

Palmer Township, Northampton County

Environmental Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

October 23rd, 2024, 6:30PM, 3 Weller Place, Lower-Level Municipal Meeting Room

1. Roll Call

- a. Present: Karen Adams, Celia Williams, Colin Burke, Monica Cintron and Ashley Cohen.
- b. Also present: Zach Trexler
- c. Absent: Tony Rose and Phil Perhamus
- d. The meeting was called to order at 6:36PM.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from September 25th, 2024

- a. Adams asked if anyone had any corrections or comments on the minutes. Burke made a motion to approve the minutes and Williams seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

3. Introduction of New Members

- a. Adams asked the new members to introduce themselves. Monica Cintron stated she did not have much of a background in environmental work, but that she has a lot to learn. She recently moved to Palmer and is happy to be involved. She said her background is in marketing and she is looking forward to working with everyone. Ashley Cohen stated she is a college student and grew up in the Easton Area School District. She is currently an Environmental Science student, and she is looking forward to working in the community she grew up in.

4. Old Business

a. LCAP

- i. Adams stated that there is a meeting next month to have a discussion with Sean regarding the plan. She said the meeting will be held at the same time as usual, but it will be held in the lunchroom upstairs. Adams then gave a quick update to the new members of the LCAP and where things stand.
- ii. Adams suggested a potential recommendation for the Board could be to aim for 100% total renewable energy instead of zeroing in on a specific type of energy.
- iii. Trexler said that the November meeting with Sean will be an update on what he has been working on this semester based on suggestions from the committee. He said some of the projects he knows Sean is working on are sites where solar can be implemented on Township owned buildings and trail signs.
- iv. Adams stated that we should look into an energy audit for the Township to gauge where things stand and where we should be headed. Burke said it is all a good idea, but that he would need to do more research into solar energy in order to make a sound decision. Adams said that the discussion would be around renewable energy in total, not just solar.

- v. Williams said that an area of interest for her is a safehouse where residents could go if the power is out, considering how much the power has been going out lately. She said it would be a good idea to incorporate this into some kind of plan.
- vi. Cintron asked if the Township has the power to dictate what kind of power is placed in the Township by the power companies, and Adams said yes but we are not doing it. John Marks suggested the bill will increase if this is done which is why it is not done everywhere. Marks suggested that there should also be a push to build new energy infrastructure underground to avoid issues.
- vii. Trexler said that, if possible, he can send materials that Sean completes to the committee for review prior to the November meeting.
- viii. Adams suggested that we all remain careful of focusing solely on solar energy. She said we should be focusing on all renewable energy.

b. Earth Day

- i. Adams informed the new members that we were sending info out to groups who were invited to the event last year as a thank you and as information about the 2025 event. Adams said that we need a point person to receive any inquiries from the recipients. Williams asked if the committee could have an official Township email address. Trexler said he would look into it. Williams said that the letters should be going out by this Friday.
- ii. Burke stated that a big focus point this year needs to be advertising. He said he also made contact with a Geologist from the PA DCNR who would love to attend the event. Williams said that she can be added to the recipient list for the letter. Marks suggested that they could have a presentation about Radon in homes.
- iii. Cohen asked what type of event Earth Day is. Adams said we try to do some presentations and have tables with various organizations. She said she knows a person that would be willing to participate in the event also.
- iv. Williams suggested that we could do a speaker series to incorporate more speakers and presentations. Adams said that it is a good idea.
- v. Trexler said that there is only one edition of the newsletter between now and Earth Day, so anything that the committee would like included needs to be worked on now.
- vi. Cohen suggested that she could reach out to the Easton Area School District band director to inquire about having a pep band attend the event if the committee wants to. She also suggested some kind of pickleball tournament could be held on Earth Day.
- vii. Adams wanted to nail down the location for the Earth Day event, either Fairview Park or the new Youth Center. Williams stated that more events could be held outside if the event was held at the park. She said the Youth Center would be better for a speaker series.

- viii. Adams suggested having a special meeting dedicated to the planning of the Earth Day event rather than having to discuss the same business at the regular monthly meetings. She suggested holding this meeting in January of 2025. Trexler said that meetings can be held whenever, they just need to be advertised ahead of time.
 - c. **Multi-Municipal EAC collaboration**
 - i. Adams informed the new members what this topic was. There was no new information at this time.
 - d. **Township/ESC Newsletter**
 - i. Adams stated that Burke has the lead on the next edition of the Township newsletter.
 - ii. Ken Starace provided the committee with some examples of the green guides that had been discussed at a previous meeting. She reiterated that she would like to have the green guides archived somewhere for everyone to be able to access.
 - iii. Adams discussed a potential welcome package for new residents to give out information about regulations. Adams said the details would be ironed out at a later date.
- 5. **New Business**
 - a. **WeConservePA affiliate membership**
 - i. No update at this time.
- 6. **Reports**
 - a. **Board of Supervisors**
 - i. Supervisor Bellis said that he wants to announce the date and time of the Earth Day event at the next Board of Supervisors meeting. He also welcomed the two new members to the committee.
 - b. **Environmental branches of Township**
 - i. John marks gave updates on the Palmer Proud event. Marks then said that the Earth Stewards need to create their own website for the event and for many other uses. Marks requested that the fees be covered by the ESC committee in the Township budget. He said it is a \$395.00 setup fee, and then a \$20.00 annual maintenance fee for as long as the site stays up and running. Marks said that the Township is supportive of the Earth Stewards having their own website that can be utilized to advertise anything from this committee. Burke asked how much is in the committee budget, and Trexler said it is difficult to say an exact price due to multiple committee's utilizing the line item, but that 2024's budget was \$6,000.00. Adams asked if the site could be for all things environmental in the Township, and Marks confirmed. Williams asked if they are building an app or a website, Marks said a website. Trexler asked what the URL would be, and Marks said it would be earthstewardsofpalmer.com. Cintron suggested using a Facebook group instead of a new website to have a larger audience. Supervisor Bellis stated that one of the main reasons we are looking for a

website is so that we can create a QR code for advertising the Palmer Proud event. Adams asked if an additional page could be added to the existing Township website rather than building another website from scratch. Burke said he loves the idea because it is a website dedicated solely to environmental. Burke said that he could be the point person from the committee to proof everything going on from the ESC. Adams asked who would be running the website, and Marks said it would be himself along with other members of the Earth Stewards group.

- ii. Adams asked how each of the committee members felt about it. Burke said he wants to approve it. Cintron asked what the timeline for the website is, and Marks said it is already being built. Cintron said that it would be nice if the ESC members could look at the website prior to approving anything. Bellis said that he has spoken to the Township Manager about it, and that he gave his approval and support. Burke made a motion to approve the funding in the amount of \$395.00 for the creation of the Earth Stewards website. Cohen seconded the motion, and it was passed by unanimous voice vote.

7. Public Comment

- a. Ken Starace handed out a summary and discussed the event he and the Earth Stewards attended in Scranton for community stewardship. Adams said that the committee will review this information and look for a way to add it to a future agenda to discuss possibly doing something similar for our Township. Marks stated that it was a great place to interact and network with surrounding municipalities.

8. For the Good of the Order

- a. Nothing at this time.

9. Next Meeting: November 20th, 2024

10. Adjournment

- a. Burke made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Cohen seconded. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous voice vote at 8:57 PM.