

MEETING: 02/07/2023

Opened at 6:02pm / City Hall 3rd Floor Conference Room & Virtually on Zoom

Attendees

In person: Robert MacDonald, Ian Kindle, Miranda Wilcha, Tony Klapatch, Nick Gorski, Marie Demarais, Lisa Pammer (Green Pond Packaging)

Virtual: Jon Zeller, Maggie Beetsra, James Cox, Rohan Prabhu, Kathryn Semmens, Madeline Squarcia

Agenda

EAC Organization and Priorities

January minutes were approved with some minor corrections. Tony is taking notes this evening with some minor formatting adjustments for future minutes.

Robert will talk to Kathryn Semmens from Nature Nurture Center to seek a possible intern for taking minutes in the future.

2 members of the public in attendance, Nick and Marie, are interested in volunteering for the vacant EAC positions. They presented the board with backgrounds about themselves. Ian gave an explanation to Nick and Marie about what the responsibilities of being a member of the EAC would entail and some projects the EAC has undertaken in the past. Ian told Nick and Marie the process of applying to the EAC through the mayor and the general timeline surrounding it.

The January 17th workshop meeting and the potential for future mid-month workshop meetings was discussed. Miranda brought up the priorities for the EAC and CAP discussed at the January workshop meeting. Ian discussed ways of adding more information to the priority list discussed at the workshop meeting and invited others to contribute. Discussion ensued of concrete events, such as trash cleanups and tree planting. Robert mentioned this would be a good idea for the image of the EAC to the public and show what we are accomplishing. A regular riverside cleanup along the Lehigh and Delaware rivers was discussed, with safety being a concern. Robert discussed sponsoring trail and road trash cleanups, potentially getting the Easton Ambassadors to assist or reach out to volunteers. Ian will attempt to get the volunteer email list from former EAC member Janet.

Ian encouraged existing members to continue to use Teams for communication and invited new members to join. Rob Christopher from the city will create any new Teams accounts.

Easton Climate Action Plan

No Climate Action Plan updates.

Kathryn reported on the Climate Action Plan task force meeting in January. At the meeting, Rob Christopher presented a potential funding source to use the city forest for climate credits. Lafayette has made gains on their climate plan, however more coordination with Lafayette would be good to have in the future. More K-12, energy as a service, and tree service. The Lafayette City of Easton walkability study was mentioned. April 29th will have the youth climate summit at Nature Nurture Center. Kathryn emphasized the importance of trash cleanups with a potential Lehigh Drive cleanup, however Nature Nurture Center pivoted only to Scott/Riverside Park due to safety concerns. Nurture Nature Center would like to help the EAC with future cleanups. Tony asked if Lehigh Drive is a state road with the potential to close traffic lanes for safety. David Hopkins from the city was able to assist in traffic safety in the past on this road, however unsafe litter such as needles makes it dangerous to pick up trash. Kathryn mentioned Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, a state organization to provide free supplies for trash cleanups. Miranda mentioned city wide cleanup day on April 29th, discussion ensued with the

possibility of the EAC promoting this event. The Lehigh Valley EAC network was brought up by Ian. Kathryn received funding from the county to develop messaging for local foods and their environmental impact as well as what issues farmers are facing locally. Nature Nurture Center is conducting interviews of farmers for messaging on the benefits of local foods and is communicating this with the Lehigh Valley EAC network. Madeline is identifying three key messages to create new marketing material with this research. Ian will discuss this with the chairs of Allentown and Bethlehem EAC and Bushkill Township in addition to the Lehigh Valley EAC network. The next Lehigh Valley EAC forum will be hosted sometime in May in-person and virtual with a panel of speakers discussing funding available for renewable energy projects.

Miranda mentioned looking into dump site ordinances and looking for a place where a dump site for compost would be allowed in the city. Robert did not see anything noteworthy in the proposed zoning ordinance changes, but would like to look at what other municipalities are doing. Ian mentioned the city is far in the process of the zoning ordinance changes and this may not be possible to change anything more but invited Robert to send the city comments. Green requirements for warehouses were discussed. Robert saw a news article regarding warehouses in the Lehigh Valley and how they are at capacity here and in the Poconos and discussed a warehouse near a creek in Tobyhanna. Ian mentioned that there are not many areas within the city for warehouses to be developed. James is working with Green Building United's Sustainable Warehouse Forum - there will be a 3rd installment in April at Penn State Saucon Valley regarding green space around new and existing warehouses. Kathryn mentioned looking at Bushkill Township's ordinances regarding warehouses. Tony mentioned Bushkill Township being within the Nazareth area multi-municipal plan and how this affects shared zoning regulations per the Pennsylvania Municipal Code.

Communications/Education

Robert asked Kathryn about seeking an unpaid or paid internship for the EAC to take meeting minutes and the potential for college credits to get students to contribute to the EAC. Ian was not sure if this should be a full intern or a shared intern with Nature Nurture Center. Nature Nurture Center has 2 intern postings, but has not received any applications yet. Kathryn mentioned students are more likely seeking projects, not a job, however Lafayette

students may be interested and this would be a good relationship for the city with Lafayette. Ian discussed a possible amendment to the EAC ordinance for having a dedicated volunteer college student position. Ian will bring this up with David Hopkins from the city. Robert would like to bring this up with city council.

Miranda will send volunteer dates for Easton Garden Works/Easton Compost Program for the EAC to advertise. Ian will continue to work on getting the volunteer email list from former EAC member Janet.

Ian encouraged members to assist with preparation of city council annual report in Teams.

Lisa Pammer from Green Pond Packaging attended the meeting to present to the EAC. Compostable packaging was discussed, with many packaging and utility applications. Lisa is working with local restaurants and festivals to get the word out and encourage using compostable products. San Francisco and Seattle have passed legislation to mandate composting. Compost act has been re-introduced in congress, previously introduced in 2021. This act, if passed, would help support compost infrastructure in the United States. Ian asked Lisa about biodegrading of compostable packaging materials, Lisa mentioned it breaks down faster but still has methane and that they are produced with regenerative resources such as bamboo. Robert motioned to keep single use plastics on the agenda for now.

Tony mentioned the 2023 Livable Landscapes Grant Program that Northampton County currently is accepting applications for until March 30th. This grant can be used for land conversation, ecological restoration, education, and municipal park rehabilitation.

Ian mentioned the pedestrian/walkability map that Tony started for Forks Township with the possibility of creating a similar map for the City of Easton. Tony discussed the Forks Township map and mentioned that this map is available to view in Teams. Kathryn mentioned the Lafayette student running a walkability study is primarily focusing on the Bushkill Dr / Sullivan Trail corridors but will follow up with more details in the next meeting. Nick mentioned a walkable NYC map and was interested in creating a similar collaborative map on MapHub.

Ian mentioned 2 upcoming events - Lehigh Valley Watershed Conference on March 14th and Native Species Day on May 18th and encouraged members to attend the conference and consider events we might want to host for Native Species Day or the following weekend. Kathryn and Madeline mentioned upcoming Nature Nurture Center events connected to the Watershed Conference.

City Urban Forestry Update

No city forestry updates.

Miranda uploaded a document to Teams on expanding the Easton compost program. Discussion ensued on finding potential funding sources for expanding the program and training programs. Miranda would like to add action items to look into opportunities for creating a more robust compost program and Ian discussed potential contacts in South East PA to assist with this. Madeline would be interested in exploring this with Miranda. Rohan mentioned getting interest from Lafayette students and Lafayette dining halls and would also be interested in helping. Robert mentioned potential funding from Northampton County grants and the Lowe's Community Partners Grant Program.

No updates on green space inventory.

New Business

No new business.

Meeting adjourned at 7:32pm.