

Swarthmore Environmental Advisory Council

March 28, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Present: Susan Kelly, Chair; members Ashley Grider, Matt McCabe, Doug Hasbrouck; associate members Annie Fox, Phil Coleman. Borough Council liaison Lauren McKinney.

Absent: members Tracy Bouvette, Jon Penders, Aurora Winslade; associate members Jennifer Pfluger, Melissa Tier.

Borough resident: Joan Urban and Dana Robinson, EQAT members; Swarthmore College student, Aaron Metheny.

Public Comment:

EQAT Resolution

Dana Robinson and Joan Urban, representing Earth Quaker Action Team ("EQAT"), discussed EQAT's background and current campaign to have PECO agree to increase its utilization of solar power to 20% by 2025 with a focus on rooftop installations in lower income neighborhoods. The group is hosting a "Solar Stakeholder Collaborative" on June 16th to commence the campaign and has had two, relatively unsuccessful, meetings with PECO. On behalf of EQAT, Dana and Joan asked for a Borough Council resolution to support this campaign.

As part of the campaign, EQAT is organizing a march, now scheduled for May 8th to 10th, in which participants would march from Lansdowne to Chester and then Chester to Media. A rally in Media is being planned for May 10th.

Annie asked about getting a press release from EQAT to place in *The Swarthmorean*, possibly on the Friday before the march. Lauren pointed out Borough Council meetings were currently scheduled for May 1st and May 8th. The Resolution would be introduced to Council members on May 1st, and the May 8th meeting would be legislative and the resolution could be adopted then.

Doug motioned for approval of the resolution. Phil seconded Doug's motion. The resolution was then approved unanimously by the EAC. Lauren agreed to present it to Borough Council.

Carbon Pricing

Aaron Metheny, a Swarthmore College student, presented a Carbon Pricing Resolution for the EAC to consider recommending to Borough Council. The resolution is being advocated by the Citizens' Climate Lobby. The resolution does not define "carbon pricing" and is agnostic as to whether carbon is taxed or subject to a "cap & trade" system. Aaron, Phil and others discussed examples of municipalities and regions which had adopted some sort of pricing for carbon, including Boulder, CO and the regional cap & trade system in place in the northeast United States. Aaron mentioned that Swarthmore College is trying to implement some form of carbon control. Aaron also presented a "Summary of Carbon Pricing Resolution", a sample "Open Letter" and a copy of a Resolution introduced on December 3, 2015 in the City Council of Philadelphia.

Lauren expressed concern that the Borough Council could be overwhelmed with these sort of resolutions and cautioned about sending too many to Borough Council too frequently. Susan suggested the resolution be reconsidered in the fall given that the EAC was currently sending the EQAT resolution for Council consideration.

Approval of January and February Minutes

Doug motioned for approval. Phil seconded Doug's motion. The minutes were then approved unanimously.

A Few Steps/Indivisible

Phil discussed a new, grass roots organization that has been active in the community, Indivisible. The group is a progressive, socially active group that is looking to have an impact on important issues. A meeting is scheduled for April 23rd at Borough Hall. As part of that meeting, A Few Steps will present actions citizens can take to tackle global issues. The presentation is called "Seven Steps to Save the World." Phil also discussed A Few Steps participation in the recent "Take Action" Fair on March 18th.

It's Not Trash

Ashley and Annie gave an update on the effort to ensure residents dispose of unwanted household items appropriately. Volunteers have been working to complete information sheets that identify the places within the region where the items may be disposed. Annie mentioned several new sheets were expected to be available soon. Ashley explained that completed information sheets are available via links on the Borough's website. Jenn Pfluger is also working on this effort but was absent from the meeting. Ashley also explained that they have been attempting to involve Swarthmore College students, but there had not been substantive engagement yet.

The council discussed the Electronics for Recycling efforts in town. There will be an event on Myers Road on Saturday, June 3rd behind the Coop. (Rain date is June 16th). Ashley reviewed the history of the trailer that had been previously stationed at that site. The trailer was kept closed and people were just dumping their electronics on the street. Several options were discussed to find a way to have better permanent electronics recycling, including: (i) have an open trailer (which was viewed as problematic as kids could enter at will); (ii) involve the Coop somehow in monitoring the trailer; or (iii) position the trailer somewhere on the college campus where monitoring would be more likely. The idea for an on campus site would be raised in the overall discussions on recycling with the college.

To raise awareness on the recycling efforts, Susan suggested a table at the Farmer's Market hosted by A Few Steps. Phil mentioned including the links to the information sheets on the Few Steps website.

Report from Borough Council

Lauren reported that there was no update from Borough Council on the footbridge at the intersection of Yale Ave and Avondale Road. Lauren would try to discuss with David Creagan as a matter of public safety. Doug mentioned previous discussions with the head of facilities at the College, which apparently owns the site, but had gotten little or no meaningful response.

Pesticides/Herbicides

Susan discussed efforts to work toward an educational presentation within the Multi Municipal Environmental Advisory Committee (Rose Valley, Nether Providence, Rutledge and Swarthmore). In addition to Swarthmore, the only active EAC has been Rose Valley. Susan has started discussions with Rose Valley towards a presentation.

Little Crum Creek Park

Doug and Susan reviewed upcoming events at the Park. The SRS clean-up scheduled for March 31st had been cancelled due to weather concerns. The port-a-potty was scheduled to be installed on March 30th. Susan was meeting with roofers to discuss estimates for replacing the roof on the gazebo. Park clean-up and the Agora Dance Production were on schedule for April 22nd. The installation of the "Storybook Walk" appears to be proceeding on schedule for completion on May 13th. Susan, Doug, and Matt agreed to meet in the park to discuss new plants to be purchased with recent grant money (\$500.00). Doug, as Parks Committee Chair, agreed to schedule a meeting in April.

Gerrymandering Concerns

Annie raised recent efforts by "Fair Districts PA" to work towards more reasonable and simpler congressional districts when Pennsylvania's districts are redrawn in 2020. Annie raised the idea of getting a Swarthmore Borough Council

Resolution in support of this effort. Lauren, Susan, and Phil pointed out that any such resolution would be better suited to the General Government Committee. Annie agreed.

EAC Bylaws

The group discussed the potential for the EAC to adopt a set of bylaws. Susan had discussed with Rose Valley and they do not utilize bylaws. Matt said he was unclear how useful bylaws would be for a group like the EAC. No conclusions were reached.

The meeting adjourned before Kitchen Harvest could be discussed.

Recording secretary,

Matt McCabe