

PALMER TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

February 28, 2018, 6:30 PM

MINUTES

1. **MEMBERS PRESENT** – Tom Dittmar, Nancy Nicholas, Cindy Oatis, Ann-Marie Panella, Madison Smith, Ken Starace, Deanne Werkheiser

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. Motion was made by Nicholas, seconded by Starace, and approved by all to approve the Meeting Minutes of January 24, 2018.

3. **OLD BUSINESS**

A. 2018 Earth Day, Great American Clean-up

- i. Members will meet at the library at 8:30am, Saturday 21, 2018. Program will go from 9-12pm.
- ii. Trails and parks are being handled well, no need there at this time.
- iii. Problem areas include Bushkill Drive and 25th to Aldi along bike trail. Palmer Code Department has begun more aggressive enforcement as needed and where possible in these areas.
- iv. Will utilize groups with children in the safest areas such as the bike path and parks
- v. Items needed:
 1. Volunteers
 2. Oatis will provide solicitation letter for refreshments, arrange for the copying of flyers, assess supplies at public works, etc.
 3. Starace will assess and provide supplies request to Oatis as soon as possible and will contact Penn DOT to address overlaps in work areas.
 4. Werkheiser will obtain needed items with leftover gift cards from various businesses and contacts.
 5. Dittmar will obtain cases of water.

B. Stormwater and MS4 Requirements – Oatis reported on various meetings with Tom Adams and Smith for the purpose of creating MS4 education options. Smith will begin research and the subsequent preparation of outlines and various materials suitable for presentations, brochures, etc. to both adult and children groups within the Township.

4. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. 2018 Plan of Action, Goals and Projects

- i. Local bird habitat education – Starace raised the question of whether members would be interested in a speaker such as a local bird enthusiast and the possibility of creating education opportunities in this regard within the community. The committee expressed interest and Starace will attempt to arrange for a speaker for the April meeting.
- ii. Invasive plant education – Members expressed concern regarding the Township inadvertently disseminating inaccurate information regarding the planting of invasive plants. While it is unclear if that has happened, all agreed importance of educating our residents in this regard. Oatis indicated this subject has been included in the environmental section of the upcoming website update.
- iii. Tires – Starace informed the committee of the need to assist local environmental groups who are currently pulling tires out of the local waterways. Help needed includes storage and the costs associated with disposal. Panella offered to contact public works to address the more pressing need to relieve a local resident who has been storing recovered tires on his property. Oatis stated that assuming this is going to be an ongoing effort, it would be best that the group submit a proposal to

the township manager which would define the problem, identify solutions, and delineate expected annual costs. This will allow the Township to make decisions regarding allocation funds according to the current budget and provide for future budgeting.

- B. Suggestions for 2019 Plan of Action, Goals and Projects – Discussion on beginning the planning for various programs the committee would like to consider for 2019.
- i. Electronics, HHW, Stuff-a-Truck Events
 - ii. Environmental education for ESC members – Oatis indicated that the Township has always supported a member's desire to attend relevant, educational workshops, though in past years there has been no interest and was subsequently removed from the budget.
 - iii. Road litter – Members all agreed that the township and state roads have become horribly contaminated with litter. Ann Marie indicated this is handled by the code department but often difficult to prosecute. In response to the plastic bags that go airborne getting caught in trees, bushes, and along roads, discussion ensued regarding the possibility of implementing the "no plastic bags – bring your own bag" trend being implemented by many municipalities.
 - iv. Earth Day native planting event
 - v. Composting Workshop – Dittmar expressed an interest in restarting composting workshops. Oatis reported on a new program whereby residents can purchase composters directly through Rainbow Environmental and then learn how to compost through a Township-sponsored workshop. Oatis to provide Dittmar with the contact information for Jeff at Rainbow.
 - vi. Children's environmental education programs – The committee would like to explore options in this regard. Possible locations and subject matter were discussed. The idea of a collaborative effort with organizations such as Jacobsburg State Park, Nature Nurture, Wildlands Conservancy and Lafayette College which could provide programs to various Palmer groups such as summer church, public, and private children's programs.

5. UPDATES/REPORTS

- A. Recycling Report – C. Oatis
Oatis reported that Palmer will be submitting an application for the 2018 PA DEP 902 Grant for the purpose of building a new recycling center on the land next to the existing center. A ReStore Stuff-a-Truck event has been arranged. See the attached Schedule of Events for this event as well as the latex paint and electronics collections.
- B. Supervisor Report – A. Panella
Supervisor Panella gave an overview of the status of application to build warehouses abutting the residential properties and the insertion of an open space area to create a buffer zone. The application was denied for several reasons including concern regarding the large diesel fuel emissions which are reported to be 100 times more potent than from catalytic converters and gas engines.

6. NEXT MEETING: April 25, 2018

7. **ADJOURNMENT** – Motion to adjourn was made at 9:15pm by Werkheiser, seconded by Starace and approved by all.

Submitted by C. Oatis