

Palmer Township Environmental Steering Committee – Meeting Minutes

Environmental Steering Committee March 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, Heath Ganssle

Guests: None.

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

Introduction of new member: Heath Ganssle was introduced and welcomed as a newly appointed ESC member.

The February 2014 ESC “meeting minutes” were approved. Motion to approve the February “Minutes” made by Tom Dittmar, seconded by Nancy Nicholas and approved by unanimous voice vote.

Recycling Coordinator’s Report: Palmer Township's "tonnage reports" are being processed with the last of them being received this week. This is due to the new contract requiring additional Hauler reports. The "tonnage reports" will be categorized and results placed on the Palmer Township web site. Northampton County is sending the information that it receives to all Municipalities.

Old Business:

Rob Reese inquired as to why the tonnage reports are not on Palmer Township’s web site.

Cindy Oatis stated that the "year end" reports are not received until Feb/Mar. Once they are received, will be posted. The reports already received combined both the curb-side and recycling center tonnage, they have to be separated, which is being worked on.

Rob Reese stated that in regard to Business Recycling, he has been approached by several small business owners who asked that the Township provide them with containers. Rob has asked them to provide insight, suggestions on ways to better provide service and increase recycling efforts by small business owners.

Cindy Oatis informed the ESC that there are no grants available for municipalities to purchase bins, etc. to assist business owners in their efforts.

Tom Dittmar stated that the Township expressly established the Hartley Avenue Recycling Center to assist both residents and businesses with a central location for ease of drop off.

Cindy Oatis suggested that Business In Palmer (BIP) be contacted in order to seek their assistance in reminding their membership of the requirement to recycle using the Township's Hartley Avenue Recycling Center. It was agreed that enforcement of small business participation within the recycling program was difficult to enforce and is a matter of reminding them to participate.

Tom Dittmar stated that Act 101 requires businesses to recycle the items that the Municipality identifies for recycling. A great number of small businesses are located in strip malls. If the landlords were to provide recycling containers that could increase participation. It was noted that the landlord/tenant contracts are outside the authority of the Township. Tom Ganssle stated that it is the responsibility of the small business owners to either drop off their recyclables at Hartley Avenue or

place their recyclables in with their residential recyclables.

Cindy Oatis stated that it is Palmer Township's policy to "educate rather than hard line enforcement." The small business owners must report their efforts to Palmer Township. Any reports that are incomplete or missing, are contacted and reminded as to their obligation and resources available to them.

Ann-Marie Panella agreed that the Township's experience has been that strict enforcement is not well received; that re-education of the business entities on recycling is the way to move forward.

Rob Reese inquired as to what happened to the old small recycling barrels.

Cindy Oatis stated that they either remain with the residents, turned in and reused with currently available.

Easton Area School District:

Cindy Oatis We planned to approach the EASD in the spring of 2015 due to it coinciding with their budget development timeline. In an effort to have a joint approach sought and obtained support from Forks and Easton. Approached Northampton County's newly appointed Recycling Coordinator and was informed that Northampton County prefers a systemic - county wide approach and not a School District by School District approach. Northampton County sought Palmer's assistance in researching information from other school districts. Palmer will assist in whatever way possible, yet some of their requests are outside of our purview and those requests were respectfully declined.

EASD has appointed Tim Case, current Facilities Manager as their Recycling Program Director.

Palmer together with Forks and Easton will move ahead with meeting the newly appointed EASD Recycling Coordinator.

Electronics Recycling Program:

Tom Ganssle stated that Northampton County has scheduled an "electronics recycling day" in April at the Steel Stacks site in the City of Bethlehem. Private corporate entities could be the best way forward with regard to electronics recycling in that they would be operational year round and at a reasonable cost rather than stockpiling TVs, computers, etc. for a once a year collection. The roadsides and open fields are being littered with unwanted electronics.

Year of Planned Action:

Tom Ganssle recommended that the ESC identify issues that it would want to address during 2015, either as a whole, sub-committee, individually. Northampton County is seeking county wide volunteer staffing support for these events; as a result the involvement that Palmer's ESC has had at each of the past HHW events will be reduced.

Cindy Oatis suggested that members of the ESC attend other community ESC meetings to garner insights as to what they are doing. John Marks and Tom Dittmar will check the dates, times of Bushkill Township and Lower Saucon ESC meetings and attend if at all possible.

Rob Reese sub-committee chair for the Great American Cleanup event identified two locations, between Wood Avenue and 25th Street along Northampton Street and Greenwood Avenue from William Penn Highway to Northampton Street. He will contact Tom Adams (Palmer DPW) and Chrin Group to seek their assistance toward ensuring the safety of the participants via furnishing of a truck to block traffic and be the repository of the collected items. Rob will check with Penn-DOT as to what services they will provide in that both identified locations are State Roads. It was suggested that

Palmer Police provide patrol car(s) as part of the safety/security effort.

Cindy Oatis suggested that we think of having some sort of advertisement on the trucks as to what we were doing.

Rob Reese asked if the Recycling Coordinator's budget had funds available to purchase a banner to be used during the Great American Cleanup event.

John Marks Motion to have a banner made stating:

PALMER TOWNSHIP

GREAT AMERICAN CLEAN UP

Motion Seconded by Diane Halasz. Motion Approved by unanimous voice vote to purchase the banner in time for the upcoming event.

Rob Reese: **8 A.M. SATURDAY APRIL 18, 2015. Request that those who plan to participate in the event solicit additional volunteers to assist. Due to the locations with their high traffic volume and rates of speed it is best that only adults participate in the events.**

Rob Reeses stated that his research into "**Polystyrenes Recycling**" reflects that the City of Bethlehem has purchased equipment that reduces the foam blocks and removes the air from the material so as to condense the materials. That Bethlehem spent \$30,000.00 on their equipment. That the end product is shipped to Philadelphia for further processing. That the City of Bethlehem has yet to break even on their costs due to the fact that the receipt, inspection, processing and shipping of the polystyrene is labor intensive. He has observed the trash barrels at Palmer's Hartley Avenue Recycling Center full of both plastic bags and polystyrene. Rob further stated that the PA Department of Environmental Protection does offer grant funds to purchase this type of equipment.

Cindy Oatis stated that recycling polystyrene would be logistically difficult at best. If Palmer Township were to purchase equipment that she would suggest that the cost effective" (Return on Investment) would be via the purchase of a "**Paper Shredder.**"

Rob Reese asked if it would be cost effective to rent a shredder.

Cindy Oatis stated that her research has shown that it is very costly; that the equipment used shreds less effectively than a shredder one has at home. That studies have shown that "shredder companies" sell their product and there have been instances where the product is gone thru by identity thieves. If Palmer were to purchase a Shredder, that it would have to be as good at shredding as a home shredder.

New Business:

Burke Street - As soon as it is clear for traffic - snow melt and mud dries up the Burke Street Yard Waste Center will be open for use. When it is ready for use will be published on the Township's Web Site.

Tom Ganssle stated that the Township should consider using shredded materials to fill in the mud holes and help dry up the grounds in light of the fact that the materials will decompose and turn into soil materials.

Rob Reese - **Community Days Weekend** - The ESC booth - We need to commence planning our "theme(s)" for the upcoming Community Days Weekend at Fairview Park. Rob suggested a partnership with the Bushkill Stream Conservancy who will furnish inter-active displays.

Rob Reese stated that Palmer, Forks and Tatamy will be meeting to discuss the stabilization and rehabilitation of the Bushkill Stream. That "Trout Unlimited" would like to reestablish the banks of the

stream in order to improve the habitat and enhance the stream's use for recreational purposes. This information could be made available within the ESC's "tent" at the Community Days Weekend together with it being placed on the Township's Web Site. The information would consist of Stream Data, Native Species, etc. Additional "information sources" will be developed for the upcoming Community Days Weekend so as to provide a wide array of information in addition to the traditional data previously presented by the ESC.

Diane Halasz stated that she prefers encouraging folks to grow native plants via establishment of a native plant conservancy at their residence.

Tom Ganssle: Motion to adjourn. John Marks: Seconded. Motion carried via voice vote. 8:30 PM

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting of the Palmer Township Environmental Steering Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, APRIL 22, 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, 3/27/2015