

**Swarthmore Environmental Advisory Council
Minutes
Tuesday, July 27, 2021**

Approved 8/24/21

Present: Margaret Betz, Elizabeth Drake, Sue Edwards, Nancy English, Annie Fox, Elizabeth Jenkins, Susan Kelly, Lauren McKinney, John McKinstry, Milton Meyer, Susie O'Donnell, Jennifer Pfluger, Robin Schaufler, John Webster

The July 27 meeting of the Swarthmore EAC began promptly at 7:30 pm.

I. Public Comment

There were no public comments given.

II. Housekeeping

a. Environmental Good News

Annie shared some good news: NJ Governor Murphy just signed a bill to take all leaded water pipes out of service over the next ten years.

b. Incoming Co-Chairs

Annie announced that John McKinstry and Elizabeth Jenkins were approved by Borough Council to be the new co-chairs.

c. Minutes of Special Meeting: Robin drafted these.

The Council unanimously APPROVED the minutes of the special meeting.

Annie noted that she had shared the ordinance establishing the Swarthmore EAC, which makes it clear that the role of the body is to advise and educate. That authority does not extend to writing letters. One person noted that according to the ordinance the EAC is supposed to maintain a list of all open areas, public and private. The person wondered if the EAC has actually done that. Susan Kelly said that task was done early on in the time. Another person noted that ordinance language authorizes the EAC to do certain things, but does not require it to do them. Another noted that the ordinance authorizes us to do multi-municipal EAC study of open space, which study is fairly up to date. A potential agenda item in the future is to discuss more this enabling ordinance.

d. Member/Associate Member Bios

Robin suggested that we submit biographies so we can better know what skills each of us has. Members of the EAC supported this idea, so Annie said she would submit a google thread and

asked us to share our biographies. We will do a skills bio first, and then maybe at a later time we could create a public-facing bio.

e. Budget Items

Annie asked that if there are budget items we would like to put before Borough Council, we need to discuss these this month and approve them next month, so that we can get them before Borough Council in time for that body's approval of its budget.

Lauren noted that the American Rescue Plan might have some money available for environmental matters, such as stormwater abatement, new sewers. She said that there is more exploration of what this plan involves and how it might be available for environmental matters. Annie raised the question if the Plan's funds might be available to enacting a plastic bag ban, or energy efficiency. Robin cautioned that the money has many restrictions on it. Lauren said that she would keep the EAC informed as to the guidelines for the fund's uses. Elizabeth raised the possibility of support for the native plant project.

f. Recruitment and Diversity

There will be openings for new EAC members soon and associate members. Annie noted that the EAC could be more diverse. She wondered if any of us would be willing to address groups to see if they might have appointments to us. For example, Annie said she might speak soon at the Wesley AME Church. Robin said she had talked with people in The Big Idea, a parent advocacy group in the school district and she will follow up with them about joining the EAC. John said he would be talking with Jeannie Osayande later in the week and would raise this. Susan said Ann Cole is interested in getting involved with the EAC.

III. Borough Council Update

Lauren McKinney thanked John and Elizabeth for stepping up to be chair. She also thanked Annie for her leadership of the EAC. She thought it was a good idea to look at the enabling ordinance and suggested that the EAC review it every January.

Lauren informed the EAC that there are new rules out of Harrisburg under the Sunshine Law: Agenda of all meetings need to be sent to the Borough office at least a day in advance of a meeting, and those agenda need to be posted 24 hours before each meeting. Actions cannot be taken on items not appearing on the agenda. In addition, starting in August, the meeting will need to be in person. She reminded that there needs to be a quorum for a decision to be valid. A person clarified that as long as one person was physically present in borough hall, we meet the new requirements, thus enabling the rest of the EAC to participate by ZOOM. Some expressed a preference to keeping as much of the meeting on Zoom, given the continued threat of COVID. We will put on the EAC website that there will be one person in borough hall, and people could attend in person, and the rest of us could be present electronically.

The question was raised as to whether these new sunshine rules apply to emergency meetings. Lauren said she would find clarity on these issues with the borough solicitor and then post this

on our google post. It was noted that the Energy Transition Task Force is not a governmental body, and therefore not subject to the Sunshine Law.

Lauren also said that Borough Council approved Resolution 2021-10 which expressed concern about SB 113, (and its House counterpart) which bills sought to prohibit Pennsylvania's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

IV. Email lists for Press Releases and Legislation

Annie noted we need email lists for press releases and reaching out to legislators that could be accessible to members of the EAC. It would be better for us to have our own press release list, and not depend on outside groups. Nonetheless, we could ask other groups to share their press release list to serve as a model for such a list of our own. This press release list would help us to publicize the EAC's work as well as other environmental issues being addressed in the borough. One asked if such publicity is within the authority of the EAC. Another noted that since it is within the EAC's authority to educate the public, such publicity fell within the EAC's authority. Annie noted that the EAC had been asked to create press releases, (by Borough Council, for example) but the lack of a strong list of outlets had frustrated these efforts to publicize environmental action in the past.

Margaret will be managing the EAC Facebook group, so announcements should be sent to her. In addition, we should send any pictures to Margaret to post them. Her email is margbetz121@gmail.com

V. EAC Voice

To give the EAC more publicity, we may want to do more with *The Swarthmorean* and to have our own EC website. Other EAC's have their own website. This will help us get more publicity and fulfill our education mission.

Robin has spoken to the publishers of *The Swarthmorean*, and they are on board to treat the EAC as an arm of government. They asked if we could send them a list of agenda well in advance so they could provide more coverage. The publishers asked that since they lacked a reporter to attend our meetings, said absent a reporter, that the EAC send the paper a brief summary of our meetings. One suggested that we limit our publicity to sessions regarding major items, such as the new co-chairs. Robin said that she would be happy, upon getting the minutes, to generate a list of highlights for publication.

Given that we are trying to comply with the new sunshine law, we can also try to get these agenda items to the paper in advance. The agenda sent to the paper could be the headlines, and note that the exact agenda would be available on the Borough website to make sure that the EAC is not precluded in any way from attending to an item.

Annie said she has heard that Swarthmore might be getting a Vape Shop. She suggested we learn more about this, and perhaps publicize the environmental consequences of vaping.

VI. Watershed/Erosion Issue

Annie said she was contacted by Kara Peischl. A neighbor has removed almost all the vegetation from her property, thereby causing considerable erosion. Neither the neighbor nor her contractor has provided a plan for erosion control. People suggested that Kara talk to Jane about how this could be addressed. Another suggested that Kara contact the Delaware County Conservation District, which has jurisdiction over erosion control.

VII. ETTF Report

The ETTF was established to help with the transition to green energy. Robin shared the Quarterly Report of the Energy Transition Task Force. Annie urged that we think about people who have expertise that could be on the Task Force, including those with public relations experience, understanding of energy systems, and with contacts with the business community. The slide show of the quarterly report will be attached to these minutes.

VIII. Minute of Appreciation to Annie Fox

The EAC minuted its appreciation of Annie Fox for her skilled leadership of the EAC, and for her continued work on the Energy Transition Task Force. We all noted that her new community is very lucky to have her.

Announcement

Sue Edwards announced that tomorrow, July 28 at 11:00 am, there will be a ribbon cutting for new solar installation on Temple Lutheran Church, 501 Brookline Blvd., Havertown.

The EAC adjourned at 9:25.

Respectfully submitted,
John McKinstry
Secretary *Pro Tem*