

Minutes of March 11, 2019 meeting of Allentown Environmental Advisory Council

EAC members in attendance: Tim Duch, Dave Melman, Liz Hunt, Tinku Khanwalkar

Non-EAC members present: Joel Schilling of Paradise Township EAC

1. Minutes of February 11 EAC meeting were approved
2. The EAC discussed the meeting held at Kline's Island among EAC members (Tinku Khanwalkar and Keith Hespeth), Liesel Gross, LCA Chief Executive Officer and Bob Kerchusky (Kline's Island Wastewater Treatment Plant operator). The meeting was to evaluate whether Allentown can take in food waste at Kline's Island to generate additional methane that can be used as additional fuel for the combined heat and power system (CHP) at the plant which currently only provides about 50% of the plant's power needs. Bob explained that the cost of running the CHP is higher than the cost of obtaining power directly from the electric supplier. This is due to the ongoing expenses of the CHP and a contract that increases payments to the CHP operator by 3% every year. The EAC discussed suggestions by Liesel Gross and Bob Kerchusky for the EAC to investigate the following: how Allentown restaurants currently handle their grease and food waste; what other municipalities are doing with their food waste; what has been Easton's experience with its CHP. The EAC decided to investigate Easton's experience with its CHP as the first step. Dave Melman has contacts in Easton and will set up a meeting.
3. Tinku mentioned that there is a Mayor's forum on March 12th regarding sustainability issues and initiatives at which Allentown would be presenting. She had provided EAC input via email to Mike Hanlon who had notified her of the Forum.
4. Dave Melman reported on City Council as follows: Action will be taken to enable the EAC to return to City Hall for its meetings. Courtney Robinson and Pete Schweyer remain very interested in the C-PACE program and will be reaching out to the EAC on that. The Budget and Finance Committee would like the EAC to provide quarterly reports. Dave and/or Tinku can provide these. The B&F Committee also voted on Allentown's capital fund. Dave Melman will distribute the Parks and Recreation report and the Budget and Finance Committee report. The capital cost for the Jordan Greenway project is \$1 million. The City needs to spend \$100,000 on planning costs with no guarantee that it will be able to find a grant for the \$1 million needed for the capital costs.
5. The EAC discussed the status of its 2019 goals:
 - a. Public Communications (Liz and Tim): Liz held discussions with Kristen Beringer regarding leaflets that can be included in mailings from the City. We should also keep an eye on events that we can consider tabling (e.g. Blues and BBQ), but will need to determine how to get funds for materials we may wish to hand out at such events. Tim will try to reach out to the Hispanic community, look into EAC

participation in the St. Patrick's Day parade and create a list of events for possible future EAC participation.

- b. Involvement in Allentown's Earth Day activities (Liz): Defer to 2020 as we don't have time this year to coordinate with the City
- c. Banning straws, plastic bags and receipts (Jennifer): Not discussed
- d. Commercial and School Recycling (Liz): Not yet started
- e. Thank you letter to City (Tinku): Tinku mentioned that she did applaud the City's waste and recycling programs in her communication for the Mayor's Forum. She requested EAC members to let her know of other actions to be applauded whenever they occur.
- f. Allentown's solar ordinance (Dave): This could be a good project to involve Muhlenberg students. Dave will ask Richard Niessenbaum to see if any Muhlenberg students from the Sustainability Studies Program would be interested in working with the EAC. Will also raise it with Courtney Robinson.
- g. Look into whether ordinances can be rewritten to direct environmental fines for spills into waterways to be used only for remediation of the affected area and not go to the general fund (Dave): This could also be a good project for a Muhlenberg student
- h. Allentown Climate Action Plan and C-PACE (Tinku): Will discuss with Courtney Robinson when the quarterly meetings between the EAC and the Budget and Finance Committee begin
- i. MS4 and Stormwater (Keith): Not discussed
- j. EAC booth at an Iron Pigs event (Liz): has emailed her contacts about it
- k. Lantern flies educational event for children (Liz): Can be included in Earth Day activities next year
- l. Recycling of dog waste and food waste (Jennifer): Not discussed
- m. Community recycling bins (Tim): Will create a game plan