

Minutes of August 8, 2022 Meeting of Environmental Advisory Council

EAC members in attendance: Tinku Khanwalkar, Dieter Kresky , Jon Stanley, Holly Edinger, Maria Ocasio, Jon Stanley

Non-EAC members present: Lacey Pasco, Jon Zeller, Mary Tomlinson, Kyle Ropski, Maddie Schaller, Connor Corpora (mayor's office), James Weber, Michael Israel, Laura (mayor's office)

- Welcome and introductions
- Review and approval of July minutes

UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Old Business

- Review and approval of report and recommendations on energy efficiency for residents with high energy burden (Lacey and Tinku)
 - Motion made by Tinku for approval of the report and to establish goals of:
 - By end of 2023 collect data on residential energy use and residences with high energy burden
 - By end of 2024 establish policies and programs to reduce energy use at residences with high energy burden

UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

- Review and approval of AEAC recommendations on sustainability dashboard (Jon Zeller and Tinku)
 1. By end of 2023 complete a comprehensive energy audit for all City assets (including vehicles and distributed energy systems)
 2. By end of 2023 create a task force to select and prioritize recommendations for city assets from the energy audit considering all grant opportunities and alternative financing mechanisms
 3. By end of 2024 create a publicly available energy savings implementation plan for city assets with targets and interim milestones
 4. By end of 2023 collect data on residential energy use and residences with high energy burden
 5. By end of 2024 establish policies and programs to reduce energy use at residences with high energy burden
 6. By end of 2023 complete a climate vulnerability assessment with broad stakeholder input
 7. Develop a Climate Action Plan Within 12 months of LVPC's completion of the regional climate action plan
 8. By end of 2022 design a job description sustainability officer within the Mayor's office.
 9. By end of 2023 hire a sustainability officer.

Motion made by Tinku for approval. Second by Jon.

UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

- Report on Solar Kiln Project (Leo Rooney, Lehigh interns)

- Promise Neighborhood will help to set up a customer portal/ request form for items that are needed/ wanted by community groups or municipal partners.
 - There is a proposal from Lehigh University that is drafted and will be sent to City of Allentown.
- Report on lead contamination forum (Maria Ocasio)
 - Event will be held in partnership with Health Bureau and Penn Future at Mountainville
- Reports from EAC/Friends leads on remaining goals

Old Business

- Resident (Mary) is concerned about the use of pesticides along the Jordan Creek. We thought the city had moved to a pesticide-free program for the parks.

- Drive Greater Transparency and Accountability (Tinku)
 - Need a metric for tree equity (Tinku reporting for Holly)
 - Public Works does annual reporting for the TreeVitalize program which includes number of trees planted, pruned and removed. This could be part of the dashboard metrics.
 - Need a metric for lead exposure (Tinku reporting for Maria)
 - Working with Penn Future on lead contamination. Meeting with Rachel Leon of Bethlehem City Council and what they are doing with lead contamination. Planning to hold an event in August at which Stevie Wolst will be speaking about Allentown's actions on lead. Maria wants to know whether the AEAC will co-sponsor.
 - **Vote:** Tinku Khanwalkar made motion for Allentown EAC to co-sponsor Penn Future's event on lead exposure as it falls under the AEAC role of promoting community environmental programs . Seconded by Jennifer Swann. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**
 - Need a metric/ metrics for energy use/ CO2 (Jon Z. and Lacey Pasco)
 - Dashboard has been broken down into 9 subjects.
 - Prioritize top 10 metrics.
 - Look at the selections from Bethlehem and Easton for guidance.
 - Dashboard will be public to allow public to keep city accountable.
 - **Vote:** Tinku Khanwalkar made a motion to present the 10 Climate Action targets/metrics at the next meeting with City staff. Seconded by Jennifer Swann. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**
 - Thank you to Jon Zeller and Lacey Pasco for their hard work.
- Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Allentown (Leo)
 - Lehigh U. students are designing and siting a solar powered wood kiln that could help Allentown reuse wood from the City's felled trees in more valuable ways than the current practice of chipping them up for mulch. The program could also be combined with a workforce development program for an AmeriCorps-based program called "PromiseCorps" that is being launched by PNLV.
 - Aiming to create a series of solar powered lumber drying kilns. Then using the wood to create benches and other products for public use.
 - Preserving materials that would normally be discarded and providing opportunities for it to be used.
 - There is a presentation on this project and more next week, Monday July 18, at Lehigh University.
 - Lacey has a new "guide to being outside"
 - The guide has helpful information on what to prepare for when engaging in outdoor activities. Including safety, animal/plant identification, and information on Promise Neighborhoods.
 - Consider adding more detailed trail information in the pamphlet.

- Lacey has prepared a report and recommendations on addressing energy efficiency in low-income communities in Allentown
 - **Vote:** In light of Lacey's work, Tinku made motion to revise 2022 Allentown EAC goals to add addressing energy inefficiency in low-income communities. Motion seconded by Jennifer Swann. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**
 - Lacey requested the AEAC to hold a special meeting to meet and vote on the presentation material prior to the August meeting. Lacey to send out a scheduling request.
- Plan for a Sustainable and Resilient Allentown (Jon Z. and Tinku)
 - Lacey Pasco to follow up on rain gardens information.
- City staff is looking for AEAC support on stormwater management
 - City Staff (Angie DiBuo) is looking for AEAC support for rain gardens and green infrastructure. No specific request has yet been made, however. (Holly, Lacey and Mary)
- Improve Community Health Outcomes (Leo)
 - Radon Testing for homes with Civilian Climate Corp. (Promise Neighborhood)
 - Update on radon-- Promise Neighborhoods is working with several contractors that have testing and abatement licenses. The program depends on receiving a \$25,000 grant that PNLV has applied for. If the grant is received, PNLV will be able to test about 100 homes and abate about 10. Will stop testing after reaching 10 homes that require abatement. Please reach out if you have any questions ljr@heirloomstrategies.com 610 844 2768
 - No further action from Allentown EAC needed at this time.
- Increase Environmental Stewardship
 - Liter prevention program with Promise Neighborhood
 - Liter prevention program with city parks program
 - Engaging the community in recycling items and providing education for the local community.
- Business Recognition Program
 - **Vote:** Tinku Khanwalkar made a motion to remove the Business Recognition Program from 2022 Allentown EAC goals. Seconded by Jennifer Swann. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**
- Earth Day Program(s) -- Completed
- Review and advise on DEP letters – Nothing of importance to discuss
- Discussion on plastic bag use in Allentown. Possible goal for 2023.
- Discussion with Mary Tomlinson about litter. Will trash cans be part of the Jordan Creek Greenway Plan?
 - Work with Allentown Parks & Rec to find out if trash cans are a part of the plan. What are the requirements for trash cans to be a part of the development?

New Business

- Decision on meeting at City Hall with Remote Attendance Option
 - **Vote:** Tinku Khanwalkar made motion for Allentown EAC to resume in-person meetings starting in August with a virtual option. Seconded by Jennifer Swann. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**
- Decision on EAC Interim Chair for September, October, and November
 - Tinku Khanwalkar noted that she will be out of the country in Japan, Germany and India from September through mid-December. She will have access to emails but will not be able to attend AEAC meetings due to the time difference. Holly has agreed to serve as interim chair. Jennifer Swann asked what the AEAC's procedures are if a member does not attend several meetings in a row. Tinku explained that normally the chair would have a discussion with the member and absent a good reason for the member's failure to attend, would request the member to resign. If such a member fails to resign, then the AEAC's By-laws have procedures to remove such a member.
 - **Vote:** Tinku Khanwalkar moved to have Holly serve as Allentown EAC interim chair for September-November 2022 (there is no AEAC meeting in December). Seconded by Jon Stanley. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**