

MEETING: 07/11/2023

Opened at 6:00pm / City Hall 3rd Floor Conference Room & Virtually on Zoom

Attendees

In person (members): Ian Kindle, Robert MacDonald, Paul Schalow, Beth Freeman, Stacy Melvin, Nick Gorski (arrived 6:10pm)

Virtual (members): Patti Bruno

Members absent: Miranda Wilcha, Mary Arlia

In person (public): Tony Klapatch, Rob Christopher

Virtual (public): Jon Zeller, Molly Bilinski, Rohan Prabhu, Madeline Squarcia

Agenda

EAC Organization and Priorities

Ian welcomed the new seated members to the EAC. New and existing members gave their introductions to the rest of the council. Tony inquired about having a roll call in future meetings for new members, **Ian will look into it.**

June meeting minutes were approved unanimously (7-0-0). Ian motioned, Robert seconded.

Ian discussed responsibilities of the EAC and visioning meetings as well as the history of how the EAC has handled responsibilities in the past. Ian advocated for more visioning meetings with the appointment of new members. The EAC is an advisory board of the city but does not get consulted by the city often. The climate action plan was mentioned as a major discussion point to

advance to the climate action plan. Tony inquired on having the EAC make recommendations to the planning commission on land development plans. **Patti Bruno will look into seeing if this is possible with the planning commission and the planning department.** Discussion ensued on how the development plans can be submitted to the EAC in the future and planning commission involvement. Rob Christopher discussed how development plans can be forwarded to EAC members via Teams. Discussion on future organization will continue at another workshop meeting with Monday August 14th as a tentative day for a workshop meeting.

Public Comments

Ian reached out to public works director Dave Hopkins on city lighting & dark sky fixtures. The city is locked into their contract with Met-Ed. Dave Hopkins is open to further discussions to see if there is any room for more discussion on LED & downward facing lighting. Rob Christopher discussed Centre Square tree lighting and the timing of when they are run, Tony mentioned that they are turning off sometime before 2am. Paul did not find any specific dark sky ordinances for Phillipsburg NJ. **Nick will share the dark sky ordinance from Pittsburgh.**

Easton Climate Action Plan

No updates on the climate action plan - Nurture Nature Center is absent from this meeting. The next climate action task force meeting will be at the end of this week to discuss a climate adaptation plan.

No update on composting, Miranda is absent.

Ian forwarded the bike friendly stuff to Nick. Nick gave an update on core pieces of legislation and ordinance to make a bike friendly city happen. A bicycle master plan and usage statistics would be needed that gives more detail besides only trails. They would like to see a complete streets ordinance to make sure when streets are re-done that pedestrians and cyclists are accounted for. Tony mentioned that city council applied for a WalkWorks planning grant for pedestrian safety a few months ago. Beth mentioned the

transportation set aside grant that city council is applying for at their July 12 meeting. **Nick will continue looking into this.**

Tony gave an update with current communications with LANTA on the community bus ride. Nick suggested having this at 15 minutes after the hour to give a better impression of how the bus system works and having bilingual advertisements. Beth suggested Ice Cream Corner in Wilson for another potential location to run to. **Council will try to narrow down the date and a definite location and will try to get on a call with LANTA.**

Robert has tried to reach out to Easton Area School District on a community garden partnership but has not heard back from them. Ian mentioned the high school principal was very interested in having a program during the school year.

Communications/Education

Rob Christopher received correspondence from EAC member Mary Arlia regarding trash cleanup on Smith Ave. Rob pushed for trash cans going up along the south side hill but did not hear back from anyone in the city. **Rob and Mary will look into this in September.**

Ian started a document on Teams to start gathering information for an annual report to submit to the City. **Ian encouraged members to contribute in Teams.**

City Urban Forestry Update

Rob will be hosting a pruning workshop at the Lower Hackett Micro-forest July 19th at 6pm-7:30pm and giving away free perennials. Rob is working on planting 167 trees in the West Ward over the next 2 years from a \$175K grant the city recently received. Locations have been identified on Spring Garden St and Bushkill St and continue further block by block. Rob also moved a shed from the wastewater treatment plant to Lower Hackett park for city forestry and the garden works to take advantage of.

Lafayette College will be re-planting 98 new trees within the city throughout its campus as a result of the hillside cuttings discussed at previous

meetings. Molly inquired about the new Lafayette tree planting plan not being officially approved in June, Rob has not received any official plan regarding the hillside itself. The EAC has not been asked to review any plans regarding the hillside. Paul mentioned destination type planting for creating a unique character for Easton. Rob mentioned one instance of a local developer doing this. Ian discussed diseases stemming from mono-culture planting. Rob is also organizing an event at Easton cemetery to assist in removing dead trees on October 2nd. There will be a new planting in front of 4th St Garage. Tony mentioned the old crosswalk from Church St crossing 4th St, the city will be moving this crosswalk slightly closer to Angelo's. Rob received an ad from the mayor regarding flexible permeable paving to prevent future destruction of trees - **Rob will look into this and follow up with the EAC.**

Rob was not informed regarding the West Ward archway being installed and inquired for the city to give more of a warning regarding this for the EAC to approve. Ian also advocated for opportunities to comment on the removal of mature, healthy trees. Rob mentioned people waiting for the LANTA bus being affected by loss of shade, Tony mentioned this relating back to the historic district commission, planning commission, and city council.

Ian reached out to Dave Hopkins regarding utilizing ArcGIS for a green space inventory - **Ian will continue further discussion with Dave on next steps for a green space inventory.**

New Business

Nick would like to look at adopting formal bylaws in the future, Robert agreed.

Paul had a conversation with city council woman Taiba Sultana, who wants to put a climate emergency declaration before city council. Sultana contacted Kate Semmens at Nature Nurture Center about this, but then did not pursue further to date. If there is further movement on this issue Kate will let us know.

Meeting adjourned at 7:36pm; motioned by Nick, seconded by Robert. 7-0-0.