

Joint EAC/Planning Commission Meeting
Monday, September 27, 2021 at 5:30 PM
Caucus Room, Doylestown Township Building

Meeting Minutes

The Doylestown Township Environmental Advisory Council and Planning Commission met for a joint meeting on Monday, September 27, 2021.

The meeting officially began at 5:40 pm.

Welcome

Ms. Mason began the meeting with a welcome to the group.

Introduction of EAC/Planning Commission Members and their Liaisons

Members of the Doylestown Township Planning Commission in attendance included Judy Hendrixson, Chairman; Gregory Reppa, Vice Chairman; members Tom Kelso, Ted Feldstein, and Jill Macauley. Others in attendance included Judy Stern Goldstein, Planning Consultant, Stephanie Mason, Township Manager, Nancy Santacecilia, Board of Supervisors Liaison, and Jen Herring, Board of Supervisors Liaison. Each of the members introduced themselves.

Members of the Environmental Advisory Council in attendance were Jeannine Mitchell, Chairman; Anne Woodbury, Vice Chairman; and members Tanya Casas, Heidi Shiver, Curt Sawyer, Jim Baldassarre, Martin Brooks and Kara Raymond, Associate Member. Also in attendance were Dan Wood, Board of Supervisor liaison to EAC; Aaron Walizer, Assistant Township Manager, and liaison to EAC. Members of the EAC also introduced themselves to the group.

Sinclair Salisbury, Director of Code Enforcement.

Overview of Board/Commission Functions

Ms. Goldstein gave an overview of the Township structure beginning with voters, election of the Board of Supervisors and appointment of the Township Manager. She then summarized the roles of each group, including department heads and staff.

Ms. Goldstein then summarized the role of the Township's Boards and Commissions. They make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors and provide information and opinions to help the Board make informed decisions.

Discussion of the Model Ordinance for Permitting Renewable Energy Systems

Mr. Baldassarre summarized the Ready for 100 Ordinance. As per the ordinance, the EAC has been working towards the goal of 100% renewable energy by 2035. Bucks County also passed a similar resolution for 100% renewable energy by 2050. The EAC strongly recommends that the Township adopts this ordinance. Mr. Baldassarre made a few notable points regarding the ordinance: There should be provisions for encouraging passive solar energy, more attention to the placement of trees and structures that offer shade, and he suggested changes to the Township building codes. He also

suggested that the Township should be preparing for a changeover to electric vehicles and consider installing EV chargers.

Ms. Mason said that the Township is aware of the County's ordinance and has discussed implementation. The Planner's office can help with review of the ordinance.

Ms. Goldstein explained that they are very familiar with this ordinance and that of the Township. Any issues found by the EAC can always be brought up during plan review as part of land development. She also suggested that the Township's Green Points ordinance addresses some of these things, but that a monetary incentive doesn't seem to be enough. The end goal was to get people to think about being greener, and we have seen some of this.

Ms. Mason added that the county has an incentive program for commercial businesses where they can get loans for energy efficient practices, the financing of which comes from the state.

Ms. Hendrixson explained that with new construction, developers are always looking at life cycle costing, and they want to save with efficiency in the long term. Administrative "carrots" don't mean as much.

Discussion of Township-Owned Lots & Open Spaces

Ms. Raymond summarized the background of the EAC and their mission to protect, preserve and restore. She went on to discuss watershed friendly properties and Doug Tallamay's homegrown national parks, the basic idea of which is to provide habitats for native species. The Township can also adopt a watershed stewards' program and the development of watershed friendly certified properties.

Ms. Raymond discussed the EAC's visit to Township owned open space properties. Most are in residential areas and are divided between wooded lots and stormwater basins. Some are well groomed, but others are wild and native. These areas would be a good start for watershed property certification as they are some of the few parcels that are undeveloped. This also keeps in line with a lot of the programs the Township already participates in.

Ms. Mitchell suggested that these areas can become a sort of biological corridor, not connected and contiguous, but a series of related lots dedicated to environmental stewardship. This would advance the goal of the Park Recreation and Open Space Plan, be purposeful, and have great benefits to native species, including human beings.

Ms. Mitchell then proposed utilizing the Master watershed stewards program for restoring some of these properties, as they must put in volunteer hours to maintain their certification. In addition, they could work with the community and in these neighborhoods, and residents would gain more knowledge of their environment. Considering the educational opportunities cannot be overstated. Watershed stewardship aids in containing stormwater runoff, reducing pollution, and supporting wildlife. She added that there are lots of opportunities for partnerships, with DeVal, elementary schools, Bucks Beautiful, etc. She also emphasized that they do not want to spend money but utilize volunteer labor and efforts.

Ms. Mitchell then asked if it was possible for these areas to be identified as protected watershed properties.

Ms. Goldstein added that these efforts could not only happen on Township owned properties but also privately owned property.

Ms. Herring asked if the Township could encourage builders to do this in open space as part of land development requirements.

Ms. Goldstein suggested that many of these practices are part of the MS4 program already, so these programs can all come together with a common goal.

Ms. Santacecilia added that she could help with building some partnerships and asked what else the Board of Supervisors could do to help.

Ms. Mason suggested that the EAC speak with Township staff to determine what properties they could start with. She also said that there may be some pushback from residents, who may be protective of these areas in their neighborhoods.

Ms. Raymond said they could talk to people in the neighborhoods and familiarize them with the idea.

Ms. Mason requested that they start in house educating staff before going out into neighborhoods.

Ms. Goldstein added that many of these properties do have a designated purposed or use, and their history should be part of the discussion.

Ms. Hendrixson suggested that an article in the newsletter could help with educating the community and getting basic info out.

Review/Summary of Township's Current Comprehensive Plan

Ms. Hendrixson said these issues do fall under the current comp plan, and that the Planning Commissions is working to define it and fit it into the ordinance.

With no other business or comments, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kaitlyn Finley, Township Code Secretary