



THE COUNTY OF CHESTER



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

July 24, 2024
Hybrid meeting

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Paul Spiegel, Chair; Brian O'Leary, Secretary; Ann Colby-Cummings; Kelsey Boyd; Seung Ah Byun; Marcus Kohl; George Martynick; Warren W. Messerschmidt; Sarah Sharp; Dave Stauffer; Jim Wylie.

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Carol DeWolf, Vice-Chair; Mark Connolly; Christian Strohmaier; Joseph DiRocco.

OTHERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Caroline Deyrup; Rachael Griffith, Bambi Griffin Rivera, Kate Hutelmyer, Gene Huller, Carol Stauffer, Sally Warren.

OTHERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: None

CALL TO ORDER:

The Environmental and Energy Advisory Board meeting, held in the Government Services Center in Suite 351E and via Zoom video/audio on Wednesday, July 24, 2024, was called to order at 2:30 P.M. by Chair, Paul Spiegel.

Mr. Speigel welcomed two new board members: Ann Colby-Cummings, a citizen representative, and Marcus Kohl, a utility representative from PA American Water. Mr. Speigel thanked both previous board members, Karena DiLeo and David Busch, for their service on this board.

ACTION ITEMS:

Approval of April 24, 2024, Minutes:

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 24, 2024, MEETING WAS MADE BY MR. O'LEARY, SECONDED BY MS. BYUN, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD. MOTION CARRIED.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Climate Action Plan Implementation Status

Ms. Griffith presented an overview of the progress made on the County's Climate Action Plan since its adoption and inception three years ago in October 2021. The plan has a total of 160 objectives for County facilities and community-wide engagement efforts. She noted that the highest impact actions are already underway.

She also highlighted the accomplishments of several county departments in implementing the Plan and discussed opportunities for future implementation projects.

Ms. Griffith asked the board to share ideas for moving forward. Ms. DeWolf asked how individual municipalities are responding to the Plan and if they are adopting their own Climate Action policies. Ms. Griffith stated the County does not ask municipalities to adopt the Climate Action Plan, although about 11 municipalities have adopted their own goals toward transitioning to renewable energy.

Mr. DiRocco explained several of the renewable energy steps that Tredyffrin Township has taken, including purchasing one EV for the traffic/police department and purchasing energy that is all renewably sourced in addition to having a plan to source 100% renewables by 2050.

Board members suggested a variety of projects, initiatives, and audiences to continue implementing the Climate Action Plan.

Update on Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) Survey

Ms. Griffith shared the results of a recent EAC Survey where twenty-two out of 30 municipalities responded. In summary, EACs seem well networked but are interested in being better networked with the county. EACs feel they would accomplish more with more funding and that their programs would be more valuable if more people knew about them.

Ms. Boyd suggested the EEAB Board could offer Zoom “Office Hours” for EACs to get questions answered, like an “ask the experts”. Mr. Wylie proposed a new subcommittee that focuses on supporting EACs throughout the county and helping new EACs form.

Mr. Connolly shared his frustration that after outstanding work done to create four municipal energy transition plans, there is only one municipality (Phoenixville) that mentions any of this on their website. He said many municipalities cannot get their work on a municipal website. Mr. Martynick added that websites are not the only avenue and this board needs to reach younger citizens. Mr. O’Leary offered that this board can be successful by providing education, communication, information, and marketing, and by bringing people together.

Subcommittee Reports

Clean Energy Subcommittee:

Mr. Wylie reported that in June 2024 a meeting was held for a Local Government Climate Action Team in which 10 municipalities attended. The group discussed electric vehicle (EV)-ready ordinances for new construction projects.

Mr. Wylie reported on the status of state-level solar legislation and gave an update on the Center for Climate Integrity, which is assisting Bucks County, PA, in filing a Climate Accountability Lawsuit.

The Clean Energy Subcommittee meets the third Thursday of the month on Zoom, if any board member wants to join.

Environmental Subcommittee:

Ms. Byun reported that Natural Lands has closed on a 14-acre easement known as the Painter farmstead in Warwick Township. Ms. Sharp reported that the Brandywine Conservancy completed a new climate resiliency plan for the conservancy and the museum, and they expect it to be completed by the fall of 2024, with the museum campus switching to 100 percent wind power. The Chester County Water Resources Authority (CCWRA) hopes to complete the Brandywine Flood Study by early fall 2024. The Chester County Association of Township Officials (CCATO) will hold their Fall Conference on Thursday, November 14, 2024, at White Manor Country Club, Willistown Township.

UPDATES AND COMMENTS:Board UpdatesPlanning Commission Director's Report

Mr. O'Leary announced \$30 million in new trail funding for the development of the county's Chester Valley Trail. He introduced Bambi Griffin Rivera, the commission's new Community Planning Director. He also announced his retirement in early November 2024.

Sustainability Director's Report

Ms. Griffith introduced the sustainability intern for the summer, Caroline Deyrup, who has been working on a waste audit. She also announced the commission will be hiring an additional sustainability planner. She has been working with the Chester County Solid Waste Authority to apply for a USDA grant that will create some food scraps drop-off locations throughout the county, as well as funding an educational outreach effort on backyard composting. Ms. Griffith summarized upcoming events tailored to HOAs for sustainability practices.

Facilities Director's Report

Mr. Martynick announced the county has continued with its alternative energy initiatives. The Shared Energy Manager has helped with an RFP for rooftop solar at 313 Market Street. He added that the county is working on sustainability building standards for new and purchased properties.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

The next quarterly meeting will be on October 23, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, A MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 4:15 PM. WAS MADE BY MR. MARTYNICK SECONDED BY MS. DE WOLF AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD.

Respectfully submitted,



Brian N. O'Leary, AICP
Secretary

BNO/RG/saw