

SMITHFIELD TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING – MARCH 18, 2025

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A Regular Meeting of the Smithfield Township Environment Advisory Council was held on March 18, 2025, at the Smithfield Township Municipal Center at 1155 Red Fox Rd, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301, and via Zoom.

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

Also present were Doug Schryver, Francis Schryver, Tara Vecchio-Freeman, Vicky Ozgun, and Jean Turn.

**1. Chair Pat Owens called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.**

**2. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.**

**3. Announcements:**

**a. River's Edge Public Meeting on Wednesday March 26, 2025, at 6 p.m.**

Dr. Alex Jackson announced that on Wednesday March 26, 2025 at 6 p.m there would be a public meeting on the River's Edge Bike Park master site plan and that the Supervisors were to decide on a preferred concept plan. Pat Owens asked if there were any environmental conservation issues that could come up, and Dr. Alex Jackson explained it was a planning grant, and the concepts were for possible future grants, which lead to a discussion.

Tara Vecchio-Freeman commented that the whole thing was in a floodplain, right next to the Brodhead Creek, and there were a lot of animals. She also commented on ecological and animal-related matters that should be taken into consideration, and a discussion ensued.

Robert Lovenheim also commented that the EAC should be renamed from "Advisory" to "Action" or "Conservation Action Committee," and that this would give it a different energy and a discussion ensued among Council on this topic. Ken Lesure suggested the EAC had been established in 2008 as part of the code, and that code would have to be reviewed. Pat Owens suggested having the attorney look into changing the name, and further discussion ensued.

**4. Minutes:**

Brett Cartwright asked Vicky Ozgun a question about her previously stated concerns, and a new discussion ensued, after which Francis Schryver commented on the topic of wetlands and discussed Smithfield Village and wetland filling. Francis also commented on Code Enforcement Officer and Zoning Officer of the Township, which lead to a lengthy discussion until Pat Owens made a motion to table all agenda items other than “Old Business, Discuss: EAC List of ‘Environmental Problems’ and Priorities for the EAC”; seconded by James Munet.

Discussion: Dr. Alex Jackson and Chair Pat Owens commented on concerns related to Robert’s Rules leading up to this motion, which led to a lengthy follow-up discussion amongst Council Members until Pat Owens called the vote. Vote: Pat Owens, Eric White, James Munet, Ken LeSure, and Robert Lovenheim in favor; Brett Cartwright opposed; motion carried.

## **6. Old Business:**

### **a. Discuss: List of ‘Environmental Problems’ and Priorities for the EAC.**

Robert Lovenheim began the discussion on the Open Space bond and recalled the previous open space committee, where it was suggested that Township couldn’t buy things piecemeal with the 2-million-dollar open space bond, and struggled to find a large enough project(s) to justify exercising the entire dollar amount at one time. He also suggested that the Township could only offer the assessed value, and that all property owners approached declined the assessed value as too little, and no property owners wanted to sell at this amount. These issues resulted in frustration amongst the previous Open Space committee.

Pat Owens pointed out that the subject Robert commented on formed part of the background and genesis of the current EAC’s draft presentation for Open Space. She noted how Brett Cartwright, Ken Lesure, and other sub-committee members had worked hard on the draft presentation in 2024.

Pat Owens directed the Council to focus on the List of ‘Environmental Problems’ and Priorities for the EAC, which led to a lengthy discussion where Doug Schryver commented on land use, and that that the EAC could focus on peace, beauty, and natural areas, and added that infrastructure needed to be addressed.

Vicky Ozgun commented that blighted properties were important.

Dr. Alex Jackson reminded the Council how the draft priorities list had been generated at a public meeting in 2024, and how Mitch Bowyer had suggested an algorithm and had taken the lead. Council discussed focusing on top four items for each member, as a simplified version of Mitch Bowyer's algorithm. James Munet suggested doing this exercise right then. Pat Owens agreed to do a more simplified version of what Mitch Bowyer was aiming for, and how it would essentially accomplish the same goal. A very lengthy discussion ensued as the Council Members completed that task, after which Pat Owens asked the public if they wanted to provide comment on this subject.

Doug Schryver commented that preservation and aesthetics were important, which lead to another discussion.

Brett Cartwright said that back in the 1950s, the Township had a lovely community feel, and that the [Tocks Island] Dam disrupted the Township in a big way. There used to be Buttermilk Falls, a silver lake, a baseball diamond, a dam downstream where kids would play, and about a mile along Marshalls Creek where there was a lot of local recreation. People used to walk and bicycle on the roads, but time and progress had changed the makeup of the community. Brett Cartwright further suggested that the Economic Development Zone could capitalize on the through-traffic driving on 209 through the Township, and that the community outside of the ED zone could have paths, sidewalks, and bike lanes.

Brett Cartwright further said in years past, people could walk to school, bike to school, and go to the river, which used to be a Minisink Village area. This was why he believed it was important to have an updated comprehensive plan. He commented that certain Township boards and committees didn't have an overarching vision. He said no one wanted to talk about the comprehensive plan, and he had heard it was problematic and didn't have any teeth. He said the biggest issue was the lack of a direct vision, and a discussion ensued where the Council agreed with Brett's comments and sentiment.

Tara Vecchio-Freeman commented that she appreciated Brett's sentiment, that ED Zones and development were necessary, but that the Township had definitely changed in her lifetime. She said some areas weren't pretty to look at, and others could be preserved. She further commented on making it a place where residents wanted to live because it was beautiful, and said it was important to preserve that beauty and the wildlife and she also suggested setting goals for the advisory committee that were

important to both the committee and the public, and suggested achievable items, which lead to further discussion amongst Council Members.

**7. Public Comments:**

- a. Robert Lovenheim commented that the EAC was in a unique position as a group of residents who cared about Smithfield Township.
- b. Francis Schryver suggested analyzing the ED Zone and said its appearance wasn't what it should be.
- c. Doug Schryver commented that the ED zone hadn't had a chance to organize itself yet.
- d. Pat Owens asked who was in charge of the ED Zone, which lead to a discussion.
- e. Francis Schryver commented about the Township Zoning Officer only being present once a week which led to a discussion where Council Members stated that the new Zoning Officer deserved a fair chance.

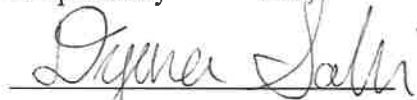
**8. Adjournment:**

There being no other business before the Council, James Munet motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ken LeSure. Vote: All in favor; meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

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Minutes Recorded by Dr. Alex Jackson

Respectfully submitted,



Dyana Salvi

Assistant Township Secretary