

**EASTTOWN TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES**

Thursday, January 26, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chairperson Cara Rash. Environmental Advisory Councilmembers in attendance were Gary Ellis, Kate Goddard Doms, Cara Rash, Radha Pyati, and Michael LeWitt. Also attending were Supervisor Michael Wacey; David Fiorenza, Township Finance Director; and resident So Young Jang, 222 Lenape Drive.

**Consideration of Draft November 30, 2022 Special Meeting Minutes.**

The November minutes were approved with a motion, second, one friendly amendment, and 4-0 vote.

**Selection of New Positions for 2023.**

Initially this item was tabled with a motion, second, and 4-0 vote until all five members of the EAC were present. Once all members were present, discussion ensued.

Per the EAC's enabling legislation, a chairperson cannot serve more than two consecutive one-year terms but may serve again after a minimum one year break in service as chair. Current Chairperson Cara Rash has served two consecutive years and is interested in continuing in the position, and no other Councilmember is interested in the role. The EAC can ask the Board of Supervisors to set aside that part of the legislation under the circumstances and enable Chairperson Rash to serve another term. So the EAC passed a motion with a second and a 5-0 vote to recommend that the BOS set aside this part of the legislation to enable Cara Rash to serve a third consecutive term.

Gary Ellis was elected Vice Chair and Radha Pyati was elected Secretary, each with a nomination, second and a 5-0 vote.

**EAC Goal Setting for 2023.**

A wide-ranging discussion of 2023 goals took place, beginning with the idea of expanding composting efforts in order to reduce strain on the municipal sewer system possibly tied to household waste flowing through garbage disposals. After discussing exploratory efforts to learn about the Twp's sewer system issues, multiple routes to composting, and gauging community interest, the EAC reached consensus to consider this an information-gathering effort and not an actual goal for 2023.

Several other ideas were proposed. An amendment to the plastic bag ban ordinance that bans straws and Styrofoam was suggested; the EAC reached consensus to reassess this idea six months after the January 1, 2023 start date of the current bag ban. A Repair Café like those done in Phoenixville and Downingtown was proposed. These events consist of volunteers who repair small household items and teach their owners how to fix them; sometimes hardware stores send a volunteer. These support our education and waste reduction efforts.

A stream cleanup was proposed, with a tentative date of Saturday, April 15. Councilmember Doms will contact Don Curley, Twp Public Works Director, and Aurora Dizel of DCVA. Also proposed was a road cleanup, with suggestions of Sugartown Road, Newtown Road, or Route 252. The Adopt-a-Highway program may be the appropriate route. Chairperson Rash will contact Don Curley about this.

A workshop on decarbonization for municipalities was proposed, within the existing framework of regular EAC workshops.

The tentative 2023 Goals were recapitulated as follows:

- Rain garden program – continue with implementation
- Street tree program – continue with implementation
- A stream cleanup
- Ongoing workshops including on decarbonization efforts
- A Repair Café event

#### **Consideration of Presentation by Pete Goodman on Road Salt.**

Councilmember Doms led a discussion about a speaking invitation to Pete Goodman of Trout Unlimited, an expert on the salt content in local streams such as Valley Creek. Salt content in Valley Creek is rising, and this general topic is relevant to previous EAC discussions of brine as a road de-icing alternative. The EAC passed a motion with a second and 5-0 vote to invite him to speak at an EAC meeting.

#### **Consideration of Next Trex Bench Location.**

The next six-month period to earn another Trex bench through recycled plastic is ending soon, and the EAC discussed potential locations for a new bench. The playground at Hilltop Park is in need of new benches to replace the current ones. The EAC passed a motion with a second and 5-0 vote to recommend Hilltop Playground as the next Trex bench location to the Park and Recreation Board of the Twp.

As part of this item, the EAC elected the following slate of liaisons with a motion, second, and 5-0 vote.

- Councilmember LeWitt to Park and Recreation Board
- Vice Chair Ellis to ROSERP
- Vice Chair Ellis to the Planning Commission
- Chairperson Rash to ECAC

Chairperson Rash continues to serve as liaison to the BOS by virtue of being chairperson.

#### **Liaison Report – Board of Supervisors.**

Chairperson Rash reported on the BOS. At the January 3 meeting, Councilmember Michael LeWitt was appointed and Councilmember Kate Goddard Doms was reappointed to the EAC. At the January 17 meeting, the BOS discussed variances requested for the fire department building related to street trees and plantings. Discussions of the new Twp building are ongoing. Starting February 1, Supervisor Beth D’Antonio will serve as liaison to the EAC, with Supervisor Alex Bosco as the alternate. The BOS is moving to a once-per-month meeting schedule; the next meeting is February 21, 2023.

#### **Liaison Report – Parks and Recreation Board.**

There was no report from P&R.

#### **Liaison Report – ROSERP Task Force.**

Vice Chair Ellis reported on the ROSERP Task Force. They have met twice since the last EAC meeting: once with P&R and once as the Task Force. Many ideas have emerged; if they are conceptually divided into hub and spoke ideas, the hubs are Old Berwyn and the Devon Horse Show. The general sense is that there is no more open space available, but it is important to keep in mind that our current open space,

such as Hilltop Park, was once private property. Approaching property owners who might be interested in donating land could be part of the plan. The next public meeting is on April 13, and Tom Comitta, the consultant working on the project, will meet with the EAC on April 27.

#### **Liaison Report – Planning Commission.**

Vice Chair Ellis reported on the PC. They addressed a zoning matter related to a riparian buffer setback. Many of these variances are handled by the PC; a spreadsheet recording all these decisions might be worthy of EAC attention.

#### **Liaison Report – Easttown Citizen’s Advisory Committee.**

There was no report from ECAC.

#### **COP27 Climate Conference Report.**

Secretary Pyati attended a virtual roundtable with US Representative Chrissy Houlahan on the COP27 Climate Conference, which Houlahan attended as part of a congressional delegation. Houlahan shared the major takeaways of the conference and encouraged the group to look at the White House Guidebook to Inflation Reduction Act investments in Clean Energy and Climate Actions. Municipal efforts toward decarbonization might be found in the ARPA Act.

#### **Rain Garden Program Discussion.**

Councilmember Doms reported on this item. She, Chairperson Rash, and Ruth Mooney visited the home of an Easttown resident on Pennsylvania Avenue who is very interested in installing a rain garden. The property has an area near the street that could be a good demonstration rain garden area, but the site may need a device to channel water away from the driveway. Further investigation is needed, but it is on the right track.

Signs will be installed on the site stating that it is an Easttown Twp demonstration garden, and these signs can be funded from the budget. Chairperson Rash received permission from the Philadelphia Water Department to utilize their rain garden graphics on some informational rain garden signs in Easttown. When completed, the rain garden can be placed on the EAC’s website with a virtual tour.

The EAC confirmed that the procedure is writing a proposal to the BOS of what is planned for the first rain garden and requesting permission to move forward. So Young Jang asked how the sites will be selected. This led to a discussion that these are demonstration gardens installed on sites where property owners are willing to have them, in the early stages. A process to publicly solicit applications for the rain garden will occur at a later stage.

Chairperson Rash and Councilmember Doms confirmed that the rain garden requires a contract to be signed by the homeowner and that an example from the Tredyffrin EAC is available. Councilmember Doms will send that example to the EAC. They have installed two demonstration rain gardens: one at the Tredyffrin Library and one at a residence.

#### **Street Tree Planning and Implementation Discussion.**

Vice Chair Ellis led the discussion of the Easttown Street Trees Demonstration Project, framed by the attached document. Item #1 on that list, Paperwork, notes some legal documents required by the program; these will be handled at a later stage. Initial publicity will begin with neighborhood flyers and a meeting at the Library. The draft flyer and ideas for locations should be assembled as part of a package to the BOS. The decision process for tree locations will begin with a walk through the Old Berwyn area

by Vice Chair Ellis, Bill Hartman, and Bill Friedrich of the Historic Commission. Another walk was suggested as a possible followup to a Library meeting, with April 2023 as a suggested timeframe. It is hoped that after a public meeting, a roster of interested property owners can be developed. Vice Chair Ellis will speak with Don Curley about several aspects of the program including parameters on selecting a contractor to plant the trees. A Fall 2023 planting date is most feasible. A new Pennsylvania grant opportunity entitled TreeVitalize that could support this was just announced by DCNR. Councilmember Doms and Secretary Pyati will serve on a subcommittee that assists Vice Chair Ellis with this effort.

#### **Grant Repository Review.**

Secretary Pyati has compiled a grant repository and will place it on Google Drive as a shared document.

#### **Seed Library Donations.**

Chairperson Rash reported on the seed library. The seed library has been very successful; half of the seed packets have been given away. However, the seeds are not being replenished. The new model is that recipients take a spoonful of seeds. There is concern that the library is not sustainable if residents do not replenish the seeds from their plants. So Young Jang has a list of potential donors of seeds. The idea of posting flyers requesting donations in hardware stores that sell seeds was suggested. A new system whereby residents return seeds needs to be created, and a workshop educating residents might support this effort.

#### **E-newsletter Draft.**

The EAC members had no further comment on the E-newsletter article drafts circulated by Chairperson Rash. She will send them to David Fiorenza.

#### **2023 Annual Report.**

Secretary Pyati will prepare a draft of the 2022 annual report for the February 2023 meeting.

#### **Public Comment.**

So Young Jang asked about the possibility of establishing a community garden on the land beside the Easttown Library. She was informed that it is the property of the Tredyffrin-Easttown School District, not the Township, and that residents can certainly ask TESD.

#### **Announcements.**

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 23, 2023.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Radha Pyati  
Secretary, Easttown EAC

## **Easttown Street Trees Demonstration Project, Old Berwyn, 2023**

Gary Ellis EAC Draft January 25, 2023

### *Implementation Phase*

1. Paperwork?
  - a. Property owner permission and liability waiver
  - b. Property owner application/ show of interest form
  - c. Maintenance agreement
  - d. Easttown's statement of tree donation and services provided
2. Initial Publicity
  - a. Township newsletter
  - b. Neighborhood flyers
  - c. Meeting at library
  - d. Property owner response
3. Location Specifics Decision Process
  - a. Coordination with Historic Commission, (per discussion Fall 2022) Bill Hartman, Bill Friedrich (Historic Commission) and Gary, neighborhood walk, needs to be scheduled
  - b. Following receipt of property owners' show of interest, review responses and finalize location specifics
4. Trees & Contractor Selection
5. Planting date: Is Spring 2023 feasible? Alternatively Fall 2023?
6. Staffing, additional volunteers?

### *Long Term Planning Inception?*

### *Board of Supervisors Project Specifics Review?*

### *Additional Notes:*

Radnor Township already has an extensive street tree planting program (GE just learned this) advisory reach-out?

New Pa. grant opportunity just announced, April application deadline