

Palmer Township, Northampton County

Environmental Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

January 24th, 2024, 6:30PM, 3 Weller Place, Lower-Level Municipal Meeting Room

1. Roll Call

- a. Present: Karen Adams, Bill Hartin, Tony Rose, Celia Williams, and Colin Burke.
Also present: Paige Strasko, Zach Trexler, John Marks, and Tom Dittmar.
- b. Absent: Michael Brett
- c. The meeting was called to order at 6:30PM.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 25, 2023

- a. Adams asked if anyone had any corrections or comments on the minutes. Hearing none, Adams made a motion to approve the minutes and Rose seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

3. Old Business

a. Reorganization

- i. Hartin made a motion to appoint Karen Adams as the chairman of the Committee and Rose seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
- ii. Adams made a motion to appoint Bill Hartin as the Vice Chairman of the Committee and Burke seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
- iii. As new members of the Committee, Colin Burke & Celia Williams introduced themselves to all in attendance.

b. LCAP Presentation Review and Discussion

- i. Sean Nichols & Brandi Robinson from the Pennsylvania State University's Department of Energy presented to the Committee their research and information regarding transportation, emissions, natural gas, and industrial/warehouse properties in the Township. Nichols also shared a template for a Township Local Climate Action Plan.
- ii. The Committee discussed research topics and next steps for the Local Climate Action Plan. The Committee decided to move forward with the development of educational materials and a framework of the plan to determine what the recommendations for main focuses moving forward will be.

c. Earth Day

i. Committee member updates on status of their topic

- 1. Rose updated the group that he will be working on sending an outline of his topic to include a rain barrel presentation and information about rain gardens and stormwater runoff. Rose also asked all other committee members to share information about their respective events at the Earth Day event so they can all be included in the resource guide.

2. Committee members discussed holding the Earth Day event at Fairview Park. They discussed available facilities and materials.
3. Committee members discussed how to better advertise the Earth Day event. Rose said he would reach out to local stores to inquire about tabling at the local stores to hand information out.
4. Adams discussed the Pennsylvania native plant sale that is being held at the Earth Day event by the Pennsylvania Master Gardeners.
5. Hartin said that he secured the bee demonstration and that there is a video to go along with it as well as an informational handout.
6. Adams mentioned that there will also be a table at the Earth Day event with information regarding alternatives to plastics and polystyrene.
7. Williams asked what the main theme of this year's Earth Day event will be. Rose said one of the themes is stormwater runoff because the issue is large within the Township. Adams also mentioned that waste reduction is another theme. She said she attended a meeting with Waste Management to discuss various forms of waste reduction information that can be included and dispersed at the upcoming Earth Day event.
8. The committee decided there were additional groups that should be reached out to in hopes that they could participate in the Earth Day event. Burke said he would take responsibility for reaching out to the utility companies. Williams said she would reach out to groups that had attended previous Earth Day events.
9. The committee decided that the Earth Day event will be held from 10AM through 2PM. The event will be held on Saturday, April 20th at Fairview Park.
10. Dittmar said that the committee should look into holding a waste audit event at an Earth Day in the future. He said the event is easy to set up and can be very surprising to participants. Dittmar said he has experience running these programs and that he would help the committee organize one of their own.
11. Rose said that he will be responsible for the development of the resource guide for the Earth Day event. He said that he would like a summary of all events to be included. Williams and Burke also suggested that a guide for local facilities like the Berks Street Yard Waste Facility should be included in the guide.

ii. Anticipated need for support/funds

d. Storm drain labeling

e. ESC education/information/newsletter topics

i. Survey

1. No update at this time.

ii. Trash/recycling/waste and food waste

1. Adams said that this education will be addressed by the Earth Day event information and resources.

4. New Business

a. Single Use Plastics Reduction Study

i. Supervisor follow up

1. There was no update at this time.

b. Committee Membership

- i. Adams announced that there are 2 vacancies on the committee. Strasko also announced that committee member Zane Rice had resigned from the committee.

c. WeConservePA Virtual Conference – Saturday, February 24

- i. Strasko reminded the committee to view the materials sent to them via email regarding the virtual conference which included registration information and instructions along with an Agenda for the conference.

d. Nurture Nature Resiliency Plan – Thursday, February 1

- i. Strasko told the committee about an upcoming event being held by the Nurture Nature organization. She told the committee there were 2 open spots, and that if anyone wanted to attend, they could. Admas and Williams volunteered to attend the event.

5. Reports

a. Board of Supervisors

- i. There were no updates at this time.

b. MS4

- i. Strasko said that there will continue to be efforts to complete the storm drain labeling project, but that it will likely occur when the weather is more suitable.

6. Public Comment

- a. Dittmar suggested a food waste and vermiculture program be added to an Earth Day event schedule in the future. He said that food waste is a large portion of the residential waste stream, and that food waste can be easily composted. Rose added that his entire garden is made up of compost.

7. For the Good of the Order

- a. Rose recapped what his tasks for the Earth Day event are moving forward. He said that he will be continuing to develop the resource guide/brochure and continue to work on advertising for the event.
- b. Adams asked the committee about potentially serving food to participants at the Earth Day event. Adams suggested small finger foods be purchased, and Strasko reminded the committee that they do have a budget that they may use at their discretion. The committee agreed to discuss this topic more in the future.
- c. Burke said that many people within the community are unaware that the Berks Street Yard Waste Facility exists and more so that the facility gives out free

mulch and compost. Williams echoed the thought. Rose said we can add a facility guide to the resource brochure he will be developing for the Earth Day event.

8. Next Meeting: February 28, 2024

9. Adjournment

- a.** Rose made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Burke seconded. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous voice vote at 9:18PM.