



THE COUNTY OF CHESTER



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

October 23, 2024
Hybrid meeting

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Paul Spiegel, Chair; Carol DeWolf, Vice-Chair; Brian O’Leary, Secretary; Steve Krug; George Martynick; Warren W. Messerschmidt; Britnee Sanseverino; Sarah Sharp; Dave Stauffer; Jim Wylie.

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Ann Colby-Cummings; Joseph DiRocco; Kevin Warren; Wyatt Williams.

OTHERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Stephen Buck; Geoff Creary; Rachael Griffith, Kate Hutelmyer, Gene Huller, Ryan Mawhinney; 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, October 23, 2024, was called to order at 2:30 P.M. by Chair, Paul Spiegel.

ACTION ITEMS:

Approval of July 24, 2024, Minutes:

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE JULY 24, 2024, MEETING WAS MADE BY MR. MESSERSCHMIDT, SECONDED BY MR. O’LEARY, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD. MOTION CARRIED.

Resignation of Secretary

Mr. O’Leary, Secretary, announced his retirement from the County Planning Commission, and therefore as a member of this board. Mr. O’Leary said the new Executive Director would automatically become a part of this board as an Ex-Officio member.

Election of Secretary

Discussion on the election of Secretary was deferred to the next meeting when a new Planning Commission Director may be on board. NO ACTION TAKEN.

Appointment of Nominating Committee

MR. O’LEARY MADE A MOTION TO NOMINATE: CAROL DEWOLF, STEVE KRUG, and SEUNG AH BYUN, TO THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE, SECONDED BY MR. SPIEGEL AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD. MOTION CARRIED.

Ms. De Wolfe recommended the Nominating Committee meet before the next EEAB meeting in January 2025.

Adoption of 2025 Meeting Dates

The proposed 2025 meeting dates were presented as: quarterly on the fourth Wednesday of the month from 2:30-4:00 pm – January 22, April 23, July 23, October 22, 2025.

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE 2025 MEETING DATES WAS MADE BY MR. MARTYNICK, SECONDED BY MR. WYLIE, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD. MOTION CARRIED.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Subcommittee Reports

Clean Energy Subcommittee:

Mr. Wylie gave a summary of this committee's activities. The Local Government Climate Action Team (also referred to as the municipal cohort), is working on an Energy Efficiency Ordinance Toolkit, with sample ordinances and guidelines.

Upcoming events include the Heat Pump Info Session by the Smart Energy Initiative on November 7, 2024; and an Electric School Bus Program by Gen180 and the Sierra Club on November 14, 2024.

Other updates included the Solar for All program and the PASolar for Schools program, upcoming/new programs to incentivize going solar. This committee plans some outreach to ensure Chester County Schools are aware of the program. Mr. Warren noted that PA Senator Carolyn Comitta's office is doing some outreach to county school districts. Ms. Sanseverino said PECO just launched a residential rebate for solar energy (<https://www.peco.com/ways-to-save/for-your-home/rebates-discounts/solar-rebates>.)

Environmental Subcommittee:

Ms. Griffith reported that the committee met and focused on two topics: municipal open space funds, how they are used, especially other than purchasing land and easements; and how this board can support municipal Environmental Advisory Councils, or EACs. The subcommittee would like the Planning Commission to create a fact sheet to share examples of all the ways open space funds can be used.

Regarding county support for EACs, Ms. Griffith reviewed findings from an EAC survey conducted earlier this year. Ms. Griffith thinks EACs could help in connecting with HOAs to gain a better relationship with their municipality. Ms. Griffith will move forward with hosting a meeting for Chester County EACs.

Discussion on open space ballot questions for the election on November 5, 2024. Mr. Stauffer added that there is a need to help municipalities understand they can use open space funds for a range of things, not just purchasing open space. Mr. O'Leary stated Ms. Griffith reached out to all municipalities to support their open space policy development and planning; but the county does not get involved with municipal taxation decisions.

Presentation:

Steve Buck, Trails Planner for the Planning Commission, gave a presentation on the Chester County Trails Master Plan. The project was partially funded by a grant from PA DCNR and seeks to promote the development of a cohesive countywide network of public trails. The plan's recommendations include key trail opportunities based on six goal areas: network growth, connectivity, accessibility and equity, economic development, protection and appreciation, and safety. The plan identifies a set of trail catalyst projects and includes various resources intended to

assist the County, municipalities, and other partners with trail design, planning, management, and implementation. The 2024 draft Trails Master Plan is available for public review [here](#).

Ms. Griffith provided an overview of the Planning Commission's 2025 work program related to sustainability initiatives. Mr. O'Leary mentioned that the 2025 work program will also focus on historic preservation, housing affordability, transportation projects and trails expansion, in addition to comprehensive plan guidance for municipalities.

Ms. De Wolf requested recommendations from the board for the first CCATO Municipal Sustainability Award, for work a municipality accomplished in 2024.

UPDATES AND COMMENTS:

Planning Commission Director's Report

Mr. O'Leary shared copies of the Planning Commission's new Landscapes3 Design Guides, which discuss design and planning principles in different contexts, and noted that Smart Growth is essential for sustainable approaches to land use.

Sustainability Director's Report

Ms. Griffith introduced the new sustainability planner, Ryan Mawhinney, and Geoff Creary, the new Design and Technology Director. A new planning committee will be forming to plan the 2025 Sustainability Summit. There is a new county-wide campaign sign recycling event after this busy election season. The sustainability ordinance toolkit will soon be shared with municipalities through a workshop. The Planning Commission is working on a Tree List after repeated requests, and there will be a focus on native trees.

Facilities Director's Report

Mr. Martynick announced the county has accepted a grant for energy efficiency initiatives, including the development of an energy strategy plan for county facilities. He provided a status report on EV charging stations for county fleet and public access. The multi-county Sustainable Energy Partnership with surrounding counties has revealed that the County will need to cut back its energy footprint. The electricity procurement agreement and provider will go into effect January 2025. Facilities settled on a new multi-use facility, mostly for the Coroner, at Oaklands Corporate Center.

Updates from the Board

Mr. Williams shared that West Whiteland Township was awarded two grants for solar energy projects.

Mr. Wylie added that former Chester County Coroner, Dr. Christina VandePol, will be presenting on, "Counting Climate Deaths" on October 24, 2024.

Mr. Krug shared there are a lot of state funding opportunities for municipalities and he will share them with Ms. Griffith. Mr. O'Leary added that the Planning Commission's website has a listing of municipal grant opportunities that is updated regularly.

Ms. Sharp shared the Brandywine Creek Greenway Strategic Action Plan was updated with an inventory of all the projects that will enhance this waterway.

Mr. Warren shared that he is encouraged after attending a Decarbonizing Tall Buildings conference sponsored by ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers w/international membership) in New York City, as there is more attention being paid to planning for new weather models and how to adjust new construction for rising temperature forecasts.

Mr. Krug mentioned several upcoming events sponsored by the Smart Energy Initiative of Southeastern PA.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

The next quarterly meeting will be on January 22, 2025.

ADJOURNMENT

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, A MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 4:30 PM. WAS MADE BY MR. O'LEARY AND SECONDED BY MR. MARTYNICK AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD.

Respectfully submitted,



Carol J. Stauffer, AICP
Acting Secretary

CJS/RG/saw