

SMITHFIELD TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING – AUGUST 20, 2024 AT 7:00PM

A Regular Meeting of the Smithfield Township Environment Advisory Council was held on August 20, 2024, at the Smithfield Township Municipal Center at 1155 Red Fox Rd, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301, and via Zoom.

Present were Councilors Pat Owens, Brett Cartwright, Mitch Bowyer, Ken LeSure, Commissioner James Munet and Conservation & Recreation Director Alex Jackson. Supervisor Michael Albert and Councilor Eric White were absent.

Also present were Jean Turn, Kristine Karol, and other members of the public.

1. Chair Pat Owens called the meeting to order at 7:01PM.

2. The Pledge of Allegiance is recited.

3. Minutes:

a. Regular Meeting – July 16, 2024.

Brett Cartwright motioned to approve the Minutes from July 16th, Mitch Bowyer seconded. Discussion: Mitch Bowyer raised a question about the strategy for Buttermilk Falls mentioned in the minutes. Brett Cartwright clarified that the Council had discussed potential strategies for preserving Buttermilk Falls. After some further discussion, a call to vote occurred. Vote: all in favor; motion carried.

4. Old Business:

a. Discuss: Open Space Future Directions.

The Council discussed the status of Buttermilk Falls, noting that the property is for sale. Council deliberated on whether Buttermilk Falls should be prioritized as an open space recommendation to the Supervisors. Mitch Bowyer raised concerns about the feasibility of such recommendations due to the Supervisors' reluctance to allocate funds. Despite these concerns, the Council agreed that Buttermilk Falls remains a valuable community asset and should be considered a priority for preservation. After some discussion, Council agreed that it is still worthwhile to get this recommendation on record. It was further agreed that the Marshalls Creek Watershed, and waterfalls, including Twin Falls, and Buttermilk Falls, would be among the top features the public would want to consider protecting.

Alex Jackson discussed documents provided by Michael Albert, including a list from the Pocono Heritage Land Trust (PHLT), and these documents were reviewed and discussed by Council. Council discussed that although some information is outdated, the excel list provides a strong foundation for identifying and prioritizing open space in the township. After some discussion, the Council emphasized the need to update and expand the existing open space list,

with the goal of building on past work and creating a comprehensive and up-to-date record. James Munet discussed properties on Mount Nebo Road with a waterfall and stream.

Jean Turn commented on the referendum, and asked if one of the goals of Council is to get the referendum back on the ballot in 2025. Mitch Bowyer agreed with this direction, and after some discussion James Munet suggested property values have increased substantially, and Council came to a consensus that the Township EAC should recommend to the Supervisors a new referendum.

Mitch Bowyer raised the topic of the EAC Ordinance, and the Powers of Council, and discussion ensued regarding the index of open space. Brett Cartwright and Pat Owens discuss what to call a hypothetical Subcommittee, and a lengthy discussion ensued.

Mitch Bowyer motioned to add Brett Cartwright, Ken LeSure, and Alex Jackson to the subcommittee, James Munet seconded. Discussion: The council deliberated on a name for the subcommittee and charge. "Open Space Inventory Subcommittee." Council agreed that this group will handle administrative tasks, including accessing tax information and using the county GIS system to gather necessary data to update the list from PHLT and share it with all Council members through Sharepoint. Vote: all in favor; motion carried.

The Council discussed the list of environmentally sensitive areas (ESA) as per the ordinance. Alex Jackson pointed out the previously generated map and the metrics as being pursuant to this power of Council. Alex Jackson and noted that these ESAs do not always align with property boundaries, making the task technical and complex.

Kristine Karol commented that she was confused and asked what was being deliberated. After some clarification, further discussion ensued between Pat Owens, Alex Jackson and Mitch Bowyer. Alex Jackson agreed to reach out to the County Planning Commission and discuss informally what would be best method to index the Environmentally Sensitive areas beyond the map.

The council had a lengthy discussion on environmental problems and environmental programs as a continuation about the discussion on the EAC Ordinance. It was concluded by Council that each of the seven EAC members should identify five perceived environmental problems in Smithfield Township and bring them back to the next EAC meeting.

Jean Turn commented on the possibility of obtaining residents' email addresses through various mechanisms, such as an optional opt-in email address for tax payments. Khristine Karol suggested using a mailer.

James Munet motioned to table the discussion on open space & powers of council, Mitch Bowyer seconded. Vote: all in favor; motion carries.

b. Discuss: November & December Meeting Date Changes.

James Munet requested an auto-calendar invite for internal Council members, and Alex Jackson pointed out the meeting date conflicts. Council will meet at 7PM on Wednesday November 19th, and Wednesday, December 18th at 7 PM instead.

c. Update: Board of Supervisors' Feedback on EAC Recommendations.

Alex Jackson mentioned pending feedback from the Supervisors to the EAC on the Official Map update, and that currently an informal meeting would need to be scheduled with the MCPC on this subject. After some discussion, Alex Jackson also relayed to the EAC that the Board of Supervisors (BOS) would like to see EAC recommendations to be educational and that recommendations to the Supervisors should reference relevant codes and ordinances.

5. New Business:

a. Discuss: Lighting Ordinance Updates.

Alex Jackson discussed that other municipalities, such as Chestnuthill Township and Coolbaugh Township, have implemented thorough lighting standards. The Joint Session group had previously responded positively to the images in the proposed draft model dark sky lighting ordinance, and after some discussion the Council agreed that the visual presentation in the new draft was crucial in conveying what constitutes acceptable lighting standards. James Munet noted that lighting affects circadian rhythms and the growth of plants, and Christine Karol commented that light pollution also impacts the migration of non-human animals. Alex Jackson pointed out the importance of full cutoff and full shielding to direct light where it is intended, avoiding disruption to drivers and reducing glare, and light trespass. Mitch Bowyer reiterated the importance of visual depictions to clarify what is acceptable.

Ken LeSure compared light pollution to sound and water pollution, emphasizing that the ordinance protects the community. Further discussion ensued, and Pat Owens asked Alex Jackson to draft the letter of recommendation. James Munet pointed out that definitions within the ordinance align with the visual elements to ensure clarity on how lighting impacts the community. James Munet also highlighted the value of including Kelvin lighting temperature standards. Brett Cartwright proposed that the visual focus be carried forward for future ordinance updates. The Council discussed enforcement and the role of light enforcement officers. James Munet noted that the Township Planning Commission had recommended approval.

James Munet motioned to proceed expeditiously with having Alex Jackson draft the letter of recommendation to the BOS, Brett Cartwright seconded. Vote: all in favor; motion carried.

b. Proposed Environmental Complaint Form.

Alex Jackson elaborated on discussions he had with the Township Engineer. This policy is intended for specific environmental and water quality issues that would assist with MS-4 requirements, particularly in relation to illicit discharge detection and elimination. The Township would receive these complaint forms, address the issues promptly, and potentially provide support to third-party agencies, such as the PA DEP, if it falls within their jurisdiction. Examples

were discussed to clarify what would be applicable for this type of form, with a focus on differentiating between egregious actions—such as filling wetlands or intentionally discharging pollutants into freshwater sources—and normal daily activities. James Munet emphasized the importance of monitoring water quality.

Mitch Bowyer motioned to approve a letter of recommendation to the Supervisors to adopt a policy for the Township that addresses environmental or water quality concerns as discussed, Brett Cartwright seconded and suggested adding an email address and a QR code to link to a web form during the discussion. Vote: all in favor; motion carried.

c. Information: 2024 MS-4 Presentation.

Alex Jackson shared the MS-4 Presentation from the previous BOS meeting with Council, and Alex Jackson updated the Council on the Township's work on the MS-4 program. Pat Owens requested that the EAC be mentioned in the Township newsletter. Brett Cartwright proposed adding a "Get Involved" tab on the Township website to list volunteer opportunities. James Munet inquired about leaf cleanup, and Alex clarified those announcements.

6. Public Comment

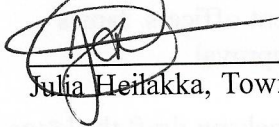
Kristine Karol asks about street sweeping, and whether the township does all the roadways. James Munet points out the Township does do street sweeping.

7. Adjournment

Pat Owens motioned to adjourn, Brett Cartwright seconded. Vote: all in favor; meeting adjourned at 8:50PM.

Minutes recorded by Alex Jackson

Respectfully submitted,



Julia Heilakka, Township Secretary