

Palmer Township, Northampton County

Environmental Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

March 26th, 2025, 6:30PM, 3 Weller Place, Municipal Meeting Room, Lower Level

1. Roll Call

- a. Present: Karen Adams, Celia Williams, Colin Burke, Monica Cintron, Ashley Cohen, Yvonne Lee, Zach Trexler and Township Supervisor Charles Bellis III.
- b. Absent: Phil Perhamus
- c. The meeting was called to order at 6:30PM.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 26th, 2025

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

3. Old Business

a. LCAP

- i. Adams said there are two areas we are focusing on now which are focused on keeping expenses minimal. She said Perhamus sent out a great report that focused on technologies that could be integrated for energy efficiency in buildings. She said she has been reaching out to the DEP for grant money to help complete an energy audit. Adams said the second area of focus is centered on plantings and resiliency in extreme climate incidents. She mentioned specifically the Fox Run Park grant and plantings at Mill Race Park.

b. Earth Day

- i. Cintron said at this point we have finalized all of the vendors who will be attending the Event, which at this point is about 21 vendors. She said we discussed the layout a few weeks ago which is also close to finalized, and we picked up all the artwork submissions from the kids at the Palmer Elementary School. She said we have nine paper submissions as well as a few virtual submissions. She said they will all be on display at the event and they will all be framed. Cintron said all the lists and documents can be found on Google Drive. Adams asked what is needed from the Committee and Williams said the day before the event, we are expecting everyone to be present at the park to help begin setting up around 3pm. Burke asked if there was a decision made for what the giveaways will be, and Williams said we have been looking into bags as well as water bottles, but the bottles are expensive so we are looking at a combination of both bags and bottles. Burke asked if we would be getting new shirts with our new logo on them, and Williams said we are ordering some long sleeve shirts because it will be cooler outside the day of the event.
- ii. Lee announced that she would also be attending the event as a vendor for her nonprofit, Aunt Yvonne's Craft Closet, for reuse of crafting materials.

She said we will be in the Palmer Library on the first Saturday of May, June and July. She said the goal is to keep crafting supplies out of the landfill.

c. Township Newsletter

- i. Williams stated that Cohen will be submitting an article for the next submission for the August edition of the newsletter. Cohen said she does not have anything developed yet and asked the committee for topic recommendations. Adams said we have the LCAP documents and ideas that could be shared, and Lee has expressed interest in waste reduction and recycling. Cohen stated she will have her article written and submitted prior to the deadline. Beavers said the Township recently added the LCAP and greenhouse gas inventory to the website, so there is an opportunity to direct folks to these documents via the newsletter. Cohen said some ideas she has are sustainable back to school practices, fall leaf management and maintenance of yards, plantings and trees that can be spotted throughout the Township, and a recap of Earth Day. Ken Starace, Earth Stewards of Palmer, suggested coordinating with other Township entities to ensure no topics overlap with each other. John Marks, Earth Stewards of Palmer, suggested a topic relating to waste reduction hasn't been published in a while. Adams suggested scheduling another tour of both the Landfill and the Recycling Processing Facility, and that this would be a great idea for the newsletter. Burke asked if a document could be set up with all Environmental groups of the Township to share their newsletter topics, and Williams stated it has already been created and shared with everyone.

d. Public Works Tour

- i. Burke said the tour was very informative and that the entire building is clean, professional and respectable. He said you can tell Kistler loves his department and really takes care of everything. He said it was cool to learn how the stormwater vehicle works and then see it in action out in the field which is very impressive to watch. Burke expressed how impressive the vehicle is in many ways. Williams thanked Bellis for putting the tour together. Starace stated that despite some of the equipment being a decade old, it all looks brand new, and everything is maintained in working order. Adams asked if some of the information we gathered from the tour should be shared with the public via newsletter articles and Marks said that Public Works submits info to the newsletter on their own behalf.

4. New Business

a. BOS Meetings

- i. Bellis thanked the Committee for attending the last Board of Supervisor meeting and noted how impressed the other Board members were with their presentation. Bellis suggested that the Committee attend a few BOS meetings per year in order to keep everyone up to date with the happenings of the Committee.

b. Educational Seminars

- i. Williams said this is something we are looking to start this year, and Lee said the idea is to bring an outside expert 2-3 times per year to talk to us about various areas. She said based on survey results, residents have expressed interest in both air and water quality. Lee said she reached out to a Professor at Lehigh University who specializes in air quality and pollution to invite her to come speak with us over the Summer. She said the Professor expressed interest in coming in to talk in late Summer or early Fall. Lee said the presentation would be focused on air pollution. Lee said she will also try to find someone to speak about water quality with the Committee. Cohen stated that she can help in trying to find someone to come in to discuss water quality. Adams said the air quality discussion would come at a good time given recent studies on traffic and warehousing in the area. Adams asked if this would be geared towards a presentation for the Committee or for the public, and Williams said it would be for the public. Marks noted a presentation given years ago regarding the now Lehigh Valley Hospital Hecktown Oaks Campus at a Lower Nazareth Township Meeting and suggested the speaker for that air quality presentation was excellent, and Beavers later confirmed that it would be the same speaker coming for our presentation. Trexler asked if these presentations would be held in conjunction with the regular monthly meeting, or if it would be in addition to the regular meeting and Lee said she was not sure. Lee said the scheduling might be tough, and Trexler said if it happens to fall outside the regular monthly meeting, it will have to be advertised if business is conducted. Starace mentioned that the Lehigh Valley has been noticed as one of the noisiest areas as well, so that could be another idea for a speaker.

c. Planning – Craig Beavers

- i. Adams introduced Craig Beavers from the Township's Planning Department and briefly introduced the project he is working on, the Bushkill Creek Greenway Master Plan and Corridor Study, which covers all the Buskill frontage within Palmer Township. Adams said the plan includes a Master Plan, community engagement and an enormous amount of data and information collection. She said some of the purposes of this study blend really well with our LCAP.
- ii. Beavers thanked Adams for the introduction and expressed his gratitude for the chance to speak with the committee. He said the plan intends to complete a comprehensive corridor and environmental study of the Bushkill Creek and all of its flora and fauna. He said it is also a trail and parks study which will discuss potential upgrades to the Township's facilities and amenities. Beavers said we have an extensive multifaceted work plan that will have several phases of public engagement, data collection and analysis, and site planning design. He said the public

engagement process will start in the coming months and will include meetings, interviews and public surveys. He said we will also be working on site and facility activities and analysis. He said after the analysis is completed, we will be working with our Steering Committee to develop various park Master Plans and trail improvements, as well as discussing how to improve our natural environment, riparian buffer corridors and recommended plantings. Beavers said it will be a lot of work, but it is important because the Bushkill is the spine of Palmer Township. He said we want to ensure every Township committee has representation on the steering committee, so he is requesting a representative from the ESC sit on the meetings and be the primary point of contact. Adams asked if a popup event could be held at the upcoming Earth Day event, and Beavers said they are looking for May or June events at this time, but he will be present at the event and he will try to do something related to this Plan. Adams asked how the survey would be conducted, and Beavers said the strategy is still being worked on, but he sees it as primarily an online survey. Burke asked if any physical changes to the Creek would occur, and Beavers said all we are doing for now is just completing a study. Burke suggested this is a beautiful plan and he looks forward to contributing in any way that he can.

5. Reports

a. Board of Supervisors

- i.** Township Supervisor Charles Bellis III stated that the Township employs one of the premier grant writers in the County, Kent Baird. He said if you get Baird involved with your grant recommendations, he would be able to help you out in many ways. He also reminded the Committee that the ESC is a recommending body to the Board of Supervisors, so any grants should be brought to the BOS for approval.
- ii.** Bellis suggested that about a week prior to the Earth Day event a notice be sent to the Township Manager and Assistant Township Manager with an updated plan for the day to serve as a reminder as well as asking for support on the Friday beforehand in case any help is needed so that we are not scrambling on Saturday morning.
- iii.** Bellis said he was a bit disappointed to see the Township only received 200 responses to the Survey for the Master Plan Study, but he suggested that we should be relying on our committees to help spread the word in order to gain more responses.
- iv.** Bellis reiterated his support for the Public Works tour and mentioned that Kistler was appreciative of the attendance, respect and questions asked and answered during the tour.

b. Environmental branches of Township

- i.** Marks said they have recently presented to the BIP and Board of Supervisors their vision for the Palmer Proud event. He said the

Supervisors have given them permission to put up banners in accordance with Township Ordinances, and they requested financial support from the BIP, and we already received one inquiry from a company that is looking to help in any way they can. He said the event will be held August 23rd, the weekend after Palmer Days, and everyone's participation will be greatly appreciated. Marks said we will be advertising our new website in the upcoming newsletter. Williams asked how signups have been going, and Marks said they have received eight volunteers already through the website signup process. Starace said they are looking to build momentum at the Earth Day event, and we also have a booth at Community Weekend. Bellis said he spoke with representatives from Upper Nazareth Township who said that they want to be involved with the event as well.

6. Public Comment

- a. Beavers asked if the Committee could designate a representative to sit on the Bushkill Creek Greenway Plan Steering Committee by Friday, and Williams confirmed that they will.

7. For the Good of the Order

- a. Trexler asked if the Committee would be interested in another tour of the recycling facility and suggested if he does, it would be good to try and have better attendance this time around. Williams said they will discuss it to find out who would be interested. Trexler asked if they would be interested in another tour of the landfill, and Williams said they will discuss that as well.
- b. Burke said that starting next meeting, he will have trouble attending meetings since he will be starting a new job.
- c. Burke asked how the storm drain labeling project was going, and Trexler suggested that this is a Stormwater project so he would need to contact Matt Gunther for an update.

8. Next Meeting: June 25th, 2025

9. Adjournment

- a. Adams made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Lee seconded. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous voice vote at 7:41 PM.