

# PALMER TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

April 25, 2018, 6:30 PM

## MINUTES

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1. **MEMBERS PRESENT** – Tom Dittmar, Cindy Oatis, Ann-Marie Panella, Rob Reese, Madison Smith, Deanne Werkheiser  
Guest – Brian Hillard, Bethlehem EAC
2. **CONSENT AGENDA** – A motion to approve the minutes from the meetings of February 28, 2018 and March 28, 2018 was made by Werkheiser, seconded by Smith, and approved by all.
3. **NEW BUSINESS**
  - A. Lehigh Valley Environmental Groups – Brian Hillard is a member of the Bethlehem EAC and a technical specialist with the non-profit Sustainable Energy Fund. Brian expressed an interest in creating an opportunity for all local environmental groups to meet and discuss the types of programs and initiatives currently being addressed in their respective communities. All agreed that this type of collaborative approach could be mutually beneficial.
  - B. Total Recycle Electronics Event Collection – Oatis reported on new program offered by this company. The Township would provide the location, forklift and operator, and volunteers to control traffic. The company would provide 6-10 employees to unload, shrink wrap, and transport materials to R2 certified processors. Numerous options for funding this type program would be available.
  - C. Yard Waste Discussion - Tabled to May meeting
4. **OLD BUSINESS**
  - A. Electronics Recycling – Discussion took place regarding various options for the collection of electronics. Last month's discussion included the pros and cons of a year-round individual curbside aka "at your door" collection of electronics. There are several companies that offer event type programs and earlier in this meeting the committee learned about a newer event collection model. The purpose was to gain insight on which type of program (curbside vs. event collection) would best meet the needs of Palmer residents. Key points of this discussion are as follows:
    - i. Currently there appears to be little movement on PA Senate Bill 800 which would provide for counties to partner with manufacturers and provide for the recycling of electronic materials via a year-round program at drop-off locations.
    - ii. The committee was in agreement that while NH County is now offering electronics collection programs twice a year and at numerous locations, there would be some benefit in Palmer running one of their own.
    - iii. Choosing an event style collection program would allow the costs to be offset in various ways.
    - iv. Most successful HHW and electronics programs nationwide are run at the county level, and are either event or drop-off type programs. Collections "at your door" are available in the western part of the state; with only one located in eastern Pennsylvania.
    - v. An "at your door" type collection program would be easier for some of our elderly and would provide year-round collection to all residents.
    - vi. This type of service could be abused by some, and Palmer might be forced to accept materials from outside communities. Possible increase in illegal dumping of electronics in the Township could also take place as it would be known that the Township had an all-inclusive program.
    - vii. Concern was expressed that if you start a curbside-type collection program, it would be difficult to take it away and return to an event collection program.
    - viii. There are potential dangers associated with allowing volatile materials and corrosives to be left unattended outside residences.
    - ix. Based on the percentage of Palmer participants at previous years' county collection events, it does not appear that the need is great enough to warrant the cost of a curbside collection program.
    - x. Concern was expressed regarding the inequity of all residents bearing the significant cost of a curbside collection for the benefit of only a few.

- xi. Though pricing for both types of events has not yet been exacted, it is well-known that a curbside “on-demand” type program would be significantly more expensive, by thousands of dollars, than our current electronics recycling costs or if we were to host our own event.

Werkheiser made the motion, that should the Township determine that there is a need to add an additional electronics collection; that the Township should opt for the more cost efficient and more equitable event model. Said motion was seconded by Dittmar and approved by all.

- B. Tire Disposal – Oatis reported that the Board of Supervisors approved the storage and cost of recycling the tires collected from the Lehigh River and nearby roads and trails. \$150 has been allocated for this cost within the 2018 budget. In the event there may be a need for temporary storage of these tires, the Township will be notified ahead of time and arrangements for same will be made.
- C. ReStore Stuff-a-Truck Event – Oatis reported that while attendance at this event was sparse, ReStore indicated that it was expected and typical for a first time event and that they would look forward to hosting future events in Palmer.
- D. 2018 Projects and Goals
  - i. Local Bird Habitat Education – Postponed to the May meeting.
  - ii. Environmental Education for Children – Committee anticipates beginning with a small program with 3 sessions as part of the Palmer Library summer program.

## 5. UPDATES/REPORTS

- A. NH County Ecycling Event - May 5, 2018; 9-12pm; Werkheiser reported that we have an adequate number of volunteers but more would be appreciated. Smith indicated that she would reach out to EAHS environmental students for additional volunteers. Dittmar will be transporting Township materials to the event and AERC will bill the Township directly.
- B. Earth Day Litter Clean-up Report – Starace provided a preliminary report indicating that 51 volunteers and 7 committee members participated and included a diverse group of men, women, and children including Girls Scouts, Boy Scouts, Brownies, church groups, and numerous groups of seniors. Our coverage was well balanced and encompassed areas of parks, trails and roads. The collection produced at least 36 bags of trash, 28 bags of recyclables, and miscellaneous items including a vacuum, shopping carts and brake rotors. The committee wishes to thank everyone for their donations, participation, and execution of this very successful event.
- C. MS4 Report – Smith discussed the status of her PowerPoint presentation(s) and indicated she would be forwarding it to Tom Adams for review. Reese expressed an interest in reviewing and commenting on same.
- D. Supervisor Report – Panella indicated that the Board of Supervisors were pleased to allocate funds for the recycling of tires and appreciated the efforts of all involved.

## 6. NEXT MEETING: May 23, 2018

## 7. ADJOURNMENT – Motion to adjourn was made at 8:23pm by Smith, seconded by Dittmar, and approved by all.