

Upper Makefield *Township*

Environmental Advisory Council Meeting

March 9, 2021 Meeting Minutes

The February 9, 2021 virtual public meeting of the Upper Makefield Township Environmental Advisory Council was called to order by Chair Bud Baldwin at 7:00 p.m. In attendance were the following members of the Environmental Advisory Council: Chair Bud Baldwin, Vice Chair Keith Miller, Member Harry Barfoot, Member Kathryn Benson, and Member Nicole Khan. Also in attendance were Board of Supervisors Liaison Ed Ford, Board of Supervisors Member Tim Thomas, and Planning and Zoning Administrator Denise Burmester.

Confirmation of Quorum: Mr. Baldwin confirmed a quorum.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

- A. February 9, 2021:** It was noted that on page 3 of the minutes, under Propane Tank Policy, EAC should be changed to Planning Commission. A motion was made by Mr. Barfoot to approve the February 9, 2021 meeting minutes with the revision. The motion was seconded by Ms. Benson and carried by a unanimous vote.

Discussion Items:

- A. Reforest Upper Makefield – Timothy Thomas:** Mr. Thomas explained that there is a piece of land located between Mt. Eyre Manor and Mill Pond, completely landlocked by houses. It is an 18 acre property designated as parkland but has not had any practical purpose because:
- It is inaccessible since you need to drive through a neighborhood to get to it.
 - 18 acres sounds large, but once a parking lot, etc. is put in, it is not really that big.
 - There are water / flooding issues, despite many previous attempts to correct them.
- Mr. Thomas made a presentation to Parks & Rec for their consideration to reforest the land. He showed pictures and explained the logic and advantage of reforesting using money from the Tree Fund. He noted that although reforested, the land would still be parkland. Mr. Thomas is asking that the EAC give some consideration to his proposal.

Discussion followed:

- Mr. Barfoot questioned whether this is something that Parks & Rec or EAC decides. Dr. Ford responded, giving a brief history of the property, stating that until a few years ago the land was being farmed. Farming stopped due to a neighbor's constant complaints. He also explained that for the property to be used, an access road needs to be added but the neighboring residents object. Since the Township owns the property, the use should benefit all Township residents and not just the surrounding residents. Use should be decided by the Township Supervisors based on the recommendation of the EAC and PC.
- Mr. Thomas questioned why reforesting would be considered a benefit to only neighboring residents. He added that the property is not currently being used and the addition of trees would not change that.

Dr. Ford responded that there are options for using this property, stating that he has advocated adding walking and nature trails and that even farming should not be a problem.

- Mr. Baldwin explained that Mt. Eyre was already there when farming started but Mill Pond was not. It became difficult to get farming equipment in and out. He personally does not suggest any use which would encourage a lot of cars being parked there or a lot of people walking in. He thinks the tree idea is excellent. He further added that a couple years ago there was Park & Rec discussion of making it active use resulting in community objection.
- Mr. Barfoot suggested establishing a meadow or even just leaving it as is.
- Ms. Khan objected to leaving it as is since water is a major problem. She explained that there's a severe stormwater management problem requiring an engineering study. She suggested that the EAC take this on and make a presentation to the Board. Mr. Barfoot voiced concern over the cost of a comprehensive engineering study. Ms. Khan, a Water Resources and Roadway Engineer, and Ms. Benson, also an Engineer, could possibly work together to evaluate and make recommendations to start.
- Mr. Thomas and Dr. Ford further discussed and disagreed on the feasibility of the walking trail idea.
- Dr. Ford does not think that the surrounding residents should dictate what gets done on this land since it is owned by the Township and that when they purchased their homes they should have been aware of the possibility that the land use could change. Mr. Barfoot brought up that the Township could even sell the property and houses could be built.
- Ms. Benson suggested a Frisbee golf course or similar.
- Mr. Baldwin advised Mr. Thomas to report to Parks and Rec that the EAC does not think it should be active recreation but does agree that something needs to be done so that it does not adversely affect other properties. He concluded that after the water issue is resolved, discussion as to what is done with the property will be revisited.

B. Arbor Day Program: Since contact has not been made yet with the Arbor Day Foundation, Mr. Baldwin suggested cancelling for this year and get an earlier start next year.

C. Earth Day: Middletown Township has been contacted, however they have not yet responded. Mr. Baldwin will reach out to them.

D. Holly Pond Property Review: Mr. Baldwin reminded the EAC that they still need to visit the Holly Pond Farm on Van Sant Road. Due to the inclement weather, they will wait until spring to walk the property.

E. Newtown Jointure Comprehensive Plan:

Wrightstown, Newtown, and Upper Makefield Townships are getting together to compile the Newtown Jointure Comprehensive Plan. The County is also working on the Environmental Policy and Ordinance. There is some confusion as to what items fall under which plan.

Mr. Baldwin started the discussion referring to the previous Comprehensive Plan (1983-1997) as well as the following specific items:

- Page 15 – “Multiple Municipal” should be replaced by the “Jointure”.
- #4 – waste water and utilities, perhaps add having pumping septic systems every 3 years.
- #6 – floodplains, perhaps insert Upper Makefield Township’s participation in CRS.

Mr. Barfoot reviewed previously and had these comments:

- Climate “emergency” seems a strong term, perhaps change to climate “change”.
- Water, Water Shed, Stormwater – change reference instead to “our” creeks which is more general and inclusive. The language about pedestrian access needs discussion.
- “Smart-Growth”, “Form Based Code”, “Mixed Use Development” terms may not be in Upper Makefield Township’s best interest.
- Trees “2 for 1 replacement in lieu of payment” is mentioned. UMT needs to decide whether this is supported.
- #7 – Renewable energy is mentioned which UMT supports but the issue of front facing roof solar panels would need to be addressed.
- #8 – Open Space, probably not aggressive enough.
- “Bike / Pedestrian Lanes” – concern is that if approved, UMT would need to develop a master plan and even add sidewalks. Perhaps Parks & Rec should get involved in this.
- An “overall township beautification strategy” should be added to the Comprehensive Plan to insure that UMT stays as pristine and nice as it is.
- This plan is not aggressive enough on open space.

Ms. Benson had these comments:

- Many concerns / comments are the same as those mentioned by Mr. Barfoot.
- The policy statement about energy and renewable energy is something to be considered and decided on.
- “Guiding Principles” are not all addressed from an environmental perspective.

The EAC needs to review the Newtown Jointure Comprehensive Plan and discuss in more detail as a priority at the next meeting. Recommendations need to be proposed and perhaps go before the Planning Commission.

Liaison Reports:

A. Board of Supervisors – Ed Ford:

Dr. Ford reported that Rich Zaveta made a proposal to the Board to change the existing plans for the property next to the golf course. He plans to build 5 homes, possibly 4, eliminate sand mounds by using another sewage treatment system, and cut down considerably less trees. Mr. Barfoot added that he also made a presentation to the PC, who supported his revisions. Ms. Burmester will forward any information on the sewage treatment system when it’s received.

B. Park & Recreation - Cathy Magliocchetti:

Ms. Magliocchetti was not present. No liaison report provided.

C. Planning and Zoning – Denise Burmester:

Ms. Burmester reported no new updates at this time.

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Mr. Barfoot and seconded by Ms. Khan to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 p.m. Motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Approved: April 13, 2021