



# THE COUNTY OF CHESTER



COMMISSIONERS  
Marian D. Moskowitz  
Josh Maxwell  
Michelle Kichline

Brian N. O’Leary, AICP  
Executive Director

PLANNING COMMISSION  
Government Services Center, Suite 270  
601 Westtown Road  
P. O. Box 2747  
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(610) 344-6285 Fax (610) 344-6515

Chester County Environmental and  
Energy Advisory Board

Hybrid Meeting – GSC Suite 351W/Zoom  
Government Services Center  
October 25, 2023  
2:30-4:00 pm

Meeting link:

<https://chesco-org.zoom.us/j/98503061778?pwd=TmdrWFZEOEYrKzNmamlxZ0FMd3gxdz09>

Passcode: 471060

## AGENDA

2:30 p.m. 1. CALL TO ORDER

A. Welcome and introduction of new members

*Paul Spiegel, Vice Chair*

2:35 p.m. 2. ACTION ITEMS

A. Adoption of July 26, 2023 Minutes

*Paul Spiegel, Vice Chair*

B. Approval of 2024 Meeting Dates

*Paul Spiegel, Vice Chair*

C. Appointment of Nominating Committee

*Paul Spiegel, Vice Chair*

2:40 p.m. 3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. EEAB Subcommittee Reports

1) Environmental Subcommittee

*Seung Ah Byun, Subcommittee Chair*

2) Clean Energy Subcommittee

*Jim Wylie, Subcommittee Chair*

*i. Update on Solar Adopter’s Conference*

B. Regional Initiatives Update

*Rachael Griffith*

C. Advancing Sustainability in the Agricultural Sector

*Rachael Griffith*

3:30 p.m. 4. UPDATES AND COMMENTS

A. Updates from the Board

1) Chester County Water Resources Authority

*Seung Ah Byun*

B. Facilities Director’s Report

*George Martynick*

C. Planning Commission Director’s Report

*Brian O’Leary*

D. Sustainability Director’s Report

*Rachael Griffith*

E. Other Updates

*Board Members*

F. Public Comment

4:00 p.m. 5. ADJOURNMENT



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**Next quarterly meeting – January 24, 2024**

Attachments:

- Draft July 26, 2023 Minutes
- Proposed 2024 Meeting Dates
- Project proposal: Support for Environmental Sustainability Enhancements in Chester County Agricultural Businesses



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**CHESTER COUNTY**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL AND ENERGY ADVISORY BOARD**  
**2024 MEETING SCHEDULE**

Quarterly on fourth Wednesday of the month from 2:30 p.m. until 4:00 p.m.,  
Government Services Center unless otherwise noted

January 24, 2024

April 24, 2024

July 24, 2024

October 23, 2024

BNO/RG/saw



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Environmental and Energy Advisory Board  
Government Services Center Suite 351W/Zoom

July 26, 2023  
Hybrid meeting

## MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Jan Bowers; Seung Ah Byun; Ann Hutchinson; Steve Krug; Warren W. (Bill) Messerschmidt; Brian O'Leary, Secretary; Steve Krug; Sarah Sharp; Wyatt Williams.

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Jess Cadorette, Chair; David Busch; Mark Connolly; Carol DeWolf; Karena DiLeo; Rachel Roberts; Dave Stauffer; Chris Strohmaier; Dave Stauffer; Kevin Warren; Jim Wylie.

OTHERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Rachael Griffith, Gene Huller; Kate Hutelmyer, Emily Kaplan; Carol Stauffer; Sally Warren.

OTHERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Ben Hertzog; Edwin Lieb; Ellen Gay; Jim Lauckner; John McHugh; Richard Whiteford; Sharon Yates.

### CALL TO ORDER:

The Environmental and Energy Advisory Board meeting, held in the Government Services Center Suite 351W and via Zoom video/audio on Wednesday, July 26, 2023, was called to order at 2:30 P.M. by Chair Jess Cadorette.

### ACTION ITEMS:

Approval of April 26, 2023 Minutes:

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 26, 2023 MEETING WAS MADE BY MR. WYLIE, SECONDED BY MS. HUTCHINSON, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD. MOTION CARRIED.

### DISCUSSION ITEMS:

#### Subcommittee Reports.

#### Environmental Subcommittee

Ms. Cadorette explained that this subcommittee is lacking a chair. Ms. Byun offered to take on the Chair position for the Environmental Subcommittee.

Steve Krug reported there are now 155 acres of wildflower meadows at three Chester County parks, in the effort to convert lawns to meadows. Ms. Roberts asked if this regular EEAB board meeting could have more round robin updates from board members. Mr. O'Leary suggested there could be time offered for partner updates on a rotating basis each quarter.

### Clean Energy Subcommittee:

Mr. Wylie reported this committee is working on developing a Solar Adopters Conference to be held in November 2023, targeted for big energy users. Programming, participant & vendor outreach, and logistical help is needed to plan this event. PECO is a potential partner, and a PECO “Net Zero 2050” video was shown. The Board discussed how to use the municipal solar ordinance inventory and outreach to help large energy users deal with a potential barrier to solar adoption if they are located in one of the municipalities with a more strict solar ordinance. Mr. Connolly pointed out that ground mount solar systems present more issues with municipal ordinance resistance than rooftop systems.

The Clean Energy Subcommittee meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday at 4 pm. Any board member is welcome to attend.

### Environmental Justice (EJ) in Chester County

Ms. Cadorette pointed out studies have shown that low income and communities of color disproportionately face the burdens of environmental injustices, and the board should address this in its recommendations. Ms. Roberts noted that the Delaware Nature (formerly Delaware Nature Society) has put water quality and PFAS issue front and center for environmental justice (EJ) and has a water testing program. The Board discussed existing maps showing environmental justice communities. Mr. O’Leary noted that the county uses the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission’s (DVRPC) Indicators of Potential Disadvantage map, as it is a broader view since EJ communities in the county are mostly spread out, not concentrated.

Discussion on how municipalities in disadvantaged communities have a harder time finding grant match sources. Ms. Sharp shared that the Brandywine Conservancy has convened a group with Spanish-speaking community service organizations to gather insights for the Conservancy’s environmental work. Board members asked about the County’s existing infrastructure to conduct outreach to underrepresented communities.

### Solar Ordinance Inventory and Outreach

Ms. Griffith reported that CCPC completed an inventory of municipal solar ordinances. This inventory will support the county’s SolSmart designation application. Outreach will be conducted to municipalities to share best practices. Board members discussed whether ordinances restrict the clearing of trees for ground-mounted solar arrays and how that conflicts with protecting natural resources and open space.

### 2024 CCPC Work Program

The CCPC Work Program will be finalized in December 2023. Discussion on whether CCPC should provide tree recommendations for municipalities that consider new and foreseeable vulnerabilities (Ash Trees, climate change, etc.).

### Sustainability Summit Program

A Sustainability Summit, promoting the county’s Climate Action Plan, is being planned for Tuesday, September 26, 2023, from 8:30 am to 1:30 pm at the Penn State Great Valley Conference Center in Malvern, PA. Three break-out sessions are planned and either a keynote speaker or a lecture on funding. Lunch will be served at the end. Discussion of promotion strategies. Board members are encouraged to submit tour ideas for the week prior to the summit and to help promote the event.

### UPDATES AND COMMENTS:

#### Facilities Director’s Report

Ms. Bowers gave an update on the Southeast PA Regional Power Purchase Agreement (RPPA). The Department is managing a grant-funded project to install EV chargers at county facilities, and decisions are still being made on locations of EV chargers. Ms. Bowers reported this is her last meeting as she is retiring.

### Planning Commission Director's Report

Mr. O'Leary reported that the county is changing the way it handles board reappointments. For all Authorities, Boards and Commissions' terms expiring in September 2023 and thereafter, the positions will be advertised on the county's social media channels and applications will be accepted here: <https://www.chesco.org/3093/Authorities-Boards-and-Commissions> . All current board members whose terms are expiring at the end of 2023 and who are interested in reappointment will need to submit an application.

### Sustainability Director's Report

Ms. Griffith introduced Emily Kaplan, a summer intern in CCPC's Sustainability Division. She requested the Board submit any ideas for content for the upcoming Sustainability E-Newsletter.

She reported WeConservePA's Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) Network Fall Gathering will take place at West Chester University on Saturday, October 21, 2023, and that she and Mr. Wylie have both been serving on the event's planning committee. Ms. Griffith noted a recent municipal grant through CCPC's VPP program to develop a Clean Energy Transition Plan which Paul Spiegel served as consultant.

### Board Updates

Ms. Roberts mentioned the Mushroom Industry is working with William Lorenz, ChE, Sustainable Engineering Director at Villanova University's College of Engineering to assess their industry's lifecycle sustainability measures. She highly recommends his expertise in sustainability.

Mr. Krug reported that the Fifth Edition of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Climate Action Plan and Impact Assessment, will be released on August 22, 2023.

Ms. Byun reported that the Countywide Watershed Resources Plan, Watersheds 2045, will be released for public comment this September 2023 and the goal is to have adoption by December 2023.

### Public Comments

Ellen Gay of Kennett Township, asked about getting a non-reusable plastic bag ban that is County-wide. Discussion of various resources and other actions related to plastic bag bans ensued.

The next quarterly meeting will be on October 25, 2023.

### ADJOURNMENT

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, A MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 4:15 PM. WAS MADE BY MR. O'LEARY SECONDED BY MR. KRUG AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD.

Respectfully submitted,



Brian N. O'Leary, AICP  
Secretary

BNO/CJS/RG/saw

# Support for Environmental Sustainability Enhancements in Chester County Agricultural Businesses

## Proposed scope of work

8.31.23

### **Task 1: Convene an Advisory Committee** (Q4 2023)

Convene organizations that conduct outreach to agricultural producers and those involved in broader statewide policy making in a roundtable discussion to identify issues and opportunities, and to conduct outreach to farmers. Organizations include but are not limited to: ChesCo/DelCo Farm Bureau, local grange organizations, Penn State Extension, CC Conservation District, CCEDC, CC Ag Council, Team PA, PDA, PASA, New Bolton Center, American Mushroom Institute, and others. Summarize findings from the discussion.

Questions:

- What activities/initiatives to advance sustainability in the agricultural industry are organizations already engaged in?
- What outreach outlets already exist?
- What resources already exist that can help ag producers advance sustainability practices? Funding, information, technical assistance, etc.
- Identify which sustainability practices are most relevant to ChesCo ag businesses, and where the greatest opportunities lie.
- Where are the outreach gaps and areas of greatest need/opportunity (topic areas, geographic areas, particular communities/audiences, ag sectors etc.)?

### **Task 2: Conduct Outreach** (Q4 2023/Q1 2024)

Work with Advisory Committee members' existing networks of producers to learn producers' attitudes toward sustainability topics, barriers to implementing new practices, areas of particular interest, areas where additional support and resources could be helpful. This could take the form of surveys, presentations at regularly scheduled events and meetings, focus groups, or another method identified by the Advisory Committee.

### **Task 3: Develop Case Studies** (2024)

Determine priority sustainability actions to promote to agricultural businesses, and develop a case study promoting each action with a goal of providing information and resources for farm businesses to adopt or enhance sustainable practices. Priority actions may be determined based on factors such as: activities for which there is available funding; activities that solve a critical environmental issue in Chester County;

activities that support broader county and statewide initiatives; activities that improve business competitiveness.

Potential case studies could include:

- Energy Efficiency improvements
- Agrivoltaics
- Renewable energy development for on-farm use
- Cover crops
- Soil health/organic content
- Perennial pastured livestock
- Sustainable forest management
- Participating in Carbon Credit markets
- Agroforestry
- Silvopasture
- Riparian buffers
- Methane digestion

Depending on what the advisory committee advises would be most effective, case studies may take the form of videos, hand-outs, or an educational program. Organizations participating on the advisory committee would have access to the final case study resources and be encouraged to share them with farmers in their own outreach work as appropriate.

#### **Task 4: Implementation Support (2024/25)**

Work with partners to support agricultural producers in adopting practices highlighted in case studies through grant support, making connections with other producers for collaboration, and providing informational resources. Develop a system for tracking new sustainable actions taken by ag producers that can be shared by all parties conducting outreach and implementation support.

#### **Task 5: Track and Promote Progress (2025)**

Potentially create a publicly viewable dashboard of known sustainability practices adopted by Chester County agricultural producers, and equate those practices to a related reduction in greenhouse gas emissions using the USDA's COMET-Planner or similar tool. Determine an effective pathway for promoting these carbon reduction activities in a way that conveys the positive environmental externalities of agriculture, and also the individual producers' commitment to sustainability. Analyze development of an ESG (Environmental-Social-Governance) values-based brand for Chester County.



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## **Related Recommendations from the 2022 Agricultural Economic Impact Study**

### ***Support Expansion of Pasture-Raised and Grass-Fed Operations***

Use education, technical assistance, and collaborative efforts to expand opportunities for pasture and grazing operations

### ***Prepare Farms for Traceability and Carbon Credit Markets***

Help farms integrate best practices and technologies needed to incorporate traceability or access markets involving carbon credits. This also means engaging businesses launching ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) initiatives to support local agriculture and forestry as part of those efforts.

Analyze development of an ESG values-based brand for Chester County.

Work towards identifying partnerships to help farms work together on marketing carbon credits

### ***Demonstrate Positive Environmental Externalities of Agriculture***

Explore carbon credit markets.

### ***Shift Land Management Toward Higher-Value Uses***

Develop case studies for value enhancement.