

Allentown Environmental Advisory Council Meeting - 5/13/2024 - 5:15pm
Virtual through zoom as well as Allentown Public Library Basement

Attendance: Tinku Khanwalker, Kyle Ropski, Molly Bilinski, Lacey Pasco, Mary Tomlinson, Becky Short, Santo Napoli, Jeremy Taylor, Jennifer Swann

Old Business

1: Approval of April Minutes

- Approved

2: Approval of revised revised 2024 Goals

- Approved, need to be posted

3: Approval and presentation of 2023 Annual Report to City Council

- Approved, needs to be posted

4: Earth Day / Ecofest at Muhlenberg Update

Earth day at the park was a success for the EAC. Met with some new individuals for the email list and were able to record an outreach video with the help of the city. Kyle needs to touch base with them for when it will be posted. Additionally, ecofest at Muhlenberg was a success as well. Veronika from the city was able to join us and connect with students and organizations alike.

The events revealed to us the need for the EAC to gather tabling materials. An activity for engagement, flyers and such, potentially a tent or banner. Future intern will be tasked with this.

5. Filling EAC vacancies

The City and website have apparently been out of the loop with our members and their statuses. Coming up in the pipeline we have the recommendations for Maria and Peter Dent's applications. We need to prepare for Jennifer's departure as well.

6. Status of budget for EAC

Santo in coordination with several City employees were able to locate the 5k allocation for the EAC. Unfortunately, it was never spent during the budget year and was placed back into the general fund. The push for funding can be accomplished in

the 2025 budget, as talks for it begin relatively soon. We need to be on the ball about it and develop a more coherent budget.

7. Letter Reviews

New system in place. All good on these several letters.

8. Status Reports from EAC Goals

1. Neighborhood Cleanup Community Initiative - Jennifer deferred to Mary and Tinku for an update. They recently met with St Lukes / Sacred Heart on Friday. Their focus is community engagement within the Jordan Heights neighborhood. The discussion was centered around a potential project called “Blueprint Communities” which is a 10 year program with a committee led by local leaders in the neighborhood. The focus is primarily associated with workforce development, healthcare access, and community revitalization. We as an EAC can send a member to serve as a part of the plan/committee. More info on the plan can be found online.
2. Shared Energy Manager - As of now, the draft plan has been developed. It includes the replacement of 7 vehicles in the fleet and installation of charging infrastructure at the Bridgeworks site. The deadline for the plan to be submitted is in July, then the money can be allocated. The City is also looking to install chargers throughout the city at other locations such as parks for the general public’s access. A large part of getting approval is getting the appropriate data to ensure the pros and cons are properly discussed.
3. Recommended ordinance - Maria has an example ordinance for us to review. She will send it to the group following the meeting. We should discuss it at a future meeting (add to agenda). Santo noted that the city is currently doing a housing study/zoning review. It potentially will cover warehouses as well as a variety of other outdated legislation.

4. Bird Town Environmental Education program - Birdtown has been going well and Felice did an excellent job. It is in place through the end of the year. Paid for through a grant by Bird Town. Jessica from the City recently did one and it was excellent. New intern Lauren will be picking it up.
5. Communication Efficiency, Transparency, and Accountability - Things are going well! Email is operational and Kyle has begun to collect new contacts to expand our reach. Note on the potential expansion of administrative access for other EAC members to the account.
6. Lead and Manage Muhlenberg Interns - Unfortunately, the interns were unable to complete their inventories due to lack of data availability. Jess was not provided gas data from UGI and the carbon footprint was too small. Jess is interested in an interim project report to be posted on the EAC website to get some worth out of her project. Tinku will share with board members to make edits by EOD Friday the 17th.
7. Community Education Programs - There was an article in the newspaper a few weeks ago regarding air quality. We have interest in received the data, but have had no input on any of the studies for placement. Iota Communications / Center for Sustainable Innovation is doing their own study on air quality. Santo will reach out to them to see if they can join the next meeting and speak briefly.
8. Annual CDP disclosures - It appears we will not be submitting the CDP disclosures this year. Leaving it on the agenda to discuss further in June.
9. No update.
10. Safe streets for all steering committee kickoff was attended by Tinku. She is optimistic due to the amount of funds available for infrastructure rather than just investments into behavior changes.

New Business

- 1: EAC involvement in Allentown's Air Quality monitoring near Allentown Schools

Discussed above

2: Youth Climate Action Grant Opportunity Update

Veronika is leading it as of now. Someone from the EAC needs to be on the review for the grants. Future agenda item.

3: New EAC email list and shareable link

- https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdQU8I2T5qJRD0amk4_2Cjf1SQRdrh-y6YYYY2VHTCPhcMs8MA/viewform?usp=sf_link
- Friendly reminder to CC atowneac@gmail.com onto any communications for organizational purposes.

4: EAC Meeting Location

Next EAC meeting will not be in the library basement due to spotty reception and the administration's stance on wanting us in City Hall. Request must be made for us to be in Council Chambers with zoom option and Santo will be included on the email.

5: EAC Network Events?

The Lehigh Valley has their own EAC network that includes a committee of major members including Maria. There is an event coming up led by Liesel Gross, CEO of LCA on the collaboration between multiple municipalities for their Klines Island plan.

Additionally, there is a statewide EAC network that falls under WeConservePA. Good handle on statewide EAC issues.

6: COA Zoning Update (feedback due by June 15th, 2024)

Not discussed.

