

SMITHFIELD TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL  
MEETING – APRIL 2, 2025

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A Meeting of the Smithfield Township Environment Advisory Council was held on April 2, 2025, at the Smithfield Township Municipal Center at 1155 Red Fox Rd, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301, and via Zoom.

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

Also present were Vicky Ozgun and Charleen Spezza.

**1. Chair Pat Owens called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.**

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

**3. Minutes:**

**a. March 18, 2025 Regular Meeting.**

Mitch Bowyer moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Eric White. Vote: Pat Owens, Ken LeSure, Eric White, and James Munet in favor, Mitch Bowyer abstained; motion carried.

**4. Reports:**

**a. EAC Chairperson's Report**

Pat Owens stated the EAC needed to follow Robert's Rules of Order and speak in accordance with the order of business. A discussion ensued regarding a Robert's Rules of Order handout so that Council Members could accept the responsibility to abide by these rules. Further discussion ensued on Robert's Rules and order, and the Council all agreed to abide. Pat Owens also reported that the Open Space Inventory presentation and the priorities for the EAC were both significant, considering what the goals of the group were. Pat Owens also reported, with regard to being an advisory council, that should the Council wish action to be taken by the Supervisors, they needed to make that recommendation, with pros and cons as part of that course of action, which led to a follow-up discussion.

**5. Old Business:**

**a. Update: Sewage and Water Tour - This coming Saturday, April 5, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.**

Dr. Alex Jackson introduced the subject and discussed how the Brodhead Creek Regional Authority facility was a model Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and this facility had more up-to-date technology compared to others in the area. Pat Owens asked if other WWTPs could invite the EAC to do tours. Dr. Alex Jackson stated the EAC had tried last year but weren't successful, to which Pat Owens suggested the Supervisors ask the other WWTP Authorities to invite the EAC for tours, which led to a discussion.

**b. Discuss: Draft Open Space Inventory Presentation.**

Dr. Alex Jackson began the presentation and explained how the bubble map was created by the EAC to show general areas desirable for potential future acquisition, and he went over the bubbles designating a cluster of landscapes the EAC sub-committee agreed on, such as Shawnee Valley, lands around Mt. Nebo Park, along Marshalls Creek, the Little Sambo Creek headwaters, and Geoffrey's Ridge. It was explained how the bubbles identify generally desired ranges of landscape for a number of reasons which were discussed.

Dr. Jackson went on to discuss a criteria flow chart, which included criteria such as "Township funding available for open space acquisitions" and "Willing seller of the property", and Dr. Jackson also explained other criteria, such as eligibility for grant funding, large acreage, critical habitat, connectivity to already protected land, water quality benefits, and public access. Emphasis was placed on large acreage, freshwater resources within the property, and adjacent to already protected lands. Dr. Jackson elaborated in more detail the criteria in the flow chart and explained how it was designed to be visual and easy to digest. He then read the criteria the sub-committee was recommending to the Supervisors. Dr. Jackson concluded the presentation by going over each of the clusters circled on the bubble map in more detail and highlighted where these clusters were located and why they were selected.

Eric White motioned to proceed with the draft Open Space Inventory presentation and materials for the Township Supervisors, seconded by Ken LeSure. Discussion: Mitch Bowyer suggested that the bubble map clusters should be labeled on the map and that there should be some edits to the Mount Nebo Park description. Council decided not to spend any more time on this; the Supervisors could review the materials and then answer any questions they might have. James Munet amended the motion to have Dr. Alex Jackson give the presentation to the Board of Supervisors on the draft Open Space Inventory, seconded by Eric White.

Discussion: Pat Owens suggested that the committee members attend the next BOS meeting when Alex would give this presentation and materials so they could answer questions and show their support for the idea, which led to a discussion. The Council also discussed how there was no money available to acquire land, but how the entire open space situation could eventually change, and how this recommendation was important to have in the Township files, which led to a discussion.



Vicky Ozgun commented about lands in the Lake Valhalla Homeowners Association, and the Council clarified that no lands within the Lake Valhalla HOA were on the bubble map, which lead to a discussion on the Little Sambo creek sub-watershed.

Pat Owens clarified the motion: the EAC would proceed with the draft open space presentation to the BOS, that Dr. Alex Jackson would present this to the Supervisors, and that the BOS would use the process that had been identified and apply it to the properties in these bubbles as those properties might become available. Vote: All in favor; motion carried.

**c. Discuss: EAC List of 'Environmental Problems' and Priorities.**

Dr. Alex Jackson began with an overview of the exercise on the EAC priority list and how the EAC had narrowed down a long list to a shorter one. Most of it reflected what Mitch had intended, which led to a lengthy discussion amongst Council members. Eric White stated how the EAC could inform the public that there were issues, and how education was very important. Eric also stated the EAC should work to decide how to educate the public on what the EAC cared about.

The Council was supportive of a community environmental program and agreed not to spend any more time on ranking the prioritization process. They would instead pick the top items and begin looking at how to make recommendations at the next Environmental Advisory Council meeting.

A discussion ensued on the outdated Township Comprehensive Plan, which had been one of the highest-rated items during an exercise on prioritization. The Council suggested tabling this discussion on the Comprehensive Plan until the next meeting which lead to a discussion where the Council clarified that the priorities list had come up in a public meeting brainstorming session that everyone had participated in, and it had been captured and presented, and James Munet motioned to table the discussion until the next meeting, seconded by Mitch Bowyer.

Discussion: Council Members discussed the Comprehensive plan, and they also discussed adding additional data to the priority list, and re-discussing the priority list at the new meeting. Vote: All in favor; motion carried.

**6. New Business:**

**a. Discuss: Starting regular EAC outreach to share concerns & updates with residents.**

Pat Owens suggested having an EAC educational column in the Township newsletter. The main idea would be to talk about meetings, what the EAC was trying to do. The EAC could update the website and archive the educational pieces there. The Council

wanted more visibility and to get more input from the residents, and they also agreed this was consistent with their mission. Eric White said the EAC could decide on a monthly or bi-monthly topic of concern to EAC members or the public. This would give members time to look into it and discuss what was necessary to distribute to the public. The focus would be to use these efforts to decide on a topic, write about it, and make it known to the public (e.g., water quality), and how the EAC were becoming part of a more active committee with value to the people of the township, which lead to a discussion.

#### **7. Public Comments:**

- a. Charleen Spezza raised a concern regarding an ongoing construction-related activity being carried out by a nearby property owner, which prompted a lengthy discussion. She also provided Council with a copy of a Chapter 102 inspection report from the Monroe County Conservation District. This led to a second round of discussion, after which Council Members expressed that they would like this topic added to a future EAC agenda.

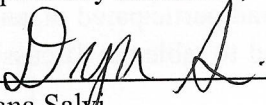
#### **8. Adjournment:**

There being no other business before the Council, Chair Pat Owens adjourned the meeting at 8:57 p.m.

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Minutes Recorded by Dr. Alex Jackson

Respectfully submitted,

  
Dyana Salvi  
Assistant Township Secretary