
Environmental Advisory Council
Tuesday, November 27, 2012

The regular meeting of the Environmental Advisory Council was held on the above date for the transaction of general business.

EAC members present –D. Beane, B. Jennings, A. Molteni, P. Ignozzi-Shaffer (via speaker phone)

Others present – S. Katzenmoyer

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Beane called the meeting to order at 5:14 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public in attendance.

MINUTES

Motion was made by Mr. Molteni, seconded by Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer, to approve the October 23, 2012 meeting summary as written. Motion carried unanimously.

SMART GROWTH ALLIANCE

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer stated that she attended the meeting. She stated that discussions were mostly regarding the upcoming awards program. She stated that the criteria are confusing but that she will circulate the information.

Ms. Hoag arrived at this time.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer stated that they are also collecting data and mapping information from the County historic content survey. Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer stated that the group also had an update regarding the recent trip to Detroit and a presentation on programs offered by the Albright Center for Excellence in Local Government.

Mr. Beane requested specifics regarding the trip to Detroit. He stated that he was not invited to participate. Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer stated that the group was looking

at Detroit and how they utilized their market value analysis (MVA). She stated that the MVA will assist Reading with the Blighted Property Review Committee and help to determine where to invest funds in housing issues. She stated that Detroit's urban planning is not best practice. She stated that fringe areas of the City were toured as some of these areas will be closed down to save on public services and to reduce costs. She stated that the MVA should be used to bolster fringe areas and that funding should be focused there to keep them from further deterioration.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer stated that Detroit's citizen outreach was not well-received when residents were told that they needed to relocate. She stated that direct contact is best and that bi-lingual information is needed. She stated that public transportation in Detroit is also an issue as the city was planned for automobiles.

Ms. Hoag stated that if Boston, New York City and San Francisco were placed together it would still be smaller than the size of Detroit.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer stated that it seemed to be a very informative trip and that the application to Reading will be seen in the future.

Mr. Molteni stated that the Detroit area is re-foresting and using urban gardens to revitalize the city.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY ORDINANCE

Mr. Beane stated that the subcommittee met with Mr. Agnes. He stated that the research is almost complete and that correct local templates have been identified. He stated that he explained that Mr. Agnes is not responsible for the educational component and that the EAC will address this at a later time.

Mr. Molteni questioned where in the City a geo-thermal system could be located. Ms. Hoag explained that there is a resident currently installing a system in Wyomissing Park. She stated that this is on a three acre parcel.

Mr. Molteni questioned their use of groundwater. Ms. Hoag stated that she did not know but that it was a closed-loop system.

Mr. Beane stated that he explained to Mr. Agnes that the items should be completed in steps and drafts should be forwarded to the subcommittee for

review. He stated that Mr. Agnes is on track to complete the drafts by the EAC's January meeting.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer stated that she forwarded the Bern Township information to Mr. Agnes. She stated that some local models are very rural in nature and that she has contacted the Philadelphia Sustainability Office and Mr. Vitale.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer stated that she spoke with Mr. Lloyd from the Conservation District about the EAC's riparian buffer and steep slope drafts. Mr. Lloyd suggested that the drafts be forwarded to the Berks County Planning Commission for review. She stated that she has forwarded the drafts. *(Note: this step is part of the formal adoption process which will begin when the ordinances are formally introduced by City Council.)*

Mr. Beane stated that Mr. Agnes is excited about the project and is very focused.

BERNHART PARK UPDATE

Ms. Hoag stated that rehabilitation is almost complete. She stated that the mowing issue must be finalized for 2013. The struggling black willow tree will be replaced by two. She stated that the new plantings must be examined.

Mr. Beane questioned if black willow was indigenous to the area. Mr. Molteni stated that he believed they were. Dr. Jennings agreed.

Mr. Beane questioned the effect of the closing of Exide on Mr. Love of EPA, whose office is at this location. Ms. Hoag stated that Mr. Love will remain in his current office. She stated that one portion of operations at Exide will remain in operation. She stated that shuttering the plant will be more cost effective than closing and will also keep their permits current.

STORM WATER ISSUES

Ms. Hoag stated that GIS mapping is now focusing on storm sewers.

Ms. Hoag stated that the City has had no response to their DEP application. She stated that the Education Committee will begin meeting in January and that the PA Stormwater Coalition recently honored Mike Fox for his work.

Ms. Hoag stated that work on the Wyomissing Creek continues. She stated that the group hopes to study the aquatic life and plan how to make repairs. She

noted the need to re-sample the creek to determine changes made since the mid to late 1980's when the last samples were taken. Ms. Hoag explained that during that time there was much construction upstream and that the permitting process was much less stringent. She noted the need to determine the current condition of the creek. The chemical and biological information is currently being analyzed.

Mr. Molteni questioned if there was a good database from the earlier samples. Ms. Hoag stated that there is much information but that there are many different criteria so it is difficult to compare information. She stated that rain events also effect sampling. She stated that she is anxious for the results of the study to determine the plan moving forward and how best to remediate the issues.

Ms. Hoag explained that the PA Stormwater Coalition is closely monitoring the work of the Wyomissing Creek group to see if the same type of work can be done by multiple municipalities regarding the Schuylkill River. She stated that Berks municipalities are getting positive attention on these issues.

RAIN BARREL REGULATIONS

Ms. Hoag stated that Ms. O'Brien from the Conservation District has reviewed the City's rain barrel regulations and had only a few comments. She stated that Ms. O'Brien questioned how larger businesses could utilize a collection system when the regulations limit use to 75 gallons. Mr. Beane explained that the regulations focus on residential use.

Ms. Hoag stated that Ms. O'Brien also suggests clarifying that the lowest spigot be opened during winterization. She stated that Ms. O'Brien also questioned if rain barrels can be located in front of properties. Mr. Beane stated that they may as it is a way to encourage others to use the systems. Mr. Molteni noted that it is also necessary due to the urban nature of the City.

Ms. Hoag stated that she is pleased with the results of the review and that she has put Ms. O'Brien in contact with Ms. Katzenmoyer to begin planning the educational workshops. Mr. Beane stated that several site suggestions were made during the October meeting.

Ms. Hoag stated that Ms. O'Brien is looking forward to the workshops.

Dr. Jennings suggested holding a session at Albright. Mr. Beane agreed noting that this location would be a good location for residents in The Heights area. *(Note: The College Heights Community Council also holds regular meetings with informational topics and is another possibility to address these residents.)*

Ms. Hoag noted that it would be great to reach these residents and suggested holding a session at Alvernia to reach the 18th Ward residents. She also suggested holding a session at the Millmont Elementary School.

Mr. Molteni suggested a session at the Goggleworks. Mr. Beane explained that this location was suggested at the October meeting.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer suggested holding a session at the PAL/Olivet Performing Arts Center.

Mr. Beane stated that the sessions should occur in late winter or early spring so that residents have time to set up their system and begin collecting water during the spring rains.

BCTV

Ms. Hoag noted the need to begin planning for 2013. Mr. Beane suggested Ms. O'Brien as moderator.

Ms. Hoag suggested discussing storm water and dovetailing with the rain barrels.

Ms. Katzenmoyer reminded the EAC that a sponsor and funding is needed to continue programming and that the EAC does not have funding. She explained that the City's solid waste fund provided funding for 2012 and was unsure if this was available.

Mr. Beane questioned when the shows aired. Ms. Katzenmoyer explained that shows aired the fourth Thursday of every other month at 7 pm.

Mr. Beane suggested scheduling Ms. O'Brien for the first show and that the topic should be rain barrels.

FLOURIDE IN WATER SYSTEM

Mr. Molteni explained that Mr. Madeya was not available this evening but that he is interested in continuing to work on this issue. He explained the problems Mr. Madeya is having wading through the information as it is difficult to understand for those whose expertise is not in this field.

Mr. Molteni stated that there is a preponderance of evidence which suggests that fluoride in drinking water has horrible side effects and is not effective. He noted his problem determining how to approach the issue and that the City's water system goes beyond City limits. He noted the need for additional thought but that he is convinced that fluoridating water is not a good idea.

Mr. Beane suggested moving forward with identifying spokespersons from different perspectives to make brief presentations to the EAC before a position is taken. Mr. Molteni noted his support of this approach. He reviewed preliminary information from Dr. Kimball and stated that he does not agree with her information.

Mr. Beane stated that Dr. Kimball is available to attend the January meeting and suggested that Mr. Molteni also invite those who can speak to this issue.

Ms. Katzenmoyer questioned if this would be the focus of the January meeting. Mr. Beane stated that it would. He requested that Ms. Katzenmoyer contact the local Dental Association and the Water Authority for a representative. He stated that Dr. Kimball will be making a presentation. He stated that if all perspectives are explained the EAC can make an informed decision. Mr. Molteni agreed.

Dr. Jennings stated that he has reviewed the information distributed to date and that there is evidence that there is potential risk.

Mr. Molteni explained that fluoride also allows the body to absorb aluminum more easily. He stated that science is discovering that aluminum levels lead to Alzheimer's.

Ms. Hoag suggested that Ms. Katzenmoyer also contact the PA Chapter of American Waterworks Association and the WWOAP. She also suggested that someone other than the executive director of the Water Authority may be more qualified to speak to the issue. She suggested someone from BCM, the Water Authority's engineering firm.

Ms. Hoag suggested that fluoride itself may not be detrimental but that it is the form of delivery that is problematic. Mr. Molteni noted his support of fluoride in toothpaste.

Dr. Jennings suggested that all invitees be sent the Environmental Health Perspectives Review article that has been distributed to members.

MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Beane questioned if Council members have found additional members as promised during his annual presentation. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that there are no applications pending.

Dr. Jennings stated that his neighbor is interesting in serving. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that she will email the application form to Dr. Jennings.

Mr. Beane requested that Council be asked to recruit. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that she will make this request.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:32 p.m.

The next meeting of the Environmental Advisory Council will be held on Tuesday, January 8 at 5 pm in Council Chambers.

Respectfully submitted by
Shelly Katzenmoyer
Deputy City Clerk