

Lower Gwynedd Township EAC Meeting Agenda

January 10, 2023, 7:00 PM

Township Building Conference Room

Zoom Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/8990039061>

Meeting ID: 899 0039 0619 Passcode: 173891 Call in: 646-931-3860; 929-205-6099

1. Call to order, attendance, introductions of new members, participants or visitors
2. Approval of prior minutes (attached)
3. Request to move items from Consent Agenda to Regular Agenda, and any other items to be considered as part of the Regular Agenda
4. Approval of Regular Agenda
5. Consent agenda: prior Meeting minutes; various reports
6. Old Business
 - a. Going Green Award, final steps
 - b. Review of 2023 Goals
 - c. Budget for 2024
 - d. Calendar updates: Review and finalize dates for key activities
 - Pollinator Pathway project—timing
 - tree giveaway, bird walks, movie nights (3?), PECO speaker, composting/rain barrel/other giveaway
 - Meeting with BoS
 - e. EAC Planning Document
7. New Business
 - a. Review of committee members, liaisons, etc.
 - b. EAC Committee Handbook
8. Standing Items – Committee and Liaison updates
 - a. Staff Liaison report (Sandi), including budget review
 - b. Planning Commission liaison
 - c. Parks and Rec liaison
 - d. LGT Comprehensive Plan liaison
9. Points of interest/General comments
 - a. Other meetings of interest
 - i. Upper Dublin Environmental Open House, March 9th
 - ii. PA Land Conservation Conference, April 3-5, Wind Creek Bethlehem

Background materials:

- Draft of November meeting minutes, with any changes/comments noted
- EAC 2023 Goals document
- EAC Planning Document

Next meeting: February 14, 2024.

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**Environmental Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
November 8, 2023**

Members in Attendance:

Lisa Brown, Co-Chair
Mark Schafer, Co-Chair
Rea Monaghan
Maureen Nunn

Marianne Grey
Brenda Doll
Steve Saffier

Associate Members: Rich Valiga, Suzanne Smith-Oscilowski

Board of Supervisors Liaison: Tessie McNeely

Staff In Attendance: Sandi Feight

Not in Attendance: Mike Twersky

Guest: Lisa Washabaugh (Zoom), Mark Perlman (Zoom), Sarah Kiper, Mike Kipper, Katie Husa, Christie Husa, Ben Husa.

1. **Call to order** - The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.
2. **Minutes** - Minutes approved as submitted.
3. **Request to move items from Consent Agenda to Regular agenda, and any other items to be considered as part of the Regular Agenda**
4. **Approval of Regular Agenda** - Approved as presented
5. **Consent Agenda**
6. **Old Business**
 - a. **Going Green Award** –The sub-committee selected top 3 candidates for the award. The full EAC voted on for either Gwynedd Friends Meeting, Harth Builders or Mary Pellegrino. Gwynedd Friends Meeting had the most votes. Mark Schafer made a motion to award a youth award to Mary Pellegrino for courage to step out of her comfort zone and submit an application to inspire other youth in the community, the motion was seconded by Rich Valiga. All were in favor with one abstain. There was not an actual vote for a corporate or the honorable mention.
 - b. **Budget 2024** – EAC has spent \$10,583, has \$9,416.79. Staff has requested the same amount of money as 2023. Tree Give Away the EAC the cost for the trees and mulch as less than the requested \$15,000. Staff has requested \$22,000 with the projection of giving away 400 plants in 2024 and cost increase.
 - c. **Updates:**
 - i. **Tree Giveaway** – Suzanne stated the giveaway went very well this year. 350 will be the number of trees up for giveaway in 2024.
 - ii. **Regional EAC Conference:** Maureen, Lisa, Mark and Tessie attended the EAC regional conference that was held at West Chester University on October 21st. Lisa stated it was very informative and a lot of activity. Mark talked about the stream signs that were put up here in the Township and how successful it was.

d. Calendar updates:

Old: November 11, switch to November 18 due to potential conflict with Veterans Day ceremony.

New: 2024 Dates for Key Activities - Joint meeting with the Board of Supervisors will need to be scheduled in January. It will most likely be towards the end of January. Discussion will be on the best way to setup a calendar for the EAC to view and to set dates for the key activities. It was asked that newsletter deadlines be added to the calendar. Lisa would like all dates for activities to be picked before January so it can be presented to the BOS.

7. New Business:

- a. Mark briefly discussed the long-range project document and the meeting he, Lisa and Sandi had with John Farrell, the new project manager for the Township. The idea is that John will be able to help the EAC in organizing some of their long-range plans and seeing how they align with other projects that are occurring in the Township and how to actualize some of the projects. The discussion will be tabled until the next meeting. Lisa had also redistributed to the EAC the set of potential guidelines the EAC had developed last spring for contractors to consider. The EAC would like to have those available on display for the contractors to see when they are coming to complete permits; this is something that John could help with as well.

8. Standing Items – Committee and Liaison updates

- a. Staff Liaison report (Sandi) – Sandi gave a breakdown of the budget and the calendar that the staff has been working on.
- b. Planning Commission Liaison – No Planning Commission this month
- c. Parks and Rec Liaison – Rea stated the Board had met in October and are working toward prioritizing the Master Plan items.
- d. LGT Comprehensive Plan Liaison – Rich stated there was a Community Open House in October it was very well attended. There was a survey sent out, in addition to the meeting, and there have been over 400 responses regarding the Comprehensive plan. There will also be another open house somewhere down the road to bring all of this together. Tessie suggested to have the next open house at a better time so more can attend.

9. Points of interest/General comments –

- a. Single Use Plastics ban
- b. Working with MCPC in the future

Meeting concluded @ 8:32 pm

Next meeting: Wednesday, January 10, 2024

I. The Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) seeks input and approval for its 2024 activities, both established and newly proposed. The activities are arranged according to our stated areas of interest and according to whether they are continuing/recurring or new initiatives.

II. The EAC presents our collective recommendations for new long range strategic environmental efforts. These multi-year activities reflect the EAC's thinking about environmentally related **long-term goals** that would benefit the Township. These include larger-scale projects for which the Township would take the lead, with input, collaboration and consultation with the EAC, especially regarding community education and outreach. They also include projects that the EAC could implement in conjunction with other township entities (staff and committees).

III. The EAC presents a draft 2024 activities calendar.

LAND STEWARDSHIP - Efforts to promote diverse habitat and healthy trees, soils, and woodlands.

Continuing/recurring:

- Native Tree Giveaway (October). This popular event can help offset declines in the Township's tree canopy year after year.
- Public education and demonstrations. Through workshops, newsletter articles, speakers, giveaways, continue to educate residents about establishing and maintaining healthy habitat. (See Communications/Outreach and Calendar.)
- Support Arbor Day, Tree City, and Earth Day objectives. Coordinate an Arbor Day proclamation in conjunction with the Board of Supervisors (April), which will help us comply with requirements for maintaining Tree City certification. Hold Earth Day event.

New/ Long Range:

- **Survey township lands** as needed to ensure open space is available for all residents to enjoy.
 - Identify and preserve new open space as available and appropriate.
 - Employ conservation easements to ensure property surrounding conserved land remains preserved. Partner with non-profits.
- **Develop a long-range working plan to address net loss of trees and tree canopy** due to land development and redevelopment and due to disease. Implement new ways to increase tree canopy, such as a tree bank.
- **Provide eco positive stewardship of our township land.** Work with Township Public Works staff and Parks & Rec staff to develop a plan for maintaining our public lands in a manner that restores native flora and fauna and reduces the carbon footprint of land management. Aspects to include:
 - establish no-mow areas;
 - convert lawn mowers and lawn equipment to battery operated (including especially contractors);
 - add new native plantings per long range plans (e.g. Parks MP);
 - develop plans for trail-side tree maintenance - to manage dead and dying trees.
 - identify and map locations of invasive species on Township properties/trails with goal of removing/replacing with natives.
- **Establish new demonstration gardens.** Provide recurring environmental education through demonstration gardens. Work with the Parks & Recreation Board, liaisons from the Board of

Supervisors, and Township staff to identify opportunities for locations where environmental education projects may be undertaken. This can be done in coordination with the Parks & Recreation Master Plan. The goal is to have small, manageable volunteer projects that are accessible to residents so that they may serve as educational opportunities. These projects are to include:

- pollinator pathways;
 - rain gardens;
 - small plot native planting plans;
 - planting/cleanup projects along trails or other township property;
 - educating residents on how to identify invasives including use of various phone apps.
- **Address issues of deer damage in the Township.** Given ongoing property damage and accidents caused by deer, we recommend initiating a project gathering information on deer management, experts, the appropriate government agencies and levels of government involved for LG participation or monitoring. Educate the community about deer resistant plants, movement patterns of deer, and rutting season implications for drivers.

WATER STEWARDSHIP - efforts to conserve water, reduce runoff, and promote clean, healthy waterways.

Continuing/recurring:

- Storm drain marking;
- Work with Township staff to complete installation of stream signs.
- Conduct rain barrel giveaway (OR composting bins giveaway, alternate years)

New/Long Range:

- **Continuous storm water management:** Work with the Township Engineers to establish projects/areas where water quality improvement projects need to be implemented and develop long-term plans to address these systems. Efforts include:
 - basin retrofits;
 - streambank stabilization;
 - riparian buffer restoration;
 - establishment of low/no mow areas.
- **Outreach/Best practices/cooperation:** Water stewardship efforts may be executed through partnering with other organizations including other EACs, Wissahickon Trails, other NGOs, etc, to support specific project/volunteer days.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION: efforts to reduce waste and promote a smaller carbon footprint.

Continuing/recurring:

- Food waste and composting focus throughout the year with articles, workshops, etc.
- Single use plastics, fast fashion, improper recycling, energy conservation: increase public awareness through news articles, social media posts, movies/presentations, etc.
- Battery and Techno Trash Recycling drives; tree lights collection; other initiatives where possible.
- Promote e-waste and hazardous waste events.

New/Long Range:

- **Transition to 100 clean energy:** The Board of Supervisors has signed a pledge to take the township to 100% clean energy by the year 2035 for electricity and 2050 for heating, transportation and public works equipment . This is an ambitious goal and will require upgrades to energy sources for township operations as well as supporting residents in conservation and utilizing renewable energy. Quantification of baseline energy use for township properties (?) needs to be set, to determine outcome statistics and success going forward. Current thinking on specific targets includes:
 - **Taskforce for energy transition.** Create a small nimble task force of highly interested individuals to facilitate township energy transition. Task force to determine resource needs, timing and methods for path forward, including, for example, the following items:
 - **Conduct benchmarking study** - Research/identify options for benchmarking study of Township energy use and make recommendations to BoS resulting from that research; such a study could indicate areas where the township could save money and reduce carbon footprint. Apply lessons learned from other communities that have used this approach.
 - **Installation of multiple Level 2-3 charging stations throughout the Township** that are available for public use.
 - **Conversion of Township vehicles to 100% EV by 2030** (where appropriate vehicles are available).
 - **Conversion of all Township buildings to clean electricity by 2030** (multiple possible approaches to achieving this goal would need to be researched, including purchasing from green power supplier; ensuring new construction meets LEED guidelines; installing solar canopy on Township property; join a regional CCA when available to second class townships. Sign on with DVRPC multi-county consortium.)
 - **Coordinate with the Wissahickon School District** to install solar panels for school power needs.
 - **EAC: Inform residents of current status of green energy options (e.g., IRA, Infrastructure, CHIPS).** Produce series of presentations/seminars for residents on various options to conserve energy, including presentation by PECO; expert tips on how to benefit from the Inflation Reduction Act rebates; subject-area-expert presentation on options for renewable energy use by residents.
 - **Enhance township walkways to promote reduced car travel.** Research options to improve walkability and bikeability throughout the township.

COMMUNICATION/OUTREACH: ensuring accurate, timely communication with Township residents about EAC activities & environmental developments of interest.

Continuing/recurring:

- **Going Green Award** - Continue to recognize exemplary sustainability initiatives with the Going Green Award.
- **Environmental education** – Continue to offer our annual series (3-5) of interactive environmental presentations with subject matter and format to be determined; examples include:
 - movie nights;
 - outside speakers (as specified above for energy-related presentations in 2024);

- composting/rain barrel/pollinator garden/ rain garden demonstrations with or without giveaways;
- **Bird Town** - Hold bird walks and bird-related events throughout the year in keeping with Lower Gwynedd's status as a Bird Town.
- **Wider-community education offerings** - Participate in tabling events at local festivals and fairs to promote LG EAC activities.
- **EAC education** - Participate in networking and other environmental events and meetings including EAC Networking Conferences; online seminars from Penn State Extension, DCNR, Sierra Club; RF100 groups; Montgomery County Single-use Plastics Coalition; and others.

New/Long Range (EAC):

- **Expand and improve communication strategies**
 - Social media. Increase social media presence through new platforms (e.g., Instagram) and more frequent posts. Coordinate the release of social media posts with activities and special days of recognition. Information for the posts may be drafted by subject matter experts in the EAC, and then passed along to Township staff for posting.
 - Calendar. Create a quarterly internal planning calendar for EAC members and Township staff. Post on internal web site.
 - Website. Work with Township staff to reorganize the public facing EAC website to make it easier to navigate and find particular information and to promote upcoming activities where the public can get involved. Township staff and the EAC will review website statistics to determine which pages are not utilized and use the information to restructure the website.
- **Engagement of volunteers:** Strengthen efforts to expand volunteer base and increase number of associate members. Enhance EAC branding to push public awareness of EAC-led work. Generate enthusiasm through enhanced communication. Encourage new members via outreach.
- **Mobile apps.** Inform volunteers and residents of several citizen science mobile apps they can utilize to document our natural environment, tree canopy, wildlife, birds, plants, insects, tree canopy, etc. These may be useful resources to include on the website and in social media posts for events as the various applications apply – for example, during an invasive species removal event, highlight an app that helps to identify different types of vegetation
- Create LG EAC handbook/merch (what would this handbook include?)

DRAFT Event and Social Media Calendar:

	Events	Possible Social Media OR E-news Post(s)
January	Battery/Techno Trash Recycling Bird Event/Walk Holiday Tree Recycling @ Ingersoll Park Holiday Lights Recycling @ Ingersoll Park	Prior year EAC highlights Holiday tree recycling
February		Great backyard bird count Winter tips for healthy birds
March	Battery/Techno Trash Recycling Speaker: residential energy conservation; possible giveaway. (PECO rep)	Leave no trace fishing Reasons to leave dandelions Butterflies day info
April	Arbor Day / Earth Day/Tree City event with Parks & Rec, possibly to emphasize issue of invasive species/intro to mobile apps Bird Event/Walk Speaker: rebates available through the IRA (Sierra Club speaker?) Electronics Recycling & Shredding Event Table at Ambler Earth Fest	Arbor Day Earth Day Plant this, not that Pollinator garden tips Health benefits of trees
May	Battery/Techno Trash Recycling Interactive event: Plant rain/pollinator garden ?? or rain barrel talk/giveaway or composting giveaway Migratory Bird Event/Walk	Invasive species awareness Tips to help pollinators and lesser-known pollinators
June	Speaker: Renewable energy options for residents (Community Advocates for Clean Energy?) Solicit Green Award nominations Movie	Health benefits of walking in nature Tips to help fireflies Plastic Free July
July	Battery/Techno Trash Recycling Migratory Bird Event/Walk EAC movie night and/or intro to mobile apps	Night sky watching tips Monarch monitoring Moth week
August	Interactive event: Storm drain marking	Don't haul firewood Tips to reduce light pollution
September	Battery/Techno Trash Recycling Table at Fall Fest Speaker: "Trees for Birds" talk? (Steve S) or movie night	PA trails month
October	Native Tree Giveaway	Fall yard tips for conservation

November	Battery/Techno Trash Recycling	Pumpkin Recycling
December	Holiday Tree Recycling @ Ingersoll Park Holiday Lights Recycling @ Ingersoll Park	Holiday tree recycling Green shopping (forest certified)

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DRAFT Update on 2023 goals/objectives.

- *Expand our Education and Outreach programming to include activities such as a speakers' series; hands-on demonstrations or trainings; screening of films; and other steps to increase awareness of sustainability issues: **accomplished.*** We held two movie nights; conducted a composting workshop and giveaway; conducted a storm drain marking event with community volunteers; provided background information for our native seed packet giveaways; tabled at the Ambler Earth Fest and LGT Fall Fest. We had environmental tips and/or longer articles in most of the township's e-news and newsletters throughout the year.
- *Institute a green award for individuals, organizations, and businesses within the township: **accomplished.*** We had six nominations and expect to grant 3 awards: a winner, an honorable mention and a youth award. We expect to make the youth award category permanent.
- *Expand tree giveaway (depends on how this first one goes): **accomplished.*** We gave away 300 trees and had many community volunteers helping us out. We don't think we should expand the program much further as the waitlist got shorter with the higher number of trees and we might be approaching the limit of what the residents can handle.
- *Focus on waste reduction (single use plastics; food waste; better recycling): **accomplished.*** In addition to the compost workshop, we developed waste-reduction related content for the spring newsletter and several e-news editions, and we also added a new recycling program (see below).
- *Promote energy-saving steps for homeowners and businesses through education: **not addressed.*** This will be a bigger focus in 2024.
- *To the extent the BOS wishes, work with township staff and other committees to promote green building practices and green energy infrastructure within the township: **partially achieved.*** We developed a list of sustainable practices or steps that developers could incorporate into their proposals. These are available to our Planning Commission liaisons to bring forward when addressing developer proposals.
- *To the extent the BOS wishes, promote steps toward achieving our 100% Clean Energy goals **N/A*** Our long-range proposals include specifics in this area.
- *Continue special recycling services, including batteries and Christmas lights, plus others as we can develop them: **accomplished.*** We had a great response throughout the year for the battery recycling as well as for our newest initiative, techno trash recycling through GreenDisk.
- *Increase joint activities and coordination between our Bird Town and Tree City programs: **we can do a better job of making explicit the ties between birds and trees***
- *Work to expand the trail system within the Township, coordinating with other committees as appropriate: **N/A***

Continuing or new programs:

- Developed a set of long-range environmental goals for the township to consider; these include projects that would involve multiple township departments and committees over several years.
- Continued popular programs for recycling of batteries, techno-trash, Christmas lights.
- Members attended both the winter and fall EAC networking conferences, and Mark S presented at the fall conference. Several of us continued to participate in regular meetings of the Southeast PA Single Use Plastics Coalition; RF 100 meetings; and webinars/presentations from the DVRPC and Penn State Extension.
- Continued monthly (except in the summer) bird walks
- Invited tree giveaway registrants to inform us whether they were interested in learning more about EAC activities and began specifically inviting respondents to our monthly meetings. We had several new faces at our October and November meetings due to this outreach.

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