

## Minutes of Lower Providence Environmental Advisory Council Meeting – November 21, 2022

The meeting began at 7:04 PM. Council members Erin McCool, Amber Minnick, Douglas White, John Zollers, Sameeksha Panda, Jessica Gabell, Sarah Kim and Madison Roeger were present.

1. Approval of Minutes. The minutes from the October 2022 meeting were approved 4-0, Mr. White making the motion for approval and Ms. Minnick seconding.

### 2. Old Business

a) The Township is currently soliciting interest in filling open seats on the Council and other Township boards. Ms. McCool also noted prior to the meeting that Council member Joseph Lulis has resigned.

i) Ms. McCool explained to the Council that the Board of Supervisors will be reviewing many existing Township ordinances in the coming year, which will be a good opportunity for the Council to advise the Board on possible changes.

ii) Ms. McCool advised the Council that Supervisor Gary Neights and Township Manager E.J. Mentry are reviewing the addition of members to the Council, creating the position of Associate Member, and allowed the Council itself to appoint the chairperson.

b) Council members were advised of an update to Pennsylvania Sunshine requirements. It was noted that the Council is already generally in compliance with these requirements.

### c) Subcommittee Reports

#### **Education / Communication**

1. Ms. McCool noted the availability of a graphic design available for possible use on a reusable bag program and proposed purchasing the image from the designer for this purpose. Ms. McCool was to discuss the possibility with the Township Manager for further discussion at the December meeting.

2. [No notes?]

3. The Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy is working on a stream monitoring program to be presented to the Council in 2023. Resident Laura Winslow noted that a general stream study of the Skippack Creek watershed is being pursued by State Representative Joe Webster.

4. Ms. Minnick met with Township staff to set up the Council Facebook and Instagram accounts. Ms. Minnick will manage these accounts and oversee content generated by Council members and student representatives along with Ms. McCool. Two (2) posts per month will be the minimum target. Mr. Zollers asked if the accounts can also be used to solicit input from residents on Council initiatives to general assent.

5. Ms. McCool volunteered to take the lead on the Green Sustainability awards.

## **Stormwater**

No updates

## **Built Infrastructure / Ecological Restoration**

Ms. McCool noted the need to develop a process and limit comment to public meetings with regard to future comments by the Council on development plans. Mr. Zollers commented on some of the difficulties involved in reviewing development plans, including the need to become more generally familiar with Township procedures regarding proposed development.

Ms. Minnick noted that Jean Akers of the Parks and Recreation Board will present to the Council on the state of the park tree planting plan.

Ms. Minnick presented her research on the requirements for Lower Providence to become an Audubon Bird Town. A three-person committee is needed (which Mr. Zollers offered to join). There is a requirement to develop specific bird-friendly goals for the Township and demonstrate progress.

## **Green Energy**

Mr. White presented on the concept of Conservation Subdivisions as presented by the Chester County Planning Commission, a way to arrange housing on a plot of land and preserve most of the land as open space. Mr. Zollers noted that the layouts provided by the Chester County Planning Commission still represent isolated housing subdivisions that require residents to drive for most purposes.

Mr. White proposed to update the Township Sustainability Resolution to set concrete goals and a current baseline for comparison, create a position of Sustainability Manager (possibly to be shared with neighboring municipalities), and proposed second resolution relating to community development patterns to address previous comments by Mr. Zollers.

Ms. Minnick provided an update on her research into tabletop solar chargers, particularly the Sunvolt Sprint, already purchased by West Norriton and Lower Gwynedd townships. With installation the cost for one unit is \$3,250 plus shipping. Ms. Winslow noted this would be useful for the MARA baseball fields, and that organizations like Mascaro and Audubon Land may have interest in contributing towards the costs.

d. The Council Workplan is to be updated to include several new initiatives:

1. Development Plan Review
2. Audubon Bird-Town Application
3. Proposals for FEMA property buyouts
4. Proposals for gathering information and insights from the community at large

## **3. New Business.**

None.

**4. Comments and Other Business.** Mr. Mentry to further review possible acquisition of solar power station for Township parks / events.

**5. Courtesy of the Floor.** Resident Laura Winslow provided the following comments:

- Ross Snook of New Hanover Township has developed an online tool to help municipalities manage stormwater.
- FEMA purchase of properties damaged in Hurricane Ida has been delayed, but trees are being planted by community volunteers with landowners permission.
- Author Doug Tallamy is coming out with a new book.
- A “Friends of Eagleville Park” group may be helpful in accelerating progress in restoration of Eagleville Park.
- An e-mailed newsletter would be valuable for keeping connections with interested community residents on environmental issues. The Bird-Town application and membership could be a good hook to start a newsletter.

Resident Julia Nakhleh recommended that decals be installed to advised visitors of the Township’s use of clean energy, efficient systems, etc.

**6. Adjournment.** Mr. Zollers made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. White, which passed 4-0.