

**WHITEMARSH TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JANUARY 29, 2018
7:00 P.M.**

MEMBERS:

X BRANT __ GALLAGHER X GEASLAND
X HEUCKEROTH X MERKLE X PICKER X SHREERO

LIAISONS:

X LEE, Staff X BOYLE-NESTER, BOS Liaison

Members of the public in attendance: John McCreavy, Linda Doll, Eli Glick

1. CALL TO ORDER – 7:00

Before the start of the meeting to re-organize for the 2018 year, the ground went around for a quick introduction to welcome two new members: Ed Brant and Lou Ann Merkle.

2. 2018 RE-ORGANIZATION

- a. **Election of Chair** – Gordon Geasland nominated Jonathan Picker to serve as Chair, seconded by Deb Shreero. Mr. Picker accepted the nomination. The EAB members voted and passed unanimously for Jonathan Picker to serve in the role of Chair for the 2018 calendar year.
- b. **Election of Vice-Chair** – Debbie Heuckroth nominated Deb Shrerro to serve as Vice-Chair, seconded by Gordon Geasland. Ms. Shreero accepted the nomination. The EAB members voted and passed unanimously for Deb Shrerro to serve in the role of Vice-Chair for the 2018 calendar year.

2. 2018 MEETING CALENDAR (3rd Monday of every other month)

- March 19
- May 21
- July 16
- September 17
- November 19

Ms. Merkle asked why the EAB meet on an every other month schedule instead of every month, to which Ms. Lee replied that a few years ago, all the different Boards and Commissions of the Township were asked to assess the frequency of public meetings, and at that time, due to limited EAB members and responsibilities, it was decided to reduce the number of meetings to every other month along with several other boards and commissions that reduced their meetings to either every other month or every three months.

Ms. Lee also explained that if there is a need for additional meetings to the every other month meetings, we can schedule them on an as-need basis as long as we publicly advertise those meetings on the Township website and other means of public outreach.

3. Follow Up items from Nov, 2017 meeting

a. Recent Stormwater Projects and Priorities List for future plans

Ms. Lee shared with the group on recent/current/upcoming Township stormwater management projects taking place throughout the Township:

- i. Andorra Creek Streambank Restoration – Ms. Lee reported that this project was funded in part by DEP and was completed in the summer of 2017.
- ii. Miles Park Improvement – this is a stormwater improvement project funded by two grant sources: DCED for \$196K and DCNR for \$200K. The cost of the construction is \$640,156, so a large portion of the construction will be paid for by grant funds.

Ms. Shreero asked when this project is to take place and what the details of the stormwater management consists of. Ms. Lee responded that the project is scheduled to start very soon (by spring time at the latest) to work through the summer into fall for completion.

Ms. Shreero asked if this project would impact the riparian basin that the EAB helped create several years back, to which Ms. Lee responded that she does not think it extends that far out into the park but she will double check. In addition, Ms. Lee will get renderings or copies of the plans for public view as well as the EAB.

Ms. Heuckroth asked if the stormwater management plans for Miles Park would have any positive impact on water quality, to which Ms. Lee was not able to respond but will check with the Township Engineer to find out what, if any, water quality improvement plans are a part of the overall stormwater management plan.

Ms. Shreero further iterated that it would have been nice if the EAB would have had a chance to review the plans for the Miles Park stormwater improvement plans to be able to understand what the proposed plans are and what kind of environmental improvements it was proposing. In addition, she iterated that the EAB consists of members who are knowledgeable in stormwater management and can be a helpful set of eyes to review plans for further suggestions and recommendations, particularly on sites that are Township owned. In addition, she suggested that it would be nice if an Engineer who is involved in these Township projects could attend EAB meetings to have those discussions – to be able to answer questions and note EAB suggestions in his/her plans.

Ms. Linda Doll, as part of the public, echoed those sentiments on how and where members of the public can gain access to plans and details of Township projects such as the Miles Park improvement plans.

Ms. Lee responded to both Ms. Doll and Ms. Shreero's comments, that she will bring those concerns to the Township Manager for consideration for other Township projects.

iii. Intersection Improvements

Ms. Lee explained that the Township, under court order as part of the HMI settlement agreement, is in the process of intersection improvements at the following intersections: Militia Hill & Stenton, Joshua and Stenton, Joshua and Flourtown, and Stenton/Flourtown/Cricket. As part of the road improvements, there are stormwater management requirements.

Ms. Lee further explained that due to the nature of this project being a court order, the Township is under a very strict timeline to complete the intersection improvements in order to avoid further penalties.

Mr. Eli Glick, as a part of the public, also commented that he is concerned about all the sycamore trees being removed as part of this intersection improvement and would like to see that addressed appropriately.

b. Invasive Control Measures at various Township owned sites

- i. Ms. Lee reported that she has been in contact with two different companies for proposals for assessment, invasive control measures and meadow recommendations. The two companies are with Kelsey Boyd of Natural Lands Trust (which is now called Lands Trust) and Mara Baird, a consultant who handles Morris Arboretum maintenance. Upon speaking with both consultants, they will work on a proposal to submit but no site visits can be made until spring time when plants and landscape start growing again as the winter time is not a true reflection of growth on each site. Once the proposals come in, Ms. Lee will share them with the EAB for further review.

Mr. Glick voiced his concern about expending more Township funds for further studies for McCarthy Basin that was already conducted several years ago. Ms. Lee said that the study conducted several years ago focused on the Gambone open space. Mr. Glick further clarified that Natural Lands Trust was also asked to do a study of the McCarthy Park Basin as part of the larger Gambone study, which created the maintenance plan. Ms. Lee responded that it might be a good time to do another assessment to see how well the maintenance plan has been followed and if the maintenance plan is working. And if things are not working well, this might be a good opportunity to pinpoint the deficiencies to help improve the site.

Ms. Doll also asked about the McCarthy Park Basin Maintenance Plan and how one could see what it consists of. She requested that the Township make these kinds of information more available for public view as she and many other residents quite enjoy the trail around the McCarthy Park basin and want to make sure it is well maintained.

While on the topic of invasive control measures and stormwater management, the topic of McCarthy Basin Site Visit that took place back on November 29, 2017 was discussed. All the EAB members were forwarded a summary of the site visit from the Parks & Rec Director. Ms. Lee also explained that Mr. Glick forwarded informational brochures teaching about invasive control, which was distributed to various staff involved in the township open space management.

Ms. Lee also shared with the group that since the November EAB meeting, the Township PW Staff have been visiting the sites to pull some of the more obvious invasive species for the past two months from various Township open space and basin sites, particularly the McCarthy Park Basin, Thomas Road Basin, Mathers Lane open space, Hunter Road basin, and Cedar Grove meadow.

c. Recycling Ordinance – Plymouth, Whitpain and UD ordinances attached

Ms. Shreero created an excel spreadsheet to compare different recycling ordinances of surrounding municipalities and how non-residential recycling is enforced by other municipalities. All townships, except Springfield require compliance reporting. Upper Dublin's ordinance require a certificate of compliance per the Director of Public Works, so Ms. Lee will follow up with Upper Dublin to see how they enforce that ordinance.

In addition, it was further discussed that although it has been the past practice policy to separate yard waste for separate day collection, the ordinance as it currently stands, does not provide specificity for recycling yard waste, so Ms. Shreero recommended that the ordinance be amended to include that.

4. New Items

a. Earth Day 2018 – Sunday, April 22

Ms. Lee reminded the group that Earth Day 2018 is Sunday, April 22 and asked if the EAB members wanted to do anything to recognize it. She also reminded the group that she posted a daily environmental fun fact about Whitemarsh for the week leading up to Earth Day, which was well received by Facebook followers. The EAB members all agreed that it was a good idea and that we should continue that for this year.

b. Spotted Lanterns – County-wide quarantine

Ms. Lee shared with the group the County's efforts to contain the Spotted Lanterns that has been growing and spreading rampantly through Pennsylvania, causing massive damage to the trees. The Township is working to distribute information on the problems of the spotted lanterns and to also educate the public on how to spot them and how to remove them.

Mr. Geasland shared that he found some and tried to report it to the state but was not able to get through to anyone. Mr. Glick shared that the best line to call is the County Extension Office that works in collaboration with Penn State.

c. Wells Street Clean Up – Ms. Lee shared with the group that the next Well Street Open Space clean up event is Saturday, April 14. All members of the public are welcome to learn about invasive plants and how to properly prune them.

d. Township Day – Ms. Lee also shared that the 2018 Township Day is scheduled for Saturday, April 28 at Victory Fields due to Miles Park scheduled for construction starting this spring.

e. Ms. Merkle also passed around the EAC Network Conference for Saturday, April 14. Ms. Lee also reminded the group that any EAB members who are interested in attending any kind of training/workshop/conference that is related to the efforts of the EAB and the price is within reason, the Township will pay to register the EAB members.

f. Ms. Shreero asked that the new members as well as old members brainstorm for any environmental initiatives that they would like to champion as a member of the EAB and bring those ideas to the next meeting.

5. APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 2017 MEETING MINUTES

The meeting minutes were approved by voice vote with no changes.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Eli Glick read from a prepared statement that is attached to the end of the meeting minutes.

7. ADJOURNMENT – The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Whitemarsh Township EAB Monday, January 29, 2018

As many of you know, I served on this board for a brief period of time but resigned after I felt that the board's primary purpose was being thwarted by the paid staff of the township and its elected officials.

This board was created by ordinance to provide, first and foremost, input and recommendations to the township regarding environmental matters. The ordinance first states:

The board shall ***"Identify environmental problems and recommend plans and programs to the appropriate Township board and/or commission for the promotion and conservation of the natural resources and for the protection and improvement of the quality of the environment within the Township's limits."***

There were several other duties of the EAB regarding managing open space that were repealed by the board of supervisors in 2007. Additionally, I understand that by history, the EAB reviewed all development plans and provided feedback to the board of supervisors about said development. This no longer happens.

When I left the board, the chair of the board of supervisors came to one of our monthly meetings and informed the EAB that we were to no longer focus on township matters. Rather, she wanted us only to focus on educating the public on various environmental issues. This change in how the EAB was to function was done without due process and out of the scope of the ordinance.

In my opinion, the Whitemarsh Supervisors appear to have a limited knowledge base regarding environmental matters and have relied solely on the township paid staff to make recommendations for issues without question or critique.

Unfortunately, the township staff has not shown a willingness to do things in a different more scientifically appropriate way when dealing with environmental matters. The EAB is the only check and balance for the way this township treats the environment and this board should speak louder regarding these matters. In the 22 years that I have lived in this township, I have seen no change in the way this township handles environmental

matters. In fact, there seems to be active push back to recommended change.

Tax payer dollars have been wasted by only partially participating in programs and projects that are designed to fulfill certain environmental legal requirements. For example, the recent MS4 document was filled with inaccuracies and outright lies. These many issues were pointed out at a past EAB meeting. Instead of removing those inaccuracies or better yet, fixing them so we would be in compliance, the MS4 was submitted as printed.

Additionally, this board spent \$5000 of tax payer money to do an energy audit of this building. Much of the focus in the conclusion of the audit was that a shift in culture was needed amongst the employees who work in this building.

One of the simple recommendations was to raise the cooling temperature in the summer to 72 degrees and reduce the heating temperature to 68 degrees in the winter. These recommendations are standard best practice for energy efficiency. Yet, you can frequently see thermostat settings in this building manually overridden out of that range.

The township spends thousands of dollars yearly to spray herbicides on turf grass with no Integrated Pest Management or IPM plan in place. Turf grass is over mowed and most native areas are not managed properly.

I have always believed that to be a leader, you must practice what you preach. This township must comply with environmental best practices first before it can expect private citizens or businesses to act.

You are now considering a new ordinance on how businesses in the township recycle. Yet, have you looked at the township's own recycling program? We currently have a provider, J. P. Mascaro, who's trucks frequently comingle trash with recyclables or with yard debris.

The prior program with RecycleBank was far superior to what we have now. Through it's website, RecycleBank provides excellent educational resources for township residents and residents were incentivized to recycle through an excellent rewards program.

Are the township and its staff setting a good example on recycling practices and sustainability? If you can't answer that question for yourself, perhaps you should do your own exploration. I think you will find that many improvements could be made.

Finally, I am the one who proposed and led the various basin visits with some of the township staff that Tom spoke of. I am also the only township resident one who went to all the sites with the staff with the exception of Lou Ann Merkle, who wasn't yet a member of the EAB. No one from the EAB was present. Yet, I was not invited to formally present the findings of the visit despite asking to do so. *By the way, Tom's report was directly from my email summary*
I presented the issues of invasives and mowing practices to this board last summer. The topic appeared well received by this board. However, the highlights, critiquing the township's management style were left out of the meeting minutes and most of what I presented was sugar coated by township staff.

During the recent visits to McCarthy Park, it was clear that there is no interest in doing anything differently. I was surprised to learn that the director of public works and the township engineer were not familiar with the term "integrated pest management" or "IPM" which is the gold standard for dealing with herbaceous pests as well as pests of all types.

Further, the director of public works felt that they were following the recommendations of the Natural Lands Trust by mowing some of the basin at the recommended twice per year. Unfortunately, there was no understanding of how timing is critical for the mowing component of managing some of the invasives. I also know that only the perimeter of the basin was mowed only once last year. The neighboring meadow, which is part of the storm water management system was not mowed at all.

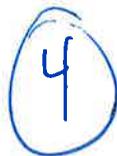
The director of public works intimated that in order to properly care of the open space in a true scientific way, additional staff would be needed. He did acknowledge that one of his staff was certified to apply herbicides to control the invasives. If this is true, then there has to be knowledge of proper management including IPM within public works or certification could not be maintained.

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This board must begin to speak out more loudly about environmental issues affecting this township. Growth and change comes from the ability to look at oneself with critical eyes and use the information to do better. Critiques should be part of a welcome process that allows for growth. This board can and must do better in holding the township accountable for its environmental practices.

I would ask that my comments be added verbatim to the minutes for this meeting so there is a written record.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to be 'E. J. M.', written in a cursive style.A handwritten number '4' in blue ink, enclosed within a blue oval.