

Lower Makefield Township
Environmental Advisory Council

September 9, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Present: Linda Salvati, Chairperson; Suzanne Blundi, BOS Liaison; Jim Bray; Soumya Dharmavaram; Alan Dresser; Kevin Gallen; Jonah Rank; Paul Roden

The September 9, 2021 meeting of the EAC was a hybrid meeting with some members in person and others on Zoom. Ms. Salvati called the meeting to order at 5:30PM.

Approval of August 11, 2021 Minutes – Mr. Dresser moved to approve the August minutes as presented, Mr. Roden seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously. Ms. Salvati will forward the approved copy to the EAC and the Township staff.

Tree Ordinance – EAC's Recommendations on Proposed Changes - Mr. Bray reviewed the document he had previously forwarded to the EAC members, Ms. Blundi, EAC's liaison, and Mr. Majewski in response to the Township's proposed changes in the Tree Ordinance. This led to lengthy discussion around a few issues:

- Mr. Bray said that the EAC has no problem with adding flowering trees to the plant list, as long as they are native (i.e., from the Coastal and Piedmont areas and areas just outside). And, he noted, cultivars are acceptable. Ms. Salvati will prepare and forward a list of natives and a list of invasives. Mr. Bray said that when you're dealing with plants, nothing is 100% exact but that we do know that the more local the plant, the better it will adapt.
- Mr. Bray noted that the EAC is opposed to the proposal that allows for the option of 20% non-native flowering trees and shrubs. They feel there is no need for such an addition to the Ordinance given that many natives are readily available, they need a lot less maintenance, and the Ordinance has always worked well as is. Mr. Dresser recalled that in over 12 years of reviewing development projects in the Township he recalls no developer complaints about there being an insufficient number of native trees/shrubs species on the native plant list. Mrs. Dharmavaram said that the Ordinance is environmental and the EAC responsibility is to bring awareness to homeowners of the environmental impact the Ordinance has. Mrs. Dharmavaram asked if the EAC could meet with the person or persons, who want to include the 20% non-native option, to discuss the matter.
- There was a discussion of the farmland buffer. Whereas the proposal recommended 15' buffers on farmland, Mr. Dresser suggested that it makes sense that the 15' buffer on the farmland side should be grasses or wildflowers. It might make more sense to require a few shade, evergreen and flowering trees and shrubs on the 10' buffer on the residential side to lessen the impact of farming activities (noise, herbicides, and dust).
- Two EAC members will meet with Mr. Majewski to discuss these issues as a next step.

Tree Planting 2021 Locations –

1) The tree planting at Patterson Farm is still scheduled for October 23. Up to 350 trees/bushes will be planted. Ms. Salvati will get in touch this week with Monica Tierney about the need for volunteers. Mr. Roden will be able to provide some poles for the planting. Ms. Salvati indicated that only a few of the trees/bushes planted at Patterson Farm in the fall of 2020 have died; she might only have to replace two River Birch.

2) The proposed tree plantings at Twig Lane Tot Park and Revere Road Tennis Court were approved at the BOS July 18 meeting. There is no date for the two plantings which the Township will manage, but they will probably be around mid-October. Ms. Salvati will be ordering the trees for the planting at the two sites along with the trees for the Patterson planting over this coming weekend.

Land Use Plans –

Deck Minor Subdivision – A special Zoning Board hearing was held on August 31st. After a two and a half hour discussion at the meeting, a continuation of the special hearing to September 29 was approved.

Jennings Lot Subdivision – The Aug. 17th Zoning Board hearing on the variances requested was continued to September 21.

Recycling – Mr. Dresser reported that the planned September 18 styrofoam/cork/prescription bottle collection event at the LMT Township Building is on track. It will be held from 10 am to noon at the Township Administration Building's parking lot.

Regarding increasing recycling in LMT public spaces, Mr. Rank had put together a chart showing the numbers of trash bins and recycle bins that are in each of the Township parks. He walked the members through the results and followed up with his thoughts on what these numbers show, i.e., that we need to work toward redoubling our bins and consider how we can improve the process to increase the amount of recyclables collected. He also feels we need to start thinking about composting. The members thanked Mr. Rank for his work on the chart.

Plastic Bag Reduction - Mr. Rank said he thinks it is worth our considering what we can do about reducing plastic bags. He mentioned two bills that were passed in Philadelphia and that they have an Office of Sustainability there and suggested that this is something we should consider. He mentioned that in New Jersey they are handing out free, reusable carry out bags.

Lecture Series – Mr. Bray said that Spring 2022 might be a good time to have the in-person lecture on “What’s Bugging Our Trees in Pennsylvania.”

Webpage/Newsletter/Every Bit Counts – Mr. Roden will send out a newsletter with information on the tree planting and the September 18 collection event.

Environmental Stewardship Award – Mr. Bray asked that everyone consider whether they know of any group or person who should receive the award and get back to him within the next week.

Odds and Ends – Mr. Dresser reminded the members to be giving consideration to how the money from the sale of the sewer system can be best used. A letter to the BOS on this has been drafted but needs more suggestions.

Mr. Dresser reported on the August 30 LMT Community Day and said it was successful in spite of the weather.

Open Discussion – The discussion on 1, 4 - Dioxane contamination in drinking water was postponed to the next meeting.

With no further business to discuss, Mr. Roden moved to adjourn the September 9 meeting of the EAC, Mr. Dresser seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 7:15. The next EAC meeting is scheduled for 6 pm on October 14th.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Salvati, Chairperson