

Palmer Township Environmental Steering Committee – Meeting Minutes

Environmental Steering Committee May 27, 2015

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

Guests: None.

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

The March 2015 ESC “meeting minutes” were approved, with one modification (2015 vs 2014). Motion to approve the February “Minutes” made by Tom Dittmar, seconded by Nancy Nicholas and approved by unanimous voice vote.

Recycling Coordinator’s Report: **Cindy Oatis** reported that she participated in a meeting with the Easton Area School District relating to enhancing their “recycling program.” The School District, Teachers Association and the PTA are firmly behind an increased effort in education and performance of recycling within the schools located in Palmer Township, which increased performance, will have a positive impact upon Palmer’s waste diversion numbers.

A meeting will take place in August, 2015, to coincide with the commencement of the school year. During this meeting there will be recognition of the efforts of a student and the staff who have focused upon both performance and fostering via education the importance of recycling to the community at large.

RECYCLING CARTS: Discussion was held as to offering smaller (64 gallon) containers to residents: **Cindy Oatis** (Recycling Coordinator), researched this issue and determined that within all other communities offering smaller trash/recycling containers that on average 1% of the populations opted for the smaller container(s). Palmer Township has 7,400 residential structures.

If a household does “opt for the 64 gallon container they will not be allowed to leave anything curbside that was not contained within the 64 gallon container due to the parameters of the current contract between the Township and the Hauler.

Further discussion centered on eligibility to opt for the 64 gallon containers and the actual dimensions of the 64 gallon container versus the 96 gallon containers currently distributed to the Township Households. The actual size difference between the 64 and 96 gallon container’s footprint (square inches of floor coverage) is marginal.

BOS Liaison Ann-Marie Panella suggested that Eligible Households should include those over 65 years of age and/or disabled residents.

Discussion as to how to publicize and/or survey the residents as to the possibility of being able to opt for the 64 gallon container(s). Suggestions ranged from the Township’s Newsletter, Web Site, Utility bill and having a side-by-side display of the 96 vs 64 gallon containers in the Newsletter (photograph) and at the ESC’s Community Weekend tent.

John Marks made the following Motion:

It is the recommendation of the Palmer Township Environmental Steering Committee that the Palmer Township Board of Supervisors consider offering Eligible Township Residents the opportunity to request that they be provided with 64 gallon trash and/or recycling carts as replacement for their existing 96 gallon trash/recycling carts. That "Eligible Township Residents" be defined as those over the age of 65, and residents who have been medically identified as disabled. That the wording of this "offering" be clear in that those opting for the 64 gallon container(s) will not be allowed to leave curbside anything outside of the provided 64 gallon container(s), other than during scheduled yard waste, Christmas Tree, bulk/white item pick up dates. The reason for the prohibition being the terms of the current contract between Palmer Township and its Hauler.

Motion Seconded by Thomas Ganssle. Voice vote: Unanimously in favor.

Cindy Oatis: The Township has entered into a contract with a new scrap metal company to service our scrap metals recycling program at the Palmer Township Recycling Center on Hartley Avenue.

The Township is currently in the "planning stage" of the design and construction of the new recycling center located at Hartley and South Nulton Avenue. Structural evaluation of the existing building is under way and may possibly be designated for several uses, including public works storage of equipment and/or recycling equipment.

Further discussion included the need and benefits of paper shredding services for residents and businesses. Options include use of the Northampton County Shredder located at the Northampton County Government Center; contract with a commercial shredding service; or purchase a commercial type shredder. Much paper tonnage, and its related grant revenue, is lost to a nearby municipality that provides this service. Ms. Oatis cited the approximate 70 tons of shredded paper reported by just one local commercial shredder who services Palmer Township. If Palmer were to offer the shredding service to both residents and businesses alike, the extra tonnage that currently benefits another municipality, would increase our performance levels and would translate into increased performance grant funding for Palmer.

Tom Ganssle - Received a request from the Northampton County Recycling Coordinator for staffing assistance during the upcoming County Wide Household Hazardous Waste Collection weekend being held at the Northampton County Community College on Saturday, 30 June 2015. Any ESC members who are available will communicate with the NCGC Recycling Coordinator to schedule.

Community Days Weekend 19-23 AUGUST 2015 - The ESC booth - planning the layout of the booth for our "theme(s)" for the upcoming Community Days Weekend at Fairview Park.

The space allocation will be:

Right side of booth: Bushkill Stream Conservancy inter-active displays;

Rear of the booth: A display of living plants and literature encouraging folks to grow native plants via establishment of a native plant conservancy at their residence, together with literature on the importance of bees to our ecological and economic

wellbeing;

Left side of booth: Table/Poster Board display of ESC's 25th year of Service to the Community – photo display; history timeline.

Left side of booth: Comparison side-by-side display of 64 vs 96 gallon trash/recycling carts.

Diane Halasz asked if the ESC would support raffling of a copy of "Bringing Nature Home" during the upcoming Community Weekend.

A conversation followed wherein it was discussed how many books should be raffled and/or provided to whom.

Nancy Nicholas made the following Motion: The ESC purchase 3 copies of the above publication, and raffle 1 off during the Community Weekend. That 2 additional books be purchased, and be provided to the Palmer Township Public Library.

Tom Dittmar: Seconded. Motion Approved by voice vote.

Tom Ganssle: Stated that he would not be able to attend neither the June nor the July meeting of the ESC. A discussion followed wherein it was agreed that the June 2015 ESC meeting would be cancelled. That the Community Weekend Sub-Committee would meet to plan displays, schedule time, date of who will staff the ESC pavilion, set-up and take-down. Sub-Committee meeting to be scheduled by mutual agreement of its membership.

Tom Dittmar: Motion to adjourn. Thomas Ganssle: Seconded. Motion carried via voice vote. 8:37 PM

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting of the Palmer Township Environmental Steering Committee is scheduled for **Wednesday, July 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, 5/28/2015