

## **Palmer Township**

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

**January 26, 2022, 6:30PM at Palmer Township Municipal Building**

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

- a. The meeting was called to order at 6:43pm by interim chair Ginny Sciorra.
- b. Present: Ginny Sciorra, Josh Kasenga, Tom Grube, Bill Ruch, Paige Strasko. Deanne Werkheiser came later to the meeting.
- c. Absent: Diane Halasz
- d. Guests: Nancy Nicholas, Anita Forrester, Tom Dittmar, Tom Ganssle, all Palmer residents. Board of Supervisor members Joseph Armato and Mike Brett also attended, along with Robert Williams, Township manager and Brenda DeGerolamo, assistant township manager.

#### **2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 27, 2021**

- a. Meeting minutes from October were not present at this meeting and were unable to be approved by the new board.

#### **3. New Business**

- a. Robert Williams, Joseph Armato, Paige Strasko and Brenda DeGerolamo introduced themselves and explained their role with the committee moving forward. Paige Strasko will be the ESC coordinator taking meeting minutes and helping the chair finalize the agenda, Joseph Armato will be working with the board of supervisors to ensure communication and support for any decisions made by the committee. Williams and DeGerolamo are also there to answer questions, lend support and coordinate with township staff for projects the committee works on.
- b. Reorganization
  - i. Tom Grube made a nomination for Bill Ruch to be the new Chair, Sciorra seconded. Motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.
  - ii. Kasenga nominated Tom Grube to be Vice Chair. Sciorra seconded. Motion was unanimously passed by voice vote.
- c. 2022 Outlook: Since there were two new members, Bill Ruch asked the other committee members to speak a little bit about what their ideas were for 2022 and what they wanted to see get accomplished.
  - i. Grube wants to see more recycling programs, DeGerolamo brought up how badly Palmer needs an e-cycling event and that was discussed at length.
  - ii. Sciorra stated she wanted to focus on recycling as well as bigger ideas like a climate action plan for Palmer township to establish what we need in case of an emergency, as well as education on what environmental actions Palmer is taking to make a difference.
  - iii. Ruch reiterated that education is big on his agenda as well.
  - iv. Kasenga wants to focus on smaller specific projects such as electric powered lawnmowers, solar power or air quality improvement.

- v. Williams mentioned that there are two grants for the recycling center, and it may be a good idea to continue working with township employees there. Williams also mentions working on a Facebook page, recruiting volunteers, MS4 program and Bethlehem's updates to their MS4 program.
- vi. Armato and Brett talk about their ideas such as Earth Day events, working with the Shade Tree Commission, starting a tree city program similar to Easton's, as well as more green building codes and no mow areas of the township.

#### **4. Old Business**

##### **a. 2022 Budget**

- i. Werkheiser commented that Cindy Oatis used to do line-item budgets and tell the committee what they had.
- ii. DeGerolamo commented that the budget from the previous year was resubmitted and there should be \$5,000-\$6,000 available. This started another conversation about budgeting for an e-cycling event between DeGerolamo, Werkheiser and Tom Dittmar. Dittmar stated he would find out costs for an e-cycling event from the old EARC or another contact from DEP. There was also discussion if the e-cycling should be only for Palmer residents or if there should be inclusion of other municipalities, but the committee decided the first e-cycling event should be for Palmer residents only to minimize logistics and cost. There may be opportunities for a larger e-cycling event at another time.

##### **b. ESC vs EAC**

- i. Ruch asked for an explanation of what an Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) exactly is. Sciorra and Werkheiser describe the structure of an EAC and explained that these types of committees have more rules and regulations to follow when it comes to member term limits and how EACs work with their Board of Supervisors (BoS).
- ii. It was unanimously decided that the committee would stay an ESC, not EAC for the new members to get to know their peers and get an understanding of on-going projects.

##### **c. ESC webpage, *Green Guide*, Facebook, email (esc.palmer@gmail.com)**

- i. Williams mentioned that committee members can email Strasko for communication.
- ii. Ruch wanted to discuss a person to head the Facebook page at the next meeting.

##### **d. Electric lawnmowers for Parks and Recreation Department**

- i. Kasenga gave a presentation on different styles and sizes of electric lawnmowers he found on the market, their run time and charge time. Kasenga also found a company that gives discounts to municipalities.
- ii. DeGerolamo commented that Parks currently mows around 300 acres per week and how that has to be considered when looking at mower options.
- iii. Armato and Kasenga discuss specifics that the BoS would want in order to be comfortable making this purchase such as schematics, cost of extra batteries, voltage needed to charge the batteries, etc.

- iv. Kasenga will do more research into the issue and possibly talk with Parks Department employees to get a better understanding of what they need for their mowers.

## **5. Reports**

### **a. Board of Supervisors**

- i. Armato discussed how the committee had covered everything previously that he wanted to talk about here, since Armato is also a new BoS member, there are plans to keep in contact with Armato about new ideas moving forward.
- ii. Williams also reiterated that all committee members are encouraged to attend BoS meetings and to introduce themselves to the Board members, utilize the support that the committee has and build a working relationship with BoS members.

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

- a. Tom Ganssle spoke about previous ESC committee and how they did many of the projects that were mentioned throughout the meeting in the past, but many people were frustrated with the decision-making power of the group. Those people broke off and formed the group Earth Stewards of Palmer (ESP) where they have collected over 16,000 pounds of waste. Ganssle gave a special thanks to Williams for being so involved in the township and making the group feel heard. Ganssle also offered that the ESP would be more than happy to help any future projects.
- b. Williams stated that its all about community, thanked Ganssle and mentioned it would be a good idea to partner with public works for projects in the future along with ESP.

## **7. Next Meeting:** February 23, 2022

## **8. Adjournment**

- a. A motion to adjourn was made by Werkheiser and seconded by Grube. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote and the meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.