- b. After conferring on the changes discussed in the meeting, Werkheiser made a motion to approve the amended minutes. Halasz seconded and the motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

#### **3. Old Business**

- a. *Green Guide* Articles
  - i. Halasz made a brief report on the status of the articles stating that the subcommittee met twice, and she is still making changes to the articles from discussion in those meetings. Sciorra has also been helping edit for punctuation and spelling.
  - ii. Halasz made a motion to defer the articles until the subcommittee finalizes all the changes to the articles and is comfortable making a recommendation to the committee. Grube seconded the motion.
- b. Facebook page progress
  - i. The committee discussed the great efforts of Cindy Kramer posting relevant information on the Facebook page. Committee members are pleased with the page progress, there were 55 group members on the ESC Facebook page at the meeting.
  - ii. Halasz reported on the need for a backup administrator to the Facebook page since she has trips planned during the summertime and would need someone to check on the page for her while she is traveling. The committee discussed other members and individuals, like Armato, that could run the page in her absence.
  - iii. Halasz made a motion to defer the topic until the April meeting. Werkheiser commented that the committee should wait to hear back from Armato before deciding.
  - iv. There was a public comment from Bill Hartin asking if the Facebook administrator must be a committee/subcommittee member. Werkheiser started explaining there will be a vacancy on the board when she moves

out of Palmer Township. Brett stated Bill Hartin would be able to speak with the Township manager to inquire about the opening. Brett also stated he will follow up with the Township manager about filling the vacancy and they discussed specific measures Hartin would need to take to be considered.

- v. Halasz asked the committee for a clarification on the procedure for new Facebook posts. Halasz states the procedure she has been following; email the committee what the post will say and state if no one responds by a certain date Halasz will post it. Halasz discussed the difference between approving *Green Guide* articles and text or images for Facebook posts.
- vi. Grube states he think the right thing to do is continue how Halasz has, send out Facebook posts perhaps give committee members a week to review. Halasz thought this was too long, Brett stated perhaps a day or two. Grube states that this is fine, whoever responds will respond.

**c. E-cycle event**

- i. The committee discussed that the main factor here is being able to use Easton Area High School's parking lot for the event to control the flow of traffic safely and efficiently. Dittmar stated the committee needs to know if the BoS has discussed dates with the school district so that we can contact Clean Earth and set up the event. Dittmar also states he knows other municipalities are looking into using the same organization for similar events.
- ii. Since the committee had not heard back from Armato, they asked Brett if anything had been mentioned at BoS meetings and he was unsure and stated that Armato would be the person to ask.
- iii. The committee also discussed having the event for Palmer residents only and needing to show proof of residency whether that be a driver's license or some other form of proof.
- iv. Brett stated he will touch base with Armato and Bob Williams to contact Easton High School and the school district to get a date set for the e-cycle event. Grube stated we will come back to the topic when we have a date and permission to use the high school parking lot.

**d. Earth Day Plans**

- i. Grube established that at the previous meeting there was not a sub-committee for Earth Day plans. They discussed topics from the last meeting like partnering with Bushkill Stream Conservancy. Halasz brought up a community wide cleanup project for Earth Day that Armato discussed previously. Brett stated it does not have to be a large event, the committee can start small and work their way up. Werkheiser and Dittmar discussed the difficulties with having a large community wide cleanup since the committee has not had the time needed to plan and coordinate such an event. Brett also stated he thought that Armato was looking for a

concrete idea from the committee for Earth Day and listed ideas like partnering with Earth Stewards of Palmer or another local group.

- ii. The committee also discussed locations for the cleanup event keeping safety in mind. Halasz also mentioned decals on storm sewers and possibly cleaning storm sewers as a community wide event to get residents active and involved. John Marks jumped in commenting on spots along the Bushkill that need to be cleaned up and some roads that are less traveled that would be safe for community cleanup efforts.
- iii. Halasz made a motion to form a subcommittee to compile a list of places for the community Earth Day event. Werkheiser and Brett stated that there would not be enough time to have a subcommittee. Brett thought the committee should pick one of the ideas discussed like Penn Pump Park as the location for the event. They discussed benefits of centralized location, having parking and accessibility. Brett also stated that with the storm drain stenciling that would take more time and would require maps so the committee should save that idea and plan another event later perhaps in the fall. Werkheiser mentioned that committee members should educate residents on other projects such as storm drain labeling.
- iv. Brett asked John Marks about how many volunteers would be good for the event. Marks stated about 10 kids with two adult supervisors would be good. Werkheiser suggested that the committee use Penn Pump Park as the cleanup site for Earth Day. Marks suggested putting a blurb on the electronic sign on 25<sup>th</sup> street. Grube was more focused on putting it on Facebook. Halasz said someone needs to write up text for a post for Facebook that includes a description of the project the committee agrees on. Brett suggested a post that ties in other groups cleanup efforts along the Bushkill Creek.
- v. Grube states the committee needs to find out what materials Armato has already gathered. Brett stated he thought Armato already ordered volunteer t-shirts and depending on the other materials needed the township most likely already has what the committee would need. Halasz brought up these reasons of looking for materials and finding a location is why a subcommittee is needed. Brett discussed a subcommittee planning in September for next year since the committee did not have adequate time to plan a larger event.
- vi. Grube took responsibility for contacting the ESC chairman and coordinating with him (Ruch, who was absent) as well as coordinating with township employees for supplies.
- vii. Werkheiser took responsibility to make an informational flyer to post on Facebook. She asked about a time for the event and Brett stated to double check what time the park opens. Marks states that parks are open sunrise to sunset. The committee decided on 9am to 12pm for a time to hold their Earth Day event.

- e. Bushkill Stream Conservancy (BSC)
  - i. Halasz stated that this item should be under old business, so it was moved for the minutes.
  - ii. Grube asked if the committee still wanted to partner with BSC or not. Werkheiser discussed the timing of the BSC event as well as Trout Unlimited's event for the week after Earth Day. Werkheiser also discussed the timing issues within their organization. Brett stated it would be better for the committee to focus on their event and promote other local events to volunteers at the Earth Day cleanup.
  - iii. Grube asked if the BSC and Trout Unlimited had posts and the committee discussed that they had already shared the other groups posts to the ESC page thanks to Cyndie Kramer.

#### **4. New Business**

- a. Updated Bylaws
  - i. Halasz states that previously the committee had formed a subcommittee in October to revise the bylaws and align them with what an EAC would be. Halasz summarized the changes in an email sent out with the documents and stated an example of changes were additions to allow for subcommittees specifically. Halasz thought it would be beneficial for the committee to look at the bylaws and the new bylaws were made by looking to other local EAC bylaws and from the past bylaws as well as things like the Sunshine Act, compensation so that the bylaws are more formal. Halasz states that it is up to the committee to decide what they want to abide by. Halasz is also just looking for comments and states she tried to add things in the bylaws the committee members would want.
  - ii. Grube stated he agreed with Halasz and thought that the bylaws should be an action item for members to review and comment. Grube asked if it was reasonable to discuss the bylaws at the next meeting. Halasz stated previously the committee would discuss bylaws over several months before deciding. After the committee voted on approval of previous bylaws, they were sent to the township manager for approval. Halasz states she does not anticipate it to be finished next month. Halasz changes can be made and go through the editing process a few times. Grube states we should discuss the bylaws at the next meeting after committee member's review.
  - iii. Halasz made a motion to defer bylaws until the April meeting. Werkheiser seconded. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.
  - iv. Bill Hartin had a question: can any committee member describe or characterize what the relationship of the committee is to the overall Palmer township culture? Hartin continued to ask if the committee was more progress and forward thinking than previously and asked how and when the bylaws will be disseminated. The committee explained that the bylaws are under review and there should be the current bylaws available

somewhere. Hartin stated he would table his question until he was able to study the bylaws.

**b. Climate Action Plan- volunteer to work on and report**

- i.** Brett updates the committee on some work he has been doing with the Nature Nurture Center who helped put together climate action plans for the city of Bethlehem and city of Easton. Brett stated that the same group is working with LVPC for a regional climate action plan. Brett stated in his discussion with one of the supervisors of Nature Nurture Center about Palmer township's climate action plan and said she recommended waiting until the regional plan comes out. The plan should help us not work too hard in reinventing the wheel and give Palmer the building blocks to create a personalized climate action plan to suit the needs of Palmer and its residents.
- ii.** Brett also says that this allows the township to see what works and what doesn't. Werkheiser asked about budgeting. Brett and Werkheiser discuss how to go about finding out more information about Nature Nurture, working with them and getting ideas for the plan.
- iii.** Grube asks to make sure the recommendation is to wait on the climate action plan and Brett agrees but also states that a subcommittee should be formed as a lead up to the plan release and find out what Palmer biggest climate problems are and what can be improved.
- iv.** Halasz asked if the meetings are public for the climate action plan development and Brett was unsure if they were at the stage in planning or not. Brett stated they were being run by LVPC so the committee would need to contact them if need be. Halasz also asked if the subcommittee could get in touch with LVPC to find out any plans they are working on or find out some information. Brett said he was unsure if LVPC would be ready to share information or not with the public. Brett said he would like to bring his contacts from the Nature Nurture Center into the ECS meetings so that committee members could discuss with them directly.
- v.** Werkheiser discusses that Upper Nazareth is working on a multi-municipal comprehensive plan and how they did not advertise much for those meetings. Brett states he hopes in the long term that Palmer will be more engaged in regional impacts.
- vi.** Grube asked to see if any of the committee members were interested in following this topic and being on the subcommittee. Sciorra expressed interest in working on the climate action plan subcommittee. Grube made a motion to form a subcommittee to look at the climate action plan from the LVPC when it is released. Werkheiser seconded. Interested in the subcommittee were Sciorra and Halasz. Werkheiser asked Hartin if he would be interested in joining the subcommittee. Motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

- vii. Brett stated he would oversee interactions with the Nature Nurture Center and the subcommittee.
- viii. Halasz suggested that under reports a subcommittee section should be added so that they do not need to be listed and all subcommittees that have news to report have a designated time to speak.

**c. Warehousing**

- i. Easton EAC Letter
- ii. Brett discussed this letter with the committee and shared his discussion with Nature Nurture supervisors and their input on warehousing ordinances and other municipalities that have some helpful model ordinances for Palmer. Brett stated Cindy Kramer would be a great resource for warehouse ordinances.
- iii. Halasz brought up that the EAC may appreciate a follow-up letter. Brett agreed with Halasz that an acknowledgement and endorsement of the letter would be a smart next move.

**5. Reports**

**a. Board of Supervisors**

- i. Brett discussed more topics following the warehousing letter including the watershed program that Nature Nurture is running with Penn State Extension.
- ii. Werkheiser recommended that the ESC highly recommend that the BoS move forward with the program and making Palmer more watershed friendly. Halasz shared that it was a questionnaire to determine if residential properties are watershed friendly. The program asks about water runoff, water usage, if there are native plants planted etc.
- iii. Hartin had questions about how the program would impact his property and Brett discussed the Home Advisory Boards may need to be made aware.
- iv. Werkheiser also asked about printing out applications for the clean watershed program to have at the Earth Day event.
- v. Marks suggested to print a poster for the Earth Day event at post it at Penn Pump Park for residents see.
- vi. Brett also wants Palmer to be certified with the tree city program in the long term. He stated that the township does it itself, it does not need another body to certify for the tree city program. He discussed some requirements for the program such as dedicating either a number of trees or a dollar amount for the township each year. Dittmar asked if Palmer can apply since the same question came up years before when the township used to not have the public space. Brett reassured that Palmer could work to be tree city certified. Brett asked about an old ordinance about cutting trees without a permit because Dittmar brought it up and the committee discussed the fact that the members have not heard of the ordinance enforced recently. The committee then started discussing the various

species of trees that are approved for street planting. Dittmar and Grube agreed that the ESC and BoS should look more into the program.

- vii. Brett asked for feedback on educational programs put together from Nature Nurture Center and if the committee would be interested in exploring their programs or hearing a proposal. Werkheiser asked about having them come and present some programs and also discuss climate action plan. Sciorra mentioned having BoS there so it's not just ESC. Brett said cost would be determined from what the committee and the residents would want and what they would participate in.
- viii. Werkheiser asked if anyone applied for Northampton County livable landscape grant. Brett was unsure but he stated he would find out. Werkheiser then brought up that the due date was April 14<sup>th</sup> and that it could tie in with MS4 projects and education.

**b. MS4**

- i. Strasko reported that she has been making maps of storm sewer drains in housing developments around the township that need a fish decal and that Tom Adams has about 100 decals in stock, but he needs to order more glue to attach them.
- ii. Werkheiser asked if the committee could have a write up on information and a storm drain decal to bring to their Earth Day event to educate residents. Strasko stated she could get decals and a pamphlet to the committee.
- iii. Strasko stated that while decals do need to be replaced, there are other storm drains in Palmer that have the metal fish plates set into the concrete that will not need to be replaced for a long time.
- iv. Werkheiser was asking about specific erosion plans and what measures the township must take to be in compliance with the permit. Strasko was unsure since she has not seen any permits and has not worked on permits, she mainly works on maps, writing articles and gathering paperwork for educational components to the MS4 program. Grube had asked about an MS4 committee that was previously mentioned. Strasko said she could ask Bob Williams about the progress with the committee.

**6. For the Good of the Order**

- i. Halasz stated she never received an updated contact sheet with Dittmar's information. Strasko said she can contact Brenda DeGerolamo for updates on the contact sheet. Grube also asked about updated agendas and minutes on the Palmer township website and that DeGerolamo probably has it on her list of things to do.
- ii. Halasz also brought up community weekend and asked if the committee wanted to pick a meeting to start talking about it again. Brett mentioned they are most likely filling up booths for the weekend now.
- iii. Sciorra brought up that she started attending the planning commission workshops and asked for Brett to explain ordinances and the process that

the township is going through. Brett discusses how townships use ordinances to make companies or warehouses adhere to the guidelines they want and how they can help reduce environmental impact. Werkheiser jumped in and was describing the various facets of zoning and building ordinances and the difference in time between different ordinances. The committee also discussed the interconnectedness of codes and plans.

- iv. Halasz brought up that there is money in the budget for education and the committee discussed the use of funds and tried to figure out if they need to ask BoS for approval or not.
- v. Marks asked about portion of the budget discussed at last meeting and how the committee spends it or who approves spending money. Strasko stated she can follow up on who can approve money. Werkheiser asked if Strasko could also inquire how committee members can get funds to attend planning commission workshops and what the procedure is for obtaining funds. Grube asked Strasko to add the items to the agenda for the next meeting.

**7. Next meeting: April 27, 2022**

- a. Werkheiser stated she may not be able to attend the April meeting.

**8. Adjournment**

- a. Dittmar made a motion to adjourn. Halasz seconded. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm.