
Environmental Advisory Council
Tuesday, March 22, 2016

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

EAC members present –C. Curran-Myers, J. Slifko, D. Beane, P. Ignozzi-Shaffer

Others present – S. Katzenmoyer, D. Hoag, J. Didow, F. Denbowski, B. Twyman

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Curran-Myers called the meeting to order at 12:11 pm. She noted that a quorum was present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Joseph Reeves, CEO and Aaron Thomas, Consultant representing Reading Green requested time to make a presentation on their environmental impact and assessment report regarding CRT waste.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that members received this report via email. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that it was also provided in hard copy in today's agenda packet.

Mr. Reeves stated that he attended the Joint Legislative Council hearing. He stated that the US EPA and PA DEP see no clear resolution to the problem of electronic recycling. He stated that they likened it to the problem with disposal of used tires. He stated that the consensus seems to be to lift the ban on landfilling electronic waste. He expressed the belief that this is not a solution and would allow contaminants to leech into the water and soil creating a public health risk. He stated that Reading Green has completed a comparative study which is contained in the report. He stated that the chemicals contained in CRT's have been found in 2014 water testing and that they will also degrade the piping system.

Ms. Hoag questioned if these chemicals appeared naturally. Mr. Reeves stated that they do appear naturally, however, the 2014 testing is the first time they were shown.

Ms. Hoag stated that this result may have several explanations including the type

of water tested. She stated that the City and Water Authority work hard to protect the Ontelaunee watershed. Mr. Reeves stated that the Water Authority has not responded to his calls.

Mr. Slifko questioned why the Legislature believes no action can be taken. Mr. Reeves expressed the belief that the manufacturers are contributing to the problem. He stated that those testifying included manufacturers, landfill operators, and recyclers. He expressed the belief that the hearing did not consider environmental issues, but rather only financial issues. He stated that additional information on the hearing will be provided to the members via email. He explained that Best Buy no longer accepts old equipment. He stated that those who do collect it salvage parts but don't really recycle them. He stated that the lead glass is a huge problem and that materials have a very low resale value. He stated that Reading Green does not support landfilling these items.

Mr. Slifko suggested adding a fee to the purchase price of items that will need to be recycled at the end of their useful life. Mr. Reeves stated that this was discussed at the hearing.

Mr. Twyman stated that as an employee of the City's solid waste office, this was one of his focus areas. He expressed the belief that Harrisburg cannot see the problems that larger cities are having with these items. He noted the need for Reading to be proactive and show that it can be sustainable. He noted the need to find a real solution to this problem. He stated that he also does not support landfilling these items. He suggested that Reading not wait for the State to find a solution.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that the EAC hears these comments loud and clear. She stated that members can help communicate the need to recycle these items and suggested that it be a topic on a future BCTV program. She questioned what else the EAC can do. Mr. Thomas expressed the belief that it is a cultural problem that poses sustainability versus profitability. He stated that it is an epidemic problem. Mr. Reeves noted the need to prevent the dumping of these items. He stated that the report contains a three phase approach and suggested that he work with Public Works. He stated that this would be consultant work only so that it does not interfere with the purchasing processes. He noted his hope that the items can be picked up, processed, and destroyed or recycled in a local location. He noted the need for Reading to create the solution to the problem that everyone is seeking. He stated that the County does collect the items but that he does not know how they are disposed.

Ms. Curran-Myers noted her concern that representatives in attendance do not know who collects what and where. Mr. Denbowski stated that he can address this during his recycling update.

Mr. Slifko questioned if research has been conducted on this closed system. Mr. Thomas stated that the process has already been determined. Mr. Reeves noted his hope that Reading Green would work with multiple municipalities.

Ms. Hoag expressed the belief that this should be a County-wide initiative to have a holistic approach. Ms. Curran-Myers agreed. She noted the need to determine the County's process. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that much information is available on the County Solid Waste webpage.

Mr. Thomas stated that York County is currently holding 30,000 items. He stated that Reading Green's program would remediate those items and 97% could be resold. He stated that Reading Green would offer their program to all municipalities but that operations would be located in Reading.

Ms. Hoag noted the need for Reading Green to be mindful of its waste streams so that it does not affect the City's overall waste stream by adding pollutants. Mr. Reeves agreed. He stated that Reading Green has a responsible and environmentally friendly solution.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer, seconded by Ms. Coyle, to approve the February 23, 2016 minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

RECYCLING UPDATE

Mr. Denbowski stated that he also attended the Legislative hearing. He stated that he will provide more information via email. He stated that the intent of the Act requiring electronics recycling has not been met and that the caps currently in place are challenging. He stated that recyclables are market driven and the price has dropped. He stated that there are several amendments being considered:

- Apply the Act to the entire State (currently rural areas are not covered)
- Provide three electronic recycling sites within each County
- Rework the formula with no additional cost to the taxpayer
- Waive the requirement to recycle electronics if the closest recycling center is more than five miles from your residence

- Increase the weight requirement

Mr. Denbowski stated that after the hearing he met with Rep. Rozzi and representatives for Rep. Caltagirone and Sen. Schwank. He expressed the belief that the amendments would not come out of committee as the State legislature is focusing on the budget.

Ms. Curran-Myers suggested that if the amendments are in hearing it is because no one with political juice is interested in the topic. She stated that it would be simple to attach this legislation to the budget for approval.

Mr. Denbowski stated that there are no co-sponsors for the amendments. He stated that Sen. Schwank did meet with the County Solid Waste manager. He stated that the legislators thanked him for the update. He noted the need for Reading not to reinvent the wheel but that it also cannot wait on the State. He stated that he just learned that the Public Works Operations Division Manager is working on an electronic recycling policy and that they will make a presentation to the EAC at its April meeting. He stated that electronic recycling has cost the City \$25,000 in indirect labor because employees are doing this instead of their regular responsibilities. He stated that many electronics are illegally dumped in Reading.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that there is conflicting information from those in attendance about the County's collection of electronics. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that there is a drop off location and that she will provide the information on the County's website to members.

Ms. Hoag noted the need to also explore what other Counties are doing. She stated that Lancaster's recycling program is very progressive and suggested that they be contacted for their procedures.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer questioned if Reading Green looked at the systems that others are using. Mr. Reeves stated that he did not but that he developed his own end result.

Mr. Denbowski stated that the recycling contract will be put out for bid. He stated that he is exploring adding styrofoam and milk cartons and better marketing of general recyclables. Mr. Reeves stated that styrofoam can only be recycled if it is marked as such.

Mr. Denbowski stated that he will have more information on the bid at the April meeting. He stated that if styrofoam and milk cartons can be added it will greatly increase the amount of recycling from the Reading School District.

Ms. Hoag questioned if Tray Pac would take the City's styrofoam for reuse. Mr. Denbowski stated that this would be a broker issue.

Ms. Curran-Myers questioned when the bids would go out. Mr. Denbowski stated that he hoped to have the recycling and the trash bids out by May. He stated that the contracts expire December 31, 2016. He stated that 2/3 of City residents now participate in City trash. He stated that he is also exploring mandatory cans for those who participate in the City trash program. He stated that much public education will be needed if this goes into effect.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that having 2/3 participation is excellent. Mr. Denbowski agreed and noted that the cost can be reduced because of the economy of scale. He stated that compliance will also be easier to enforce.

STRATEGIC PLANNING – NEW MEMBERS

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that full members and subcommittee members are needed.

Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that Mr. Vitale has not yet returned his application form. She stated that the other candidate's bios and resumes are included in today's agenda packet.

Mr. Denbowski and Mr. Twyman left the meeting at this time.

Ms. Curran-Myers questioned the residency requirement. Ms. Katzenmoyer read the excerpt from the Charter and also the annotated section regarding advisory opinions on this matter. Mr. Slifko agreed with Ms. Katzenmoyer's interpretation.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer stated that one of the interested party's business is currently located in the Community Foundation's incubator. She questioned if this person would be eligible if she did not locate her business in the City since she is a non-resident. Mr. Slifko stated that the Charter Board did not answer that specific question. He expressed the belief that these were great candidates and that the Charter Board would allow Council to be flexible in cases where specific expertise is required. Ms. Katzenmoyer agreed and explained the exception made for

several boards requiring specific expertise.

Ms. Curran-Myers questioned if Mr. Slifko would support this position if one of these candidates was brought forward. Mr. Slifko stated that he would but that there was always the chance that a Charter violation would be filed.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that Mr. Beane has recommended Mr. Kern from Liberty Environmental. Ms. Coyle stated that she has recommended Ms. Sellers. She stated that Ms. Sellers is very active in the Berks County Water and Sewer Alliance.

Ms. Curran-Myers expressed the belief that the EAC already contained someone knowledgeable on water and Ms. Hoag is knowledgeable about water and sewer. She suggested that Mr. Kern's background in geology would be helpful in working on the Steep Slope regulations.

Ms. Hoag stated that this perspective would also be very helpful with redeveloping brownfields locations and locations with sinkholes.

Ms. Coyle moved, seconded by Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer, to send an application form to Mr. Kern. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Hoag suggested that Ms. Sellers serve on a subcommittee. Ms. Curran-Myers stated that she will draft a letter to her.

RAIN GARDEN

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer suggested that Ms. Sellers serve on this subcommittee. Ms. Curran-Myers stated that she will suggest this in her letter.

Ms. Didow left the meeting at this time.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer questioned if any grants were available for signage. Ms. Hoag stated that the 18th WONDER has been researching this issue.

Mr. Slifko questioned the 18th WONDER project. Ms. Hoag stated that the initial focus was on Lancaster Ave but has expanded to the Oakbrook, Angelica, Alvernia, and Reading Hospital areas. She stated that connectivity is the main focus for moving around these areas.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer stated that complete streets should also be considered. Ms.

Curran-Myers agreed and stated that connectivity is always an issue.

Ms. Hoag stated that the 18th Ward also contains very wide ranging income levels. She described the project.

BUSHONG DAM PROJECT

Ms. Hoag stated that the contracts for all the City's dam issues have been put on hold. She stated that the administrative transition has delayed many projects. She stated that there is also question whether grants awarded will be honored without a State budget. She also questioned the need to reapply. Ms. Curran-Myers stated that she will reach out to her contacts at the State.

BCTV

Ms. Curran-Myers noted the need to change the title of the program. She stated that Mr. Beane has contacted BCTV to delay the program to allow additional time to plan and organize the next program. She suggested that if members are having problems producing a show every other month that it be reduced to quarterly or that additional help is needed.

Mr. Slifko suggested that Mr. Denbowski speak about electronic recycling. Mr. Reeves stated that he would like to be affiliated with the EAC and not Public Works. He stated that he is willing to volunteer for the EAC.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer stated that Mr. Beane contacted her to do the show on green building.

Mr. Slifko left the meeting at this time.

STEEP SLOPE ORDINANCE

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that the subcommittee met and that she will be sending a report. She noted the need to simplify the regulations and not include small projects.

SMART GROWTH ALLIANCE

Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that she attended the PA Land Use Institute and provided the information provided on Smart Growth in today's agenda packet.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer stated that meetings are much more productive now that Ms. Rossman has taken over the Alliance. She stated that a bus trip to the Philadelphia

Navy Yard is being planned. She stated that the Alliance hopes to become more involved in future projects.

WEB AND FACEBOOK

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer stated that there is no update. She stated that the EAC has a page on the City site but that it is not user-friendly.

Mr. Reeves suggested that the EAC use Reading Green's site. Ms. Curran-Myers stated that the EAC must stay within the City's guidelines and legal parameters.

PLAN REVIEW

Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that she has spoken with the City Planner and he cautioned adding another mandatory layer to plan review.

Ms. Hoag stated that the City Arborist reviews plans relative to trees and plantings and that she reviews them for engineering concerns monthly.

Ms. Curran-Myers suggested that the EAC create a policy that it not be mandatory but that the Planning Commission allow the EAC to comment on projects when necessary.

Ms. Hoag clarified that she does not see comments that the Planner makes to Commission members.

Ms. Ignozzi-Shaffer questioned what the goal would be for plan review. Ms. Curran-Myers expressed the belief that the EAC should be able to speak to support or oppose projects and that the appearance of EAC members at hearings should not be surprising.

Ms. Hoag suggested that the EAC review plans when there are environmental impacts or for projects in Preservation zones. Ms. Katzenmoyer explained that in the past an EAC member testified before the Zoning Hearing Board regarding a project in a Preservation zone and was told that he did not have standing.

Ms. Hoag and Ms. Katzenmoyer noted their concern that there is not an attorney present at Planning Commission meetings.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that discussions will continue.

ANGELICA PARK

Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that Council received an update in executive session.

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that she is counselling Alvernia on this issue. She expressed the belief that a municipality does not retain control of a parcel with long term leases and that a land swap is probable.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Environmental Advisory Council will be held on Tuesday, April 26 at noon at the Public Works Building.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Shelly Katzenmoyer, CMC
Deputy City Clerk