

SMITHFIELD TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING – DECEMBER 18, 2024, AT 7:00PM

A Regular Meeting of the Smithfield Township Environment Advisory Council was held on December 18, 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, Ken LeSure, Commissioner James Munet, Supervisor Michael Albert, and Conservation & Recreation Director Dr. Alex Jackson. Councilors Eric White and Mitch Bowyer were absent.

Also present were Doug Schryver, Francis Schryver, Kristine Karol, Vicky Ozgun, and Jean Turn.

1. **Chair Pat Owens called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.**
2. **The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.**
3. **Minutes:**

- a. **November 20, 2024 Regular Meeting.**

Michael Albert motioned to approve the minutes from November 20, 2024, seconded by Brett Cartwright. Vote: all in favor, motion carried.

4. **Announcements:**

- a. **River's Edge Park Online Survey ends January, 2025.**

Alex Jackson announced that the Rivers Edge Park online survey ends January 10, 2025.

5. **Old Business:**

- a. **Update: Open Space Inventory.**

Brett Cartwright commented that Council Members were tasked with describing various open space “clusters”, with the goal of eventually presenting their findings to the Supervisors. Alex Jackson suggested that he would compile the materials for the Council’s January meeting. Pat Owens stated that the open space inventory is part of the EAC’s responsibilities and noted that this Council is doing a good job. The Council discussed the importance of open space criteria as a key aspect of the presentation, emphasizing the need for an objective method and process by which the Township can evaluate a property. Council pointed out that a presentation is planned to be a 10-minute session to the BOS later in 2025.

Francis Schryver commented on the idea of opening the criteria to citizen input, which led to a discussion about the old referendum and the processes related to potential future ones.

Pat Owens then pointed out that open space criteria, and property clusters, and the bubble map has already been created for the Township through community input, both past and present.

b. Discuss: Existing Stormwater Drainage Issues in the S*ambo Creek & ‘Little’ S*ambo Creek Watersheds.

Brett Cartwright introduced the subject, and Alex Jackson discussed the Township’s MS4 Pollution Reduction Plan for the Sambo Creek watershed. He also highlighted the Township’s efforts to explore projects aimed at reducing sedimentation in little S*ambo Creek watershed, specifically in the Delaware Avenue and Wayne Avenue areas of the Township.

The Council discussed the potential involvement of the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) in such projects. Alex Jackson explained how the Township could apply for grants and initiate projects within the Pollution Reduction Plan (PRP) area. The Council noted that pollution in S*ambo Creek and water quality issues are key concerns, emphasizing that impactful projects like these might take higher priority than educational efforts alone. Alex pointed out that these initiatives are limited to low-volume roads, which the Council further discussed.

Brett Cartwright made a motion, seconded by Ken LeSure, that the Environmental Advisory Council endorse the Delaware Avenue and Wayne Avenue swale improvement project for the Dirt and Gravel and Low Volume Road program. Discussion: This would be included as a line in the grant application, not a specific letter. Vote: All in favor; motion carried.

Michael Albert made a motion to table the discussion and add it as an agenda item for the next meeting, seconded by Brett Cartwright. Discussion: Brett Cartwright asked how to encourage residents to be aware of water issues and report them. After further discussion, Pat Owens suggested waiting until January’s discussion on this subject. Vote: All in favor; motion carried.

Jean Turn commented on whether the Township had identified roads with fewer than 500 cars per day, and Alex Jackson stated that traffic counts would be required. The Council discussed the value of identifying potential homeowners on those low-volume roads for educational outreach. Pat Owens closed the discussion.

6. New Business:

a. Discuss: Dirty Fill.

Alex Jackson introduced the subject of dirty fill in bordering municipalities along the NJ border in PA. The Council inquired about the model ordinance from Blairstown, NJ. Michael Albert asked about steep slopes in the ordinance and their relationship to fill and commented that adopting an ordinance like this would make sense for the Township.

Doug Schryver questioned whether MS4 regulations address the issue of dirty fill.

Vicky Ozgun noted that a nearby property owner had experienced an issue related to this subject matter.

The Council discussed enforcement through a Code Enforcement Officer, clarifying that this issue is separate from stormwater management. A discussion followed about the lengthy PA DEP enforcement process and the benefits of having a Township-level ordinance in place. Council also discussed how an ordinance would require permits for large volumes of fill on the scale of dump trucks or larger, giving the Township a mechanism to address the issue.

Francis Schryver asked whether people are aware they are receiving contaminated soil and the Council noted that NJ has strict rules on dumping, which drives cheap, dirty fill into PA.

Doug Schryver asked about the origin of the fill, while Francis Schryver made suggestions on communicating with NJ, and Alex Jackson commented that the origin of the fill can be from near New York City.

Kristine Karol commented that it may be individual operators responsible, and further discussion by the Council ensued.

The Council agreed that the EAC should recommend this ordinance as a priority to the Supervisors. The Council proposed aligning the ordinance with DEP regulations, ensuring the ordinance also addresses stormwater drainage and dirty fill while avoiding undue restrictions on small projects like garden beds.

Brett Cartwright moved that the EAC recommend to the BOS the development of a soil fill placement ordinance, seconded by James Munet.

Discussion: Vicky Ozgun asked whether wetlands can be filled, prompting clarification by the Council that existing Township zoning regulations prohibit wetland filling.

Vicky Ozgun also inquired whether the presence of concrete or blacktop material would be regulated through a permit.

The Council agreed that the EAC should recommend this ordinance as a priority to the Supervisors. The Council emphasized the importance of clear criteria for determining dirty fill. Brett Cartwright asked if the State Department or Agricultural

Office is involved, leading to a discussion on the legality of transporting dirty fill across borders versus dumping it.

Kristine Karol commented on the FP-001 form as a potential criterion.

The Council concluded that the ordinance should require a permit for significant fill projects. For smaller loads, such as a single dump truck, a permit might not be necessary, but the FP-001 form would still need to be submitted.

Vote: all in favor; motion carried.

b. Discuss: Housing in Smithfield Township.

Pat Owens stated that Housing is a significant issue both within the state and across the United States. The Council noted that reports indicated mortgage interest rates have risen, which has led to fewer houses on the market. The Council also pointed out how homeowners may be reluctant to sell because their current mortgages are below 4%, and obtaining a new mortgage would result in a higher rate and emphasized that this is a national matter. Pat Owens added that several options for creating more affordable housing are being discussed, but some of these options present environmental concerns.

c. Update: Riparian Buffers.

The Council agreed to continue researching pertinent research related to wetland buffers and to advise accordingly. Alex Jackson also commented on the wetland buffers in the Township. The Council plans to draft a document and report back.

d. Information: Sewage Facility Tour for 2025.

Alex Jackson discussed the possibility of organizing a tour for the Brodhead Creek Regional Authority. The Council agreed and expressed enthusiasm for this idea.

e. Discuss: 2025 Meeting Dates & Council.

The Council agreed to hold meetings on the third Tuesday of every month at 7:00 PM. Michael Albert announced that he would be stepping down from the Environmental Advisory Council to join the Smithfield Sewer Authority. Robert Lovenheim is set to be appointed in 2025, and the Planning Commission will vote on a member for the EAC in January. Alex Jackson encouraged attendance at the Sewer Authority meetings, and Michael Albert noted that the meetings are held at 1:00 PM on the second Tuesday of every month.

f. Discuss: 3 Point Garden Estates Major Subdivision.

Alex Jackson provided a summary to the EAC, including the timeline for their recommendation in January. Pat Owens asked if work sessions could be scheduled, and Alex Jackson confirmed that they could. The EAC agreed there should be adequate time to prepare a recommendation for the Supervisors.

Michael Albert motioned to table the discussion until January 21, 2025, seconded by Brett Cartwright. Vote: all in favor; motion carried.

7. Pending:

The Council discussed how several of these items might be addressed in January and noted that the Township is implementing a more formal mechanism for tracking recommendations.

Michael Albert moved to table the pending items until January, seconded by Brett Cartwright. Vote: all in favor, motion carried.

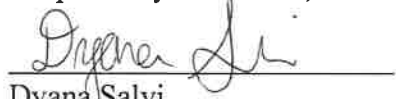
8. Public Comments: None.

9. Adjournment:

There being no other business before the Council, Michael Albert motioned to adjourn, Brett Cartwright seconded. Vote: all in favor; meeting adjourned at 8:21PM.

Minutes Recorded by Dr. Alex Jackson

Respectfully submitted,



Dyana Salvi
Assistant Township Secretary