

Swarthmore Environmental Advisory Council
MEETING MINUTES
March 22, 2016

In Attendance: Susan Kelly, Chair; Members: Nancy English, Tracy Bouvette, Fintan McHugh; associate members Phil Coleman and Melissa Tier. A quorum was present.

The February 2016 minutes were approved, with two edits. The update for A Few Steps included a reference to expected costs of \$2.70 per watt, and this was changed to \$2.75 per watt if 30 or more customers are obtained. Also, the update on Boy Scouts should be supplemented to reference that John Crawford will be installing benches, tables, and a bike rack in Little Crum Creek Park.

Meeting began at 7:35

Old Business:

A Few Steps

Phil Coleman explained that A Few Steps would not be using summer interns in 2016. He believes that the organization has exhausted what it can do for local churches and synagogues concerning their energy initiatives. They are focusing currently on outreach through sustainability coaches, with Tracy Bouvette serving as a new sustainability coach. They are also exploring collaborative consumption initiatives, similar to efforts by Transition Town Media, which allows community members to share resources in order to reduce consumption.

Growing Green Grant

Tracy explained that the Growing Green Planning Grant continues to proceed forward, and that the public outreach portion of the process may begin in May or June 2016. Tracy will be sending a follow-up email to the consultants on the job, and will be copying Borough Manager, Jane Billings, and Susan Kelly. Since this is a planning grant, it will not interfere with the Swarthmore Swim Club opening on May 28, 2016.

Little Crum Creek Park

The members reviewed the work that was performed at the March 19th work day at the park. Most of this included clean up and weeding from the Northern section of the park along Cresson Avenue. There were 23 people in attendance, including a lot of new faces. It was believed that the front-page notice in the Swarthmorean helped generate public interest in the cleanup day. The next scheduled cleanup day will be in conjunction with the Annual CRC Streams Clean Up on April 30th.

The Borough, working with the Public Works Department, recently removed a substantial section of bamboo and invasive weeds near the corner of Yale Avenue and Swarthmore Avenue. They will be planting grass throughout that area to prevent erosion.

Tracy explained that he and his family are working on a project for pop-up art in the park, and are creating a YouTube video in connection with it. He anticipated that the project would begin on March 23rd.

Tim O'Connell, a local resident, has initiated a milkweed planting project near the fence at the park. Financial support would be needed to support this project. Tim has suggested obtaining seeds and/or plants from the Save the Monarchs website.

Susan mentioned that one of the ways to increase community interest and maintenance of the park would involve Brownies and Girl Scouts, and she intends to contact local leaders soon. It was also suggested that setting up regular work days, for instance on an established Saturday of each month, would make it easier for people to schedule participation in the work days. Rachel Sten, a resident of Rutledge Borough, has expressed interest in becoming involved in events and activities in the park, especially those involving children's activities and planting milkweed.

In terms of improving the landscaping at the park, Susan suggested that there may be a way to work with Borough Council and the recommendations in the Aging-In-Place Task Force report to get support to regrade and reseed the Northern section of the park so that it is more accessible and friendly for aging pedestrians. Carol Menke was suggested as a member of the Task Force who has experience with landscape architecture, and who might be someone who could help sketch plans that would make the park more usable and attractive to the entire community. Improvements involving a gathering area, feeder seeding, and possibly bathrooms were discussed. Members discussed the opportunity of contacting Borough Council member David Murphy before borough budget discussions begin in the fall, as he is Chair of the Public Works, Park and Recreation Committee.

New Business

Melissa gave an explanation of the first annual Sustainability Summit that will take place on Friday April 15th. This was a change from the previously announced date. The Summit will take place from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in Eldridge Commons, near the Science Building and parking lots on the North end of the collect campus. There will be three sessions of this Summit. The first would be a relatively informal set up with tables where people can exchange ideas , and would provide an opportunity for different groups to exchange summaries of what has been happening with their projects and how to keep them moving. The second session would involve group brainstorming, focusing on sustainability goals, such as what different groups want to accomplish in five years. The third session would be a series of more formal presentations by groups that must register for their respective presentations.

Zip Car

Melissa filled in for Aurora on this topic and mentioned that there currently are two zip cars on campus and the college would like to add another, going beyond student use. Is there interest in the community in having access to a zip car? Hopefully, more discussions on this topic will ensue at our April meeting.

Driveway Replacement Issues

Tracy brought the issue of driveway replacement to our attention. He is currently in discussions with the Borough Manager concerning replacing his own driveway and realized from reading comments on NextDoor.Swarthmore that most residents are unaware of the ordinance that governs this issue; i.e., pervious vs impervious surface, storm-water management, obtaining permits, what is necessary, and how to go about the process. Contractors as well must have purchased a permit to work in the borough. Since Tracy is in the initial stage of this process, he agreed to share his findings with us at our April meeting. Perhaps there is some way that the EAC can be involved in public education about this topic.

Important Upcoming Events

Saturday April 30th: Chester – Ridley – Crum Creek Watersheds Association stream cleanup day. This will occur from 9:00o a.m. to 11:00 a.m. in Crum Creek Park.

EAC 2016 Meeting Dates (4th Tuesday of each month, 7:30 p.m. in the Community Room)

The following dates were discussed and agreed upon for the remaining 2016 meeting dates: April 26, May 24, June 28, July 26, August 23, September 27, October 25, November 22, December 27? (due to holiday)

Adjourned 8:40 pm

Minutes submitted by Fintan McHugh