

SMITHFIELD TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING – OCTOBER 15, 2024 AT 7:00PM

A Regular Meeting of the Smithfield Township Environment Advisory Council was held on September 17, 2024, at the Smithfield Township Municipal Center at 1155 Red Fox Rd, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301, and via Zoom.

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

Also present were Jean Turn, Kristine Karol, Marguerite Vecchio, Douglas Schryver, and Francis Schryver.

1. Vice Chair Brett Cartwright called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

2. The Pledge of Allegiance is recited.

3. Minutes:

a. Regular Meeting – September 17, 2024.

Michael Albert made a motion to approve the minutes, and Mitch Bowyer seconded. Vote: all in favor; motion carried.

4. Announcements:

5. Old Business:

a. **Presentation: eCode Ordinance Tutorial.**

Jeanie Sanders, a trainer at General Code, she provided a presentation to the Council Members regarding E-code. A general overview of ecode's public access platform, followed by a walkthrough with some examples relevant to the Township. Kristine Karol commented on the ecode presentation, Doug Shryver also commented on the presentation, and a discussion ensued.

b. **Update: EAC Tour of the Pen Argyl WM Facility.**

Alex Jackson mentioned that Friday, November 8 at 9:30 a.m., works for the Council for the Tour. The tour will last about an hour to an hour and a half, and it would be a worthwhile experience for everybody.

c. **Update: Feedback on EAC Recommendations.**

Alex Jackson provided an update, Michael Albert mentioned an initiative by the Board of Supervisors where upon receiving a recommendation from an advisory body there would be a formal response. The Council discussed promoting the fall stormwater management and MS4

education. Brett Cartwright commented that homeowners may not fully understand the maintenance needs of on-lot sewage mounds.

d. Discussion: List of 'Environmental Problems' & Priorities for EAC.

Mitch Bowyer discussed the Powers of Council document. The ordinance mandated that the EAC keep an index of all open space and environmentally sensitive areas. The discussion clarified that the EAC's role includes identifying environmental problems and recommending plans to the Board of Supervisors. This included but is not limited to, making recommendations for educational programs. The EAC can also identify new issues and make recommendations if it believes an ordinance update is necessary. Recommendations should clearly articulate the problem, explain its significance, and provide a detailed plan for addressing it to ensure they are as effective and actionable as possible.

To enhance productivity, members proposed forming subcommittees to evaluate and prioritize the list of environmental issues. Subcommittees could assess specific items in more detail, then bring a prioritized list of top concerns back to the council for action. This structure would enable EAC to move more efficiently, avoiding the slow progress of a single monthly meeting. Consensus was to add this as an agenda item to future meetings.

e. Update: Open Space Inventory & Criteria for Consideration of Open Space.

Council discussed the existing open space inventory. Michael Albert suggested that the EAC focus on properties with potential high-value conservation or recreational use. A structured prioritization process would provide the Board of Supervisors with a strategic framework for land acquisition, helping prevent arbitrary or impulsive decisions on property purchases.

Council agreed that potential properties for acquisition should be assessed based on criteria such as proximity to water features, potential for recreational use, preservation value, and eligibility for external funding, such as DCNR grants. The group discussed the importance of not just focusing on new acquisitions but also on maintaining existing Township lands effectively.

Michael Albert suggested that the list be organized into two categories: conservation/preservation and recreation potential. James Munet made a motion to form a subcommittee to formalize this structure. Seconded by Michael Albert. Discussion: The subcommittee, composed of Mitch, James, Ken, and additional members. Vote: all in favor, motion carries.

The council discussed adding walking and bicycle paths to future agenda items as part of enhancing Township greenways and exploring how such pathways could align with conservation priorities.

Francis Schryver commented about enhancing the township in the long term, such as establishing a future town center. The council responded that the EAC's primary role involves

preservation and conservation, it was suggested that the Planning Commission could explore the idea of a town center further.

f. Discussion: S*mbro Creek Sediment Reduction Plan.

Council highlighted that the township's MS4 permit mandates a sediment reduction plan. The Township engineer, along with Township staff will investigate areas of significant erosion to identify sections for potential stabilization. This process might involve planting trees, adding riparian buffers, and strategically placing boulders to control stream bank erosion. After some discussion, Council concluded with a consensus on the importance of balancing education efforts with targeted restoration projects, and members agreed to keep pollution reduction on the agenda as an ongoing topic.

Members emphasized the need to inform residents that they should be discouraged from creating makeshift drainage ditches or runoff channels on their properties without oversight and must maintain their sewage mounds properly. The consensus was that public education is crucial to foster community understanding.

g. Discussion: 630 Seven Bridges Rd. Sketch Plan.

Brett Cartwright introduced the subject, and noted several concerns, and a discussion ensued. Council Members expressed concerns over the developer's possible requests for relief. Including three variances and dozens of waivers. The developer's possible plan may include reduced setbacks near the creek and no sidewalks. Brett Cartwright expressed a desire to verify certain aspects of the developer's stormwater permit. Council discussed the importance of having sidewalks. Council raised concerns about the safety and traffic impact, especially given the proximity to Gap View Drive, which is notorious in the Township. Council agreed to readdress this project if it progresses from a sketch plan into a land development submission.

6. New Business:

a. Discuss: River's Edge Park Online Survey.

Alex Jackson shared a new online survey meant to gather resident input on park needs and preferences for Rivers Edge Park on River Road.

Marguerite Vecchio commented on some issues she was having with the GIS mapping system within the survey, and a discussion ensued. Alex Jackson mentioned that the next meeting on Rivers Edge Park is December 11th at 6 P.M.

7. Public Comment


Kristine Karol asked a question on the open space inventory list, and commented about EAC members communicating with property owners.

A discussion ensued on procurement, and Michael Albert highlighted the need for discretion. Council Members reiterated their approach to prioritizing properties, and the importance of refining this list before considering outreach or further additions. Mitch Bowyer expressed the importance of prioritizing the environmental/conservation protection aspects in evaluations.

8. Brett Cartwright motioned to adjourn. Seconded by James Munet. Meeting adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Alex Jackson

Respectfully submitted,



Julia Heilakka, Township Secretary