

Upper Makefield *Township*

Environmental Advisory Council Meeting

March 10, 2020 Meeting Minutes

The March 10, 2020 public meeting of the Upper Makefield Township Environmental Advisory Council was called to order by Vice Chair Keith Miller at 7:05 p.m. In attendance were the following members of the Environmental Advisory Council: Vice Chair Keith Miller, Member Harry Barfoot, Member Jack Wiseman, Member Cathy Magliocchetti, Member Nicole Khan, and Member Kathryn Benson. Also in attendance were Board of Supervisors Liaison Ed Ford and Planning and Zoning Administrator Denise Burmester.

Confirmation of Quorum: Mr. Miller confirmed a quorum.

Public Comment: Ms. Magliocchetti introduced her daughter, Anslee, stating that they both attended the Meadow Management Conference, run by the Audubon Society, at the Bucks County Courthouse. Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Barfoot also attended.

Anslee presented ideas for projects at two locations in the Township:

- River Road – perhaps milkweed and other small plants can be planted here to form a riparian zone along the river. This would help with flood management, etc.
- Mt. Eyre Manor – possibly install a meadow in this area. A meadow would be a staged, longer project, starting with tilling the ground early in the season and putting a light layer of fertilizer and pesticides to control weeds. Plugs can be planted in April / May, including grass plugs, to help deter weeds. Establishing a meadow would attract local species, aid in floodwater management, and create a useful public space.

Anslee answered various questions from the EAC members concerning the meadow:

- Grass seeds vs plugs? Seeding would be an option but would require much more upfront maintenance.
- Frequency of mowing? Maintenance of the area would start as monthly mowing and then annually after it's established in approximately 3 years.

Discussion followed about the Meadow Management Conference and establishment of the meadow at the Mt. Eyre site:

- Mr. Barfoot gave a brief synopsis of the conference stating it was well attended, well organized, very informative, and interesting. He will bring charts, etc. from the conference to the next EAC meeting.
- Mowing in spring is not recommended. It negatively affects the birds' habitats, etc.
- Poster showing root depth of all different plants and other suggestions on mowing and planting is available for public educational purposes. The Township purchased and owns the copyright to the poster.
- Cost vs benefit is something to consider, for example plugs vs seeds. Perhaps plugs in a small area would be affordable and effective but for a large area, as in the 18 acres where the soil is rock-hard, plugs would not be a viable solution.

- Site prep requires more advice before proceeding. Stripping the soil is probably necessary. Cost is a consideration but finding someone willing to do pro-bono would be a solution. Suggestions made: UMT Public Works Department, Local Farmer (maybe Bud Baldwin), T&T or other Tree Company.
- Cost projections and analysis are needed before the EAC can move forward and recommend this project. Anslee agreed to work up a proposal for the next meeting.
- There may be grants available to help with cost.
- Records for the Mt. Eyre property should be pulled to verify the property lines. This is a valuable piece of property, owned by the Township, which could ultimately become a beautiful recreational area. There may be resistance from Mt. Eyre Manor and Pondview residents if walking trails are proposed initially, so it would be best to start with the meadow only.
- Anslee is also willing to put together a Power Point presentation for the Board. Perhaps examples of what other Townships did previously should be included.
- It may be worth reaching out to presenters at the conference for leads or more information.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

- A. February 11, 2020:** A motion was made by Mr. Wiseman to approve the February 11, 2020 minutes with no amendments. The motion was seconded by Mr. Miller and carried by a unanimous vote.

Discussion Items:

A. Earth Day 2020

This year's Earth Day is on Saturday, April 25th at Core Creek Park from 11:00 to 2:00. Items for the event were discussed by the EAC Members:

- At the next meeting, it will be necessary to coordinate who is attending and work out scheduling.
- Craft / Pinecone Bird Feeders: Mr. Barfoot will bring the pinecones he collected to the next meeting. Last year about 90 pinecones were used. He has approximately 180 already, so there's more than enough. There is also plenty of Crisco and twine left from last year. Bird seed and small paper bags are still needed.
- Ms. Burmester provided samples of the bookmarks and tote bags from Earth Day 2019.
- Tote Bags: There are plenty bags left to use for this year, no need to reorder. When giving out a bag, it would be beneficial to point out that it's a good alternative to plastic bags at grocery stores, etc.
- Handouts for Spotted Lanternfly Awareness: Bookmarks, similar to last year, can be made. It's important that three photographs of the Spotted Lanternfly are shown: 1) wings open, 2) wings closed, 3) eggs. Another option may be to hand out the USDA's wallet size cards about the Spotted Lanternfly. Ms. Magliocchetti will contact Penn State to see what they have available.
- The previous Township banner is still available for use.
- Ms. Burmester pointed out that it would help with the Township's CRS certification to hand out information (perhaps a one page flier) on Floodplains and Flood Insurance.
- It may be beneficial to have a list of other EACs in the County as well as clipboards to track who is coming to Earth Day.

B. Riparian Restoration Project

Ms. Burmester provided an update stating that Planning & Zoning is working closely with Land Studies on the Riparian Restoration and that it's currently in the design phase and going well. Grants are being pursued for further funding and an application is already in process for a grant from the National Fish and Wild Life Foundation. Discussion by the EAC Members followed:

- Jericho Golf Course and Patel are both cooperating with the restoration project. They have agreed that the study can be done on their section of the stream and depending on the findings of the study, will work with the Township to mitigate problems.
- A development on Brownsburg Road, near the golf course, was previously approved prior to current ordinances. Trees that were removed and could not be replaced ultimately resulted in a \$12,000 donation for the study.
- Who will do the study funded by the \$12,000 donation has yet to be determined.
- Issues relating to the Falkenstein property were briefly mentioned including property lines, septic tank, ownership, etc.
- Other properties of concern were briefly discussed including the concrete debris at Bridlewood. It was noted that the Bridlewood HOA has been notified and are taking responsibility to rectify the situation.
- Ms. Khan will follow up on unanswered Land Studies questions concerning design, funding, etc. by emailing Mr. Kuhns directly. She will report back to the EAC.
- Ms. Burmester will check as to whether a motion is needed to move forward to get the study started.

C. Bag-it Presentation Representation

No discussion needed. Presentation date conflicted with tonight's meeting, so no one attended.

D. Meadow Management Workshop

The workshop was discussed at the beginning of the meeting in accordance with Public Comment. Mr. Barfoot complemented Anslee's presentation. He and Ms. Magliocchetti reiterated how well attended and informative the workshop was. One additional item was discussed:

- There are certain species of trees that are not recommended in this area for varying reasons, for example the Bradford Pear. Trees planted here should be native to Pennsylvania and non-invasive.
- The PA Native Tree List, as shown on the Township website, needs to be updated. The current list should be brought to the next meeting and reviewed by the EAC.
- Traditions is having a company prepare a list of about ten different trees recommended to replace existing street trees. The list will provide advantages for each specie. The list will also be given to the Township.

E. Ready for 100: Clean Renewable Energy for Bucks County – Solar Expert

Consensus is to support solar however current ordinances may be prohibitive. The ordinances do allow ground and roof solar panels but not on the front facing roof unless calculations are provided showing that it is the only viable location option. Some comments were:

- Solar should be promoted however maintaining attractiveness within the Township is of high priority.
- Panels on the front roof are not appealing and should not be allowed at all.

- Concern is that many Homeowners will install panels on their front roof utilizing calculations, etc. thus making it impossible to maintain attractiveness throughout the Township.
- One solution may be to allow solar shingles instead of panels on the front roof. They are not noticeably different than regular roof shingles.
- Ordinances may need to be changed so they are not against solar but are still protective of the upscale integrity of the community.
- The EAC needs to review the current ordinances and suggest revisions.
- Panels and shingles work great but converters do not since they break down quickly and are expensive.
- The EAC would like to know how many solar panel permits have been issued by the Township. Ms. Burmester will provide the counts.
- Perhaps obtaining details showing cost of solar vs realized savings would be helpful.

Liaison Report:

A. Board of Supervisors – Ed Ford:

Dr. Ford reported that the Riparian Restoration Project is proceeding as previously discussed.

B. Park & Recreation - Cathy Magliocchetti:

Ms. Magliocchetti reported that additional play equipment is currently being investigated which would expand the playground at Brownsburg Park.

C. Planning & Zoning - Denise Burmester:

Ms. Burmester reported the following:

- Conservation easements are progressing. Reports are starting to come in and they will be reviewed and assessed.
- Mosquito control has been approved by the Board of Supervisors. However, they don't just come out automatically and spray. There are other things that can be done first. They monitor levels and do treatments when there's a serious problem.
- OLDS Survey: The contractor is going out to do surveys on the high risk on-lot septic systems. Getting authorization from the Dolington and Taylorsville residents is currently in process.
- Upper Makefield Township's newsletter and website won third place statewide. More notable is that the Townships that finished higher have full-time communications staffs and UMT does not.

Additional discussion:

- Even though the Township's website and newsletter came in third in the state, people are still struggling to find information about the area. Getting the information to potential / new buyers is a challenge both logically and economically. Different issues and suggestions were discussed:
 - Target Realtors.
 - Send packets to new homeowners, however a list is not immediately available.
 - Email newsletters, however not all email addresses are known.
 - Mail a "welcome letter", rather than a packet, which can be a simple one page letter directing people to the website and providing other valuable information

about the area including emergency numbers, etc. Mr. Barfoot, Ms. Benson, and Mr. Wiseman volunteered to put a letter together.

- Mr. Nyman needs to be apprised of the EACs letter notification idea.
- Temple is looking to enroll families with children under age three in a study of private wells in PA. They have asked UMT to make an announcement with specific details to residents. A few suggestions were made as to how to get the message out. Also noted was that well testing is not required when purchasing a home.
- Canal Cleaning Day is April 4, 2020. Details are on the *Friends of the Delaware Canal* website.
- Ms. Khan gave an update about her fund raising idea of a half marathon run along the two canals. According to the Toll Commission, the pathways will not be completed until July 2021 so the earliest the run could be held is Fall 2022. So far, UMT, Friends, and the Toll Commission are interested. Next would be reaching out to the Delaware Canal Commission. It would be helpful to consult with the UMT Business Association since they hold the Revolutionary Run.
- Photographs of the EAC members were taken.

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Mr. Barfoot and seconded by Mr. Wiseman to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 p.m. Motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Approved: August 11, 2020.