

**RADNOR TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

MINUTES

The September meeting of the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) was called to order by Josh Hilbert at 6:00 P.M. on September 24, 2015 at the Radnor Township Municipal Building, Radnorshire Room, 301 Iven Avenue, Wayne, Pennsylvania.

Those present were:

Josh Hilbert, Chairperson
Skip Kunda, Planning Commission Representative
Sally Mattison
Matthew Holtman
Daniel Meier
Sloan Walker, Vice Chairperson
Luke Clark, Parks and Recreation Representative
Anne Poulin

Those not present were:

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Hilbert called the group to order.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Hilbert made the following announcements. The DVRPC website has announced a Transportation Alternatives Program, which provides a \$7.5m grant opportunity (\$26m across the entire state) for projects that involve pedestrian or bicycle facilities, rails to trails, and associated vegetation management. Eligible entities include governments, school districts and regional transportation authorities. The application period opens November 2 for about 2 months.

There will be a hazardous waste pickup in Sharon Hill at the Emergency Services Training Center on October 17. Anything with a plug plus paints and pesticides.

Ms. Mattison announced a Natural Lands Trust volunteer training program. Participants pay \$150 to cover the costs of a handbook, t-shirt, etc. The event takes place in the early winter (e.g. February or March) and they ask for a commitment of 20 hours of volunteer work on one of their preserves. Participants will learn about the identification of invasive species and habitat maintenance. www.natlands.org

WORKGROUP REPORTS AND DISCUSSION

Radnor Green Team

Mr. Hilbert noted that the Green Team had a meeting earlier in the day. Two topics were discussed: the greening of the vehicle fleet, and the sustainable parks policy. There was a

discussion of the status of school bus purchasing. They are planning a conversion of the fleet from diesel & gas to either propane or compressed natural gas. This is challenging because they have to install a filling facility on their property. The group concluded that any kind of conversion process in Radnor is a long-term project rather than low-hanging fruit. Small vehicles may be the easiest target for now, either via hybrid or electric vehicle purchasing. The key to making headway is to find out well ahead of time when they're planning a purchase; do a feasibility analysis with payback period; and present it before the budget is set. The group is arranging a meeting with a representative from the police department and one from community development. There are some outdated assumptions about the costs and performance of hybrids. It's good that the EAC is in a position to help with research and help find grants and incentives (though none have been identified yet). On, Mr. Hilbert explained the sustainable parks policy to the group and discussed how we introduced it to parks and rec to try to get an alliance started. They talked about switch from Roundup to Avenger, and about meadowization. Paul Bazik said the switch is going well. It takes a bit longer but smells nice. The group also discussed the potential for use of some storm water funding to pay for meadowization or similar projects.

Sustainable Parks workgroup selection

Mr. Holtman reported on his recent visit to the Parks and Recreation board and the discussion about the Sustainable Parks Policy. Mr. Clark noted that there were encouraging signs and recommended that we go slowly and come back to the Parks group with some specifics on proposed projects.

Ms. Poulin noted that their biggest concern is maintenance. The hope is to have someone else come and do hand-weeding for a year or two to get started. Signage may also be important. She described what happened at the Willows where they tried to establish meadow around the pond to discourage geese, but got so much pushback from residents that they wound up mowing it down. So communication is important, and it may make sense to involve members of the gardening community to help.

Mr. Meier noted that it is possible to make volunteering work for these kinds of projects, but we need the backup of the township. It is not realistic to rely on the EAC. Maybe the work can be done through focused volunteer days once or twice a year.

Mr. Walker suggested that the EAC invite someone in to teach us what is involved and what kind of training is needed. Mr. Meier offered to reach out to people he knows at the Delaware County Conservation District and PEC to see what we can learn.

Mr. Clark also suggested talking to the stewards of Wilson Farm Park in TE. It is a big multi-use park with lots of wild areas right off 252. At the next Parks meeting he will also ask which park(s) we think this may work for based on resident attitudes, etc.

Mr. Hilbert also offered to talk to Westchester. They have a very nice meadowized park out there.

A question was raised about the algae problem at Fenimore Woods. Mr. Hilbert noted that the Willows pond is treated with algaecide. Weeds Inc. is the contractor. They put together a chemical cocktail that is blessed by PA Fish & Game Commission. They can't do anything in the summer or fall – it has to be spring. He suggested inviting Paul Bazik or Steve Norcini (and/or someone from Weeds) to come to the next EAC to discuss what they use, the effectiveness, and environmental impact.

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION/AWARENESS

Mr. Hilber reported on a recycling education event at Wayne Elementary School. The kindergartners and first-graders started a new program called 'recycle rangers' – have a ranger standing by the trash cans to help people make the right decisions.

LIAISON REPORTS

Mr. Clark reported on recent Parks and Recreation events. They held the Truck Zoo this past Saturday. It was very well attended. They will also hold the Fall Harvest and Pumpkin Patch this Saturday at the Willows. Get there early! There will be pony rides, face painting, vendors, etc. Radnor Run takes place on the 25th at 8:00am. It is a 5-mile run to the Willows and back.

Mr. Kunda discussed the Planning Commission meeting. The last meeting dealt with what's now the Penn Medicine site (it used to be Biomed). They gave a presentation on their first iteration concept. It is fairly exotic-looking architecture. Lots of environmentally friendly things are included, including a meadow, outdoor seating with tree canopy, and walking paths. The other half of the site will be something else, and they don't know what yet or haven't told us. They are currently working on a new ordinance working on side-by-side with Penn. What they've applied for is permitted, but the new ordinance would permit a hotel. Residential use was taken out as a possibility. Over-55 housing was put into its place. The next concept is traffic neutrality for development.

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Mattison led a review of the ongoing artificial turf discussion. After last month's meeting, Sally drafted a proposal to send to Leo Bernabei that was just a little more detailed, to make clear we're not recommending artificial turf; we're not in a position to say avoid at all costs, but we're not pushing it. Per Mr. Meier's suggestion, she tried to fill out a bit of reasoning for why, and make some recommendations.

Discussion ensued. On motion made and seconded, a vote was taken to approve a version of the new language that Ms. Mattison had drafted. The motion was passed. An addendum is attached to the minutes with the language that the group approved.

Mr. Walker noted that switching energy providers from PECO to Constellation has so far saved \$9000 for the Township.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on a motion made and seconded, the meeting of the Environmental Advisory Council was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Holtman

Addendum

Artificial Turf Language as Approved by EAC 9/24/2015

The EAC did not see any specific findings that would cause us to categorically advise the School District against the use of artificial turf or tire crumb. We are also unable to recommend the use of artificial turf and tire crumb. We are unable to conclude that artificial turf and tire crumb are environmentally benign or environmentally preferable to natural turf fields.

For example, numerous studies reflect concerns about toxic effects, such as the leaching of carcinogenic dibenzopyrene isomers from tires into the environment and the potential risk to surface waters, especially smaller watercourses, and aquatic organisms associated with whole effluent and zinc toxicity of stormwater runoff from artificial turf fields.

Further, numerous studies have shown that artificial turf gets quite hot. There has been some scientific research done on the thermal effects of artificial turf on the urban environment (i.e., the urban heat island effect); researchers have modeled the effect of artificial turf on city temperatures and on the energy use of nearby buildings. However, accurate modeling results for specific artificial turf installations (such as specific fields in Radnor) would require local simulations.

Many of the studies that have been done emphasize that more study is needed.

We note that the EPA has been less than decisive about the merits of artificial turf. It issued a report in 2009 about a limited study to test a method for measuring possible emissions from using synthetic turf on playgrounds and ball fields. Although the concentrations of components monitored at the four sites studied were below levels of concern, the EPA stated that it was not possible to reach comprehensive conclusions without the consideration of additional data. The EPA met with additional state and local representatives in 2010 but has not made further statements about the merits of artificial turf. Reportedly, though, the EPA ended a longtime campaign to promote the use of recycled tires on artificial turf fields and playgrounds, amid growing concern from critics about health risks.

We suggest that the School District do the following:

- * With assistance from the EAC, continue to monitor scientific research about environmental impacts of artificial turf*
- * If it has not already done so, investigate techniques and products for improving the health and performance of its natural turf fields*
- * Ask the Board of Health for updated comment on the use of artificial turf fields. We are aware that there is ongoing research in this area -- for example, results of a Yale study about 96 chemicals in rubber tire infill was announced in June -- but health impacts are outside our area of expertise.*
- * Consider monitoring watercourses near its artificial turf fields, and using best management practices and treatment for stormwater runoff from the fields*
- * Investigate best practices for disposing of its current artificial turf at end-of-life*
- * Consider planting trees, both to absorb CO2 and other pollutants and to provide cooling shade*