

**PALMER TOWNSHIP**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**  
January 27, 2021, 6:30 PM  
**MINUTES**

1. **ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS** - The meeting was called to order by Chairman Forrester at 6:30pm. In attendance were Anita Forrester, Tyler Nemura, Nancy Nicholas, Cindy Oatis, Ann-Marie Panella, and Doreen Shaffer. Members absent included Ginny Sciorra and Deanne Werkheiser. Guests included Madelyn Koch, Jonathan S. Forrester, and Tara Zrinski, Northampton County Councilwoman.
2. **REORGANIZATION** - Chairman Forrester turned the meeting over to Supervisor Panella for the acceptance of nominations.
  - a) Nomination of Chairman – A motion was made by Nancy Nicholas to nominate Anita Forrester for chairwoman, seconded by Tyler Nemora. The motion carried with Ginny Sciorra and Deanne Werkheiser absent.
  - b) Nomination of Vice Chairman – A motion was made by Anita Forrester to nominate Ginny Sciorra, for vice chairwoman, seconded by Nancy Nicholas. The motion carried with Ginny Sciorra and Deanne Werkheiser absent.
  - c) Nomination of Secretary – A motion was made by Nancy Nicholas, seconded by Anita Forrester, that Cindy Oatis remain functioning as Secretary of the ESC for 2021 for the purpose of maintaining consistency and accuracy of recording requirements, etc. that must be met for this position. The motion carried with Ginny Sciorra and Deanne Werkheiser absent.
  - d) Designation of ESC Meeting Time, Date and Place - A motion was made by Nancy Nicholas, second by Anita Forrester to confirm 2021 ESC Meetings will be held at the Palmer Public Library, the fourth Wednesday of each month, at 6:30pm, except during the months of November and December. The motion carried with Ginny Sciorra and Deanne Werkheiser absent.
  - e) The committee recommended that Tyler Nemora's term be extended for two (2) more years and Panella will have that placed on the Board of Supervisors' agenda for approval.
3. **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS** - Forrester introduced our guests Madelyn Koch, Associate Professor, Northampton Community College; Jonathan S. Forrester, professor at Northampton Community College and Temple University; and Tara Zrinski, Northampton County Councilwoman.
4. **GUEST SPEAKER** – The Honorable Tara Zrinski came to discuss the current movement toward banning single-use plastics. Northampton County Council, in January 2019, passed a resolution strongly suggesting municipalities consider banning plastic bags and other single-use plastics such as straws. The resolution passed and included the education of local EAC

and ESC groups and municipalities as to why these are detrimental to the environment and why banning them is an important step toward helping the environment. Moore, Forks, Lower Saucon, and Bethlehem townships have all been considering banning these materials. Strong interest triggered the City of Bethlehem to put out a survey to their businesses regarding the possible negative impact prohibiting these items and the feedback was favorable to eliminating them. In July 2019, our legislature, preemptively banned Governor Wolf's ban on single-use plastics and this triggered much discussion as to the constitutionality of these actions. Penn Environment has joined with the City of Philadelphia to bring a lawsuit to clarify the constitutionality of these actions, and to restrict the legislature from overstepping their boundaries and squashing or impacting municipal rights, and prevent them from applying this precedent in other areas as well.

5. **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES** – Forrester made a motion to approve the September 23, 2020 meeting minutes with one correction, the motion was seconded by Nemura, and approved by all.

6. **OLD BUSINESS**

- a) 2021 Webinars and Articles – In light of the ongoing pandemic, the committee realizes that many of the events they had hoped to host in 2021 will have to be cancelled, as in 2020. The committee agreed to move forward with educational initiatives.
- b) Template Proposal - Madelyn Koch spoke about the Bushkill Stream Conservancy proposal and template she created for the committee and mentioned that topics that are important or helpful to families and individuals will serve the community well. The committee agreed that template provided could be used or modified for just about any topic.  
Articles to be loosely drafted for discussion and implementation at the next meeting include the following:
  - (1) Leaf Blowers – Nemura
  - (2) Recycling – Oatis
  - (3) Plastics – Forrester
  - (4) At Home or Backyard Composting – Koch
  - (5) Sciorra and Nicholas will consider additional topics.
- c) 2021 Northampton County E-cycling Event – Oatis to provide an update at the next meeting.
- d) 2021 Keep America Beautiful Litter Clean-up – The committee agreed they would like to continue to participate with this program again this year. Oatis will register the group with Penn DOT and determine an area to work.
- e) Earth Day Celebration - Nemura made the suggestion that we create a social media campaign challenge. Examples #keepPalmerGreen or #PalmerEarthDay and go with a “stand with us,” campaign to encourage residents, groups, churches, township departments to post pictures doing something environmental. Koch indicated that considering prize options might help provide incentive.

- f) Logo – Forrester reported the contact we had hoped to utilize is no longer available. Nicholas will check with embroidery person that would be doing the shirts and Nemora commented he might know someone that might be able to help in this regard.

## 7. **NEW BUSINESS**

- a) Palmer Climate Action Plan – Forrester mentioned the ESC should consider creating a climate action plan and that the City of Bethlehem’s plan was meant to serve to help other communities create their own. The ESC was asked to review the plan via the following link: <https://www.bethlehem-pa.gov/Public-Works/Climate-Action-Plan>

- 8. **GOOD OF THE ORDER** - Werkheiser passed along to the committee that the new Sheetz has electric vehicle charging ports.

## 9. **REPORTS**

- a) Recycling Report –
  - i) Oatis reported that the legislature took \$50 million from the Recycling Fund having a huge impact on future PA DEP municipal grants. Palmer recently received \$107,000 for the 2019 PA DEP 904 Performance Grant.
  - ii) Oatis informed the committee that preparation of the waste and recycling bid specifications had begun and the township will receive and open bids at the end of the month.
- b) Supervisors’ Report – Panella reported that there hasn’t been a Shade Tree Commission in many years and would like to propose combining this commission with the Environmental Steering Committee. She expressed concern about the need for builders to incorporate trees in areas such as new retention ponds. She also cited the importance of designating the right type of trees in certain areas. An example of this being the Parkview area that contains trees with aggressive surface roots that upend the sidewalks. Forrester felt there were definitely overlapping areas and Nemura commented that he had helped with the creation of the NCC arboretum. Nicholas felt that there are certain other township practices that could be modified such as allow the grasses to grow higher and that would that would help eliminate the geese problem. Discussion included considering moving from an Environmental Steering Committee (ESC) to an Environmental Advisory Council (EAC). Oatis commented that this would need to be done by the Board of Supervisors passing an ordinance to establish same under PA law.

- 10. **NEXT MEETING** – February 24, 2021, 6:30pm

- 11. **ADJOURNMENT** – Motion was made to adjourn by Nicholas, seconded by Nemora, and approved by all.