

Allentown EAC Meeting

June 14, 2021

5:15 PM via Zoom

- Welcome and Introductions

In attendance: Tinku Khanwalkar, Dieter Kretschy, Lacey Pasco, David Melman, Maria C. Ocasio, Jon Stanley, Matt Tuerk (guest)

- Jon Stanley's appointment to the EAC will be voted on by City Council on Wednesday. Jon will be in attendance
- Review and Approval of May Minutes

Unanimously approved

Old Business

- 2021 Goals Reports

1. Waste Minimization/Food Waste – Dieter Kretschy/Holly Edinger/Maria Ocasio:

- a. Food waste project to identify waste, those who will take the food, and those who will transport it.
- b. Maria has done outreach to see who would be amenable to this
- c. Some potential sources: C-town in Bethlehem – Frank Rodriguez; Wegman's needs a form 2 weeks in advance, Panera needs a form, Redners also needs a form
- d. Some potential destinations – Allentown food council, salvation army – has to be packaged, Lehigh valley council of churches.
- e. We need to have a City map for the intern to know whether the sources and recipients are located in the City of Allentown
- f. Tinku made a motion to limit the source of the food to Allentown as the EAC angle to this project is to reduce the City's carbon footprint, and to limit the recipients to the City as well, but accept transportation services without limitation. **The motion was seconded by David and unanimously passed.**
- g. Tinku would like Maria to lead this focused effort to identify and sign up sources, recipients and transportation options– if it is ok with her

2. Micro-mobility – Jennifer Swann/Tinku Khanwalkar:

- a. Jessica will produce a report (currently on vacation) which concludes that the City does not currently have the infrastructure to begin a successful bike share program as traffic on the roads remains too hazardous for the average cyclist. The city is focusing on connecting to the D&L.

- b. Matt Tuerk noted that the City held a stakeholder meeting at Bucky Boyle Park at which connection to the D&L received support from the developers; the finances are what we need – the plans exist.
 - c. Once the plans are developed, we can encourage a bike-share
 - d. Financing may be feasible as LV planning commission has plans for green infrastructure and the Biden administration has proposed significant funds for infrastructure.
 - e. Lacey Pasco noted that near Muhlenberg there is a park with streets that might be amenable to bikes
- 3. Climate Action Inventory and CDP Questionnaire
 - a. Tinku explained that the climate action inventory is different from the Greenhouse Gas inventory which was completed last fall and the full report is now available and needs to be publicized. Tinku will make sure it is posted on the EAC website but more publicity is needed.
 - b. The Climate Action Inventory is currently in draft form and being reviewed by the City. EAC member are requested to provide input to it as well. EAC taskforce to discuss the inventory – Jon, Dieter, Lacey, Maria, and Tinku.
 - c. Actions noted in the inventory can become part of Allentown's response to the CDC questionnaire (full disclosure of the city's actions on climate change which the City has for the first time agreed to participate in), and will inform the City's climate action plan when it begins developing it
 - d. City is not developing a climate action plan now because it wanted to wait until the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission develops a regional plan. The LVPC has begun the planning process and is including the Allentown EAC. Tinku will attend and report back.
 - e. CDP questionnaire is due at the end of July. Tinku will send the link out to the EAC members
- 4. Park Spark Project – Jennifer -- in progress
- 5. Litter Removal Project at 401 Cleveland – Tinku and Jennifer:
 - a. EAC would like to help bring the neighbors together to clean up the property and decide upon what the neighborhood would like to use the property for. However, we cannot proceed because the City cannot figure out who owns the property. The site is near Trout Creek which is part of the City's drinking water supply. Tinku and Jennifer will continue to discuss this with the City
- 6. Rain Gardens (Muhlenberg -- Sadie)
 - a. Lacey reported that the community garden at Muhlenberg has been planted. There is also a new rain garden behind the football field which is going well.
- 7. Create a public repository of sustainability data including Greenhouse Gas Inventory, Climate Action Inventory, Community Sustainability Certification, CDP Responses, etc. (Tinku):

- a. Need to build social media following (promote Allentown Vision 2030, education about our trash and recycling programs, invasive species). Build-out to include internships. Get marketing intern help. Talk to the city about improving the posting of the link to the FB Page. Lacey suggested we could create a QR code for EAC. Use that Neighborhood app/ site
 - b. Lacey reviewed the draft logos she has created for the EAC. Participants picked Design No.1 (professional) and No. 5 (friendly), as the top choices. No. 5 has questions of scalability – whether it will work when made smaller. Lacey is willing to redesign.
 - c. Lacey is working on increasing our social media presence. Photos are needed. Perhaps photos of flooding would be good as impact of flooding is critical to our climate work
- 11. Sustainable Pennsylvania Communities Certification (Tinku): no progress until Irene has more support
- 12. Sustainable Business Survey and Recognition Program – on hold (Tinku)
- 13. Get more Council input on EAC activities (Dave) no updates: Dave is reaching out to Siegal and Gerlach.
- 14. Invasive Species Events- neighborhoods and parks (Jennifer): Maybe a Poison Hemlock contest on social media. Pictures of poison hemlock and other invasive plants would be needed.
- 15. Get a budget for the EAC (Dave): needs to follow up.
- 16. Preliminary Review of Allentown Zoning Map – Holly and Jennifer: No update
- Reports from EAC Liaisons
 - 1. Muhlenberg College – Sadie: not present
 - 2. Parks and Recreation – Jennifer and Tinku: no update as there was no meeting. Lacey would like to meet with Rick Holtzman to find info on the native and invasive species. She will be invited to the next meeting
 - 3. Public Works – Tinku: Extensive discussions and work have been conducted on the CDP response. Next will come the further review of the climate inventory
 - 4. City Council – Dave: No update
 - 5. Planning Commission – Holly – Not present
 - 6. Bureau of Planning and Zoning – Tinku, Holly, and Jennifer: Meeting with Irene focused on cleanup of 401 Cleveland discussed above

New Business

- A platform for future EAC meetings – the city has clamped down on giving access because it was hacked. We need a city email address to use the system. Will continue to share the current source. In-person could be at the Friends of the Allentown Parks building in the rose garden. Tinku will talk to Karen El Chaar about using that conference room. We will discuss this at the next meeting
- Lehigh Valley EAC forum on September 18 (10:00 AM-noon)
 - Lehigh valley EACs will be coming together to meet at the Cedar Beach Pavilion. People will bring a dish to share. All EAC members and supporters are encouraged to attend
- Additional communications on Barnes Lane. Seems to continue to be issues about the property. We have done our job. Need an environmental attorney to take it. David knows some of them but they will not be pro-bono. Not our role to suggest litigation.
- Commitment to 100% Renewable Energy (using Mark Pinsley's Proposal as the basis for discussion)? Save for next meeting
- Global Covenant of Mayors
 - Tinku made a motion to join, seconded by David. She explained that simply signing an empty letter is meaningless if there is no benefit from joining and no intention to take action. However, the alliance consists of 10,000 cities all over the world. Has a help desk, material, and tools. They may help us with our social media presence. Now that we are doing the CDP responses, the city may see the benefit of collaborating with other cities.
 - Dieter has strong objections to the motion because he is concerned about the follow-through. Dieter suggests we wait until after the election and work with whoever is elected to determine their commitment
 - Lacey shares the same concerns and sees it as an opportunity to learn from others without us having to do the leg work. Can we ask for a commitment before the election?
 - Tinku noted that – Conservation Voters of PA may hold a forum for the candidates in the fall and perhaps we can ask the candidates their position on this at that time.
 - Tinku modified her motion to state that we will ask the new mayor to sign on after the election. Motion passed with 3 yes and one abstention (Dieter Kretschy)