

**Salisbury Township
Environmental Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
July 15, 2009**

A Public meeting was held on the above date at the Salisbury Township Municipal building located at 2900 South Pike Avenue, Allentown, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania. The meeting was brought to order at 7:00 P.M. Committee members in attendance: Bruce Burchard, Chair, Frederic Brock,, Vice-Chair, Louis Cinquino, Jane Benning, Richard Niesenbaum, Commissioner James Brown, Joseph Hebelka, Planning Commission representative; Ms. Cynthia Sopka (Secretary to the EAC) and Mr. Randy Soriano, Township Manager.

Ms. Sopka announced that all sessions of the Salisbury Township Environmental Advisory Counsel regular meetings are electronically recorded as required by the By-laws and for the purpose of taking the Minutes.

Minutes – 6/17/2009

Motion was made by Mrs. Benning to approve the June 17, 2009 Environmental Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes as submitted. Motion seconded by Mr. Cinquino. Mr. Fritz Brock abstained indicating that he was not present. The Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Agenda Review

No comments.
No amendments.

NEW BUSINESS

Representatives from local EAC's were invited to present to STEAC.

Allentown EAC – Mr. Daniel Poresky	#610-434-1396	dporesky@yahoo.com
Allentown EAC - Ms. Julie Thomas	#484-358-1200	jromases@yahoo.com
Emmaus/Upper Milford Joint EAC – Mr. Bill Ahlert	#610-965-3306	bahlert@ptd.net
Upper Saucon EAC – Mr. Tom Beil	#610-282-1171 x 3	N/A
Upper Saucon EAC – Tom Gettings	#610-965-4397 x 40	N/A

Local EAC Representative Introduction and Presentations.

Mr. Daniel Poresky, Allentown EAC

The EAC was formed over a year ago. The EAC meets on the 2nd Monday of every month at City Hall from 5:15 p.m. -7:15 p.m., the meetings are advertised and open to the public.

The EAC has been working on issues that relate to the City such as South Mountain, drinking water, and city parks. The EAC is available to review proposed land development plans that include site visits and coordination with developers. Some examples of work include getting involved with City departments to review issues pertaining to parks, water works, shade tree commission and historic preservation. The EAC is a resource for additional information and also provides communication to the public. Mr. Poresky described one success story that involved

saving historical ancient Sycamore trees that were going to be cut down.

The EAC is also active in protecting the Little Lehigh and Cedar Creek. The plan is to establish riparian buffers as a means to protect these water courses from storm water run-off, flooding, bank erosion, and strive to maintain a balance in aquatic life. One aspect of the plan includes ceasing mowing of grass up to the stream bank and allows native vegetation to grow. Other aspects of the plan include tree planting to assist with stream bank stabilization. Trees have been donated by DCNR and the public broadcasting station WDIY through a pledge system. The planting is proposed for October which will include public participation.

The “No Mow” policy is already in process in regards to Lehigh and Cedar Parkway. The south end of Trexler Park now includes native vegetation that not only enhances the beauty of the park but also provides flood control and wildlife habitat.

Mr. Poresky suggested the value of additional contact with Mr. Jim Brey of Lower Mayfield Township.

Ms. Julie Thomas, Allentown EAC

The Allentown EAC originally dealt with wells and later the subjects evolved to other environmental impacts the City faced. The EAC prepared a list of priorities and is working towards establishing procedures to address those items with the greatest environmental impact.

Mr. Bill Ahlert, Emmaus/Upper Milford Joint EAC

He commended the STEAC for the interest in other Townships and feels it is an important process. The EAC meets the 4th Monday of every month at 7 p.m. They alternate between Upper Milford & Emmaus. The joint EAC has a website which links to all information.

The joint EAC started as a result of a watershed assessment. Recommendation was that the EAC is to provide input to the Township and the Borough with respect to issue that may impact the watershed. Other issues consist of Riparian buffers, educating residents on the importance of not to mow up to end of stream, erosion controls, proper maintenance of on-lot septic system Wellhead Protection Program for the Borough of Emmaus. Many residents in the Upper Milford Township have wells; therefore, they need to be extremely careful what is around them.

Mr. Ahlert indicated that the EAC sees education as their priority to benefit the community and developed a newsletter to achieve this goal. Recently the EAC focused on a community survey regarding centralizing refuse collection. The key element to any EAC is education and community support.

The EAC is involved with stream buffer projects in Emmaus Community Park. It provides a framework for water quality education that includes water monitoring and analysis.

Mr. Ahlert cautioned the STEAC members on their involvement because some issues are technical in nature and require professional evaluation. He finds it important to have group consensus regarding communication and action.

Mr. Ahlert proposed continuation of collaboration between the EAC's and described additional projects that the EAC may focus on such as educating residents about septic system maintenance and the presence of invasive species such as Canadian Thistle, Japanese Knotweed, Tree of Heaven, etc.

Mr. Hebelka made reference to the Emmaus/Upper Milford EAC earth day pick up that included 250 volunteers. They conducted storm drain stenciling to indicate storm drains to stream. Many residents supported the efforts as well as the volunteers. The EAC is considering this to be an annual event that would include games, prizes, and food as a means of involving the community. Other items such as residential outdoor burning, riparian buffers, and issue of residential rights were referenced.

Ms. Benning inquired if Salisbury Township has a Wellhead Protection Ordinance. Mr. Hebelka advised no, because there are not any large public water supply sources in the Township. Mr. Ahlert advised the City of Allentown is working on a Well Head Protection/Source Water Protection Plan.

Questions pertaining to sub-committee arose. Mr. Ahlert stated that they do not have sub-committees because they are too small. He stated they have champion who report back monthly. What the champion does is identify an issue and this person is responsible for moving it forward. The champions are divided into two groups of four (4) with one (1) liaison for each.

Mr. Tom Beil & Tom Gettings, Upper Saucon EAC

Mr. Beil stated the EAC was established in 2007. They meet the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 6 p.m. Mr. Beil circulated brochures and reiterated the importance of understanding the duties of an EAC and knowing that these duties come from state law.

Mr. Gettings stated the biggest challenge is setting priorities because as a government you continue to be pulled in so many different directions. Therefore, ask yourself what you want accomplished over the next year, list them, give a time frame and put them on your agenda for every meeting.

Their EAC is concerned with a lot of land development, in that, they developed a way to focus on which properties are important to their land preservation programs. This is how the unofficial map started, and why they wanted to change it into an official map that gets adopted by the governing bodies. The official map took about one year to accomplish. Therefore, any development taking place will require land preservation, whether it is a walking trail or more open space.

Ms. Benning questioned how development can be held up for a year and how this works. Mr. Beil stated in the municipalities planning code in the state law, it allows all municipalities to prepare an official map. On the official map you identify properties for preservation; therefore, you have the authority to hold up development for that building permit for one (1) year to see if the Municipality can preserve the property.

Mr. Gettings encouraged the EAC to address the issues that are out there like clean ups, recycling electronics, and get the citizens involved and supportive of the EAC efforts. Try to focus on issues that continue to get staff and public support and what they can understand. He stressed to remember that EAC are advisory councils, and not try to get political. He also advised to get your Township Manager's support and guidance.

Mr. Beil advised they have interests in opportunities for joint projects with the surrounding municipalities. They would like to work together and possibly do a joint clean up day in a centralized location. They are also interested in conducting electronic recycling, preserving South Mountain, connecting the Trail Systems and possibly partaking in rain barrel work shop.

Mr. Gettings stated the EAC held an education seminar for the township land owners with more than ten (10) acres. The seminar focus was on conservation easements; with an attorney present for questions. The seminar was attended by 60 residents.

Mr. Getting also stated that the EAC saved the Township a lot of money by obtaining LED lighting for the stop lights through the DEP. The DEP also provided assistance in the installation of the LED lighting. The EAC is also working on "adopt a road." which allows a corporation or family to take on a section of the road within the Township to care. This further instills resident's involvement

Mr. Beil indicated since the inception of the EAC they have been able to preserve 70 acres of land, through a program funded from the general fund revenues and matching grants from the County.

City of Allentown proposed timbering of South Mountain parcels in Salisbury . Daniel Poresky from the Allentown EAC addressed the issue referenced in the Sunday Morning Call regarding **City of Allentown proposed timbering of South Mountain parcels in Salisbury Township**. He clarified misconceptions that have been prompted by this article and by negligent journalism.

The Mayor was looking to do a tree inventory on South Mountain to know if they will be able to make hiking trails, biking trails, roads or only a fire lanes, etc. Typically environmental projects are conveyed to the EAC, this was not the case. Miscommunication ensued and ultimately led into controversy. There are mixed emotions regarding the South Mountain: some people/residents are concerned over the issue of fires, small brush, fallen trees, available camping and trails along with the presences of ATV's. In turn, others would say leave it alone, nature will take care of itself. Therefore, the Mayor sought the services of Greg Weitzel with the intent of conducting a tree inventory. They went to DCNR and were advised to use a consultant to manage, protect and keep it beautiful. This consultant is a forester and fostered the concerns of the residents and EAC.

Mr. Poresky indicated the Morning Call report was skewed. It was believed that the EAC could have handled this situation by allowing for public education and input.

Salisbury Township EAC Proposed Priority Projects

Cinquino – Land preservation, watershed protection, forest stewardship, natural resources inventory, zoning remedies for both areas that may be zoned originally for density that are no longer appropriate and good environment chooses for example solar power, etc., environmental education and participation.

Brock - Solicit the Board of Commissioners. What are the issues, give advice, and offer your knowledge and get their perspective of it.

Burchard – riparian buffers, residential windmills

Niesenbaum – eco friendly transportation, biking or walking trails

Randy Soriano - Developing an official map that includes environmental sensitive areas.

Additional Discussion Information

Mr. Soriano spoke of land acquisition grants received from DCNR for the School District property located on Emmaus Avenue and it's location to Franko Park. Mr. Soriano stated this is where to prioritize the needs for **preserving land** that's viable for preservation. Start with an inventory then start creating an official map from it. The Lehigh Valley Commission is a valuable source of information in this regard.

Mr. Soriano advised to communicate with John Andreas in regards to County clean up and how to coordinate it with the County.

Future Agenda Items

Finalize By-laws

Wellhead protection plan and source water protection

Formalize a list of priorities to present to the Board of Commissioners

Invite John Andreas to speak of MS-4

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Burchard the meeting was adjourned.