

Palmer Township Environmental Steering Committee – Meeting Minutes

Environmental Steering Committee

February 25, 2015

Attendees: Ann-Marie Panella (Board of Supervisors Liaison), Cindy Oatis (Recycling Coordinator), Tom Ganssle, Nancy Nicholas, John Marks, Diane Halasz, Tom Dittmar, Rob Reese, John Olock, Heath Ganssle

Guests: Diane Halasz - newly appointed ESC member and Heath Ganssle.

Public Meeting opened at approximately 7:00 PM at the Palmer Public Library – public meeting room

Officer Elections: Tom Ganssle, current ESC Chairperson, turned the meeting over to Ann-Marie Panella who then presided over the 2015 ESC reorganization proceedings. Tom Ganssle was nominated by Tom Dittmar to be the 2015 Chairperson. John Marks was nominated as the Vice-Chairperson and Secretary by Tom Ganssle. **Motion to close nominations** made by John Olock. A unanimous voice vote approved the above three positions.

Introduction of guests and new members: Ann-Marie Panella newly appointed Board of Supervisors Liaison to the ESC; Diane Halasz and Heath Ganssle were introduced and all were welcomed as newly appointed Liaison and ESC members.

The October 2014 ESC "meeting minutes" were approved. **Motion to approve the October "Minutes"** made by Tom Dittmar, seconded by Rob Reese and approved by unanimous voice vote.

Recycling Coordinator's Report: Palmer Township is seeking a new scrap metal collector and recycler for the recycling center since the closing of Easton Iron and Metal. Negotiations are underway as well as consideration of moving from a 40 yd to 20 yd container which would ease the process of loading and compressing of materials..

Palmer Township was awarded a \$250,000.00 grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP). These funds will be used for renovation of property located on South Nulton Avenue to turn it into the Township's new Recycling Center. It was noted that Northampton County received a total of 7% of all 2014 PA DEP Grant funds.

Old Business

Rob Reese inquired as to the status of Palmer Township's Comprehensive Plan. Cindy Oatis stated that it is currently being worked on and contact will be made with various Township Committees for their review and input.

Rob Reese inquired as to "Recycling Bins in Township Parks" Cindy Oatis stated that the Township did look into the purchase of recycling bins for its many parks. That the costs of sturdy bins ranged from \$1,800.00 to \$2,000.00 or \$18,000 to \$20,000 total.

Diane Halasz asked, "What is recycling in parks?" Cindy Oatis explained what it is and further explained that research revealed that other communities have experienced high cross contamination rates (foods, pet waste, improper materials) in their public park recycling containers. The "return on investment is negligible." Tom Dittmar stated that PA DEP will not fund such a program due to poor success rates. That Palmer has had much success during the Community Weekend Celebrations, yet when recycling containers were placed in the parks during high density sporting events – soccer, baseball, football - there was a great deal of cross contamination resulting in all materials being landfilled. Cindy Oatis stated that she researched "private grants" from corporate entities, and determined that those grants were focused on communities that did not have any available funding sources. Tom Dittmar stated that Northampton County has initiated a program of "What you carry in you carry out" for its County owned and operated park system. Tom Ganssle asked as to what types of containers are currently in the Township's parks. Cindy Oatis stated that there are currently metal trash cans (50

gallon). Cindy Oatis stated that the Board of Supervisors with the Township Manager are required to make difficult determinations as to where to spend tax dollars with respect to recycling and those determinations are based upon prioritization and return on investment.

Rob Reese inquired as to "Styrofoam Recycling – grocery store chains should be approached to seek their assistance in reduction, collection and recycling of Styrofoam." Cindy Oatis stated that due to the bulk and light weight of Styrofoam that a "densifier" would be required to make such a program cost effective. That the cost of the "densifier" is exorbitant. Tom Dittmar stated that the closest Styrofoam recycler is Egg Harbor, NJ – the transportation costs would be prohibitive. Bethlehem City sends its Styrofoam to a firm in Philadelphia for processing. Cindy provided Rob with Bethlehem's Recycling Manager's contact information for his research into this topic.

New Business:

John Marks made a **motion to thank Palmer Townships Parks Department for the great job they have done this year in clearing snow and ice from all of the Township's Rails to Trails** *Seconded by John Olock and unanimously approved by voice vote.* Tom Ganssle will draft a letter to the Parks Department.

Tom Ganssle commenced discussion of "Proposed ESC Year of Planned Action for 2015." The first topic: Education –

How to increase residential curbside recycling rates."

Recycling Education = what can be done to further educate the Township's population to continue to improve their recycling efforts. Cindy Oatis stated that both businesses and residential units are doing well in reducing solid waste and increased recycling of materials. That research has shown that the general public when reading recycling educational materials spends eight (08) seconds on "read time." That educational materials must be focused, with the intended message being placed directly up front and any informative discussion following.

Public Schools Recycling Program = During October and November 2014 the ESC was asked to perform research into School District Recycling Programs across the country. The purpose of the research is to assist the Easton Area School District's recently formulated Committee in their efforts to further expand their recycling program. After further discussion on the previously performed research together with a "Program Guide" developed by Tom Dittmar, John Marks made the following **motion:**

"That representatives of the Palmer Township and its Environmental Steering Committee, together with representatives from all communities within the Easton Area School District (EASD), and Northampton County's Environmental Coordinator schedule a meeting with EASD's Assistant Superintendent, Alyssa Emili, and EASD's Advisory Committee, for the purpose of assisting them in the enhancement of EASD's existing Recycling Program." Rob Reese seconded the above motion which was unanimously passed by voice vote.

Palmer Community Weekend Tom Ganssle – The entire ESC to work on this weekend in developing topics and displays

Household Hazardous Waste Collection dates were verified by Tom Dittmar as May 30 and October 10, will be held at the Northampton Community College.

Great American Cleanup, Rob Reese will act as sub-committee chair and coordinate date, time, safety for participants at the suggested site of Northampton Street and Rt 248. Additional locations were discussed – will be considered if there is a large volunteer group.

Restore (Habitat) for Humanity – June, 2015, Cindy Oatis will contact Restore to establish a "drop off site, date, time" for such an event as well as publicize the event. John Marks made a **Motion**

that the ESC should support this event. *Seconded by Tom Dittmar and unanimously approved by voice vote.*

Electronics Collection: Saturday, April 19, 2015 from 9 AM to 1 PM sponsored by AERC. Event to be held at the Bethlehem Steel Stacks parking lot, Bethlehem, PA.

Rain Barrel Display: Rob Reese suggested that there be an event held during May, 2015, at the Chrin Community Center to provide education on rain barrel use, composting, native plants, gardening with compost.

Yard Waste Collection: There will be two (02) curbside collections held during the weeks of June 1 and November 2, 2015.

Tom Ganssle: **Motion to adjourn.** *Seconded by John Marks. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote. 8:35 PM*

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting of the Palmer Township Environmental Steering Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, March 25, 2015, at 7:00 PM at the Palmer Branch of the Easton Area Public Library's Conference Room located at 1 Weller Place, Palmer, PA.

Minutes submitted by: John Marks, 2/27/2015