

PALMER TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

September 25, 2018, 6:30 PM

Minutes

1. **ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS** - The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm. In attendance were Tom Dittmar, Nancy Nicholas, Rob Reese, Ken Starace, Cindy Oatis, and guests Bridget Salantri and Dave Baxter.
2. **MEETING MINUTES** – A review of the August meeting minutes was necessary to clarify a few items. Minutes will be formalized and submitted for approval at the next ESC meeting.
3. **OLD BUSINESS**
 - A. Bridget Salantri updated the committee regarding her work on the atrazine presentation and provided the committee with a draft her presentation. Reese indicated that the Easton Suburban Water Authority informed him that although it does not test for atrazine, its filtration process removes it from the water before it could present a problem to our residents. Whether or not American Water filtration would remove these types of chemicals is unknown. Reese further indicated that there was a possibility that Lafayette and others may be working on this issue. Oatis indicated that the presentation should be between 5 and 10 minutes and then allow for questions. The committee should have specific recommendations and requests – i.e. time of year, locations, and a price quote for the cost of the testing. She also indicated that the committee’s position and requests would carry more weight if this initiative were partnered with others in the field such as Easton Suburban, Bushkill Stream Conservancy, Lafayette College, or the Conservation District.
4. **REPORTS**
 - A. Oatis addressed several questions Reese and Starace raised during the August meeting as follows:
 - i. All recycling and yard waste centers nationwide experience contamination. Palmer’s centers have had *minimal* amounts over the years. However, in July, the Township was made aware of deliberate contamination attempts by out-of-town residents.
 - ii. PA Act 101 requires that *all reported recyclables must be from residents and businesses within the Township boundaries*. While this has been the case since the inception of this law, the Township felt it necessary to make a very public statement to remind all that our recycling centers are for Palmer residents and businesses only, that identification will be required once we are able to hire additional staffing, and further steps will be taken to address contamination prevention at the centers.
 - iii. The Township’s recycling processor began providing us with recycling centers and curbside cart contamination rates as part of their recycling audit program.
 - iv. With respect to Reese’s concern over recycling revenue, Oatis informed the committee that there currently isn’t any revenue to lose. This is the result of the serious repercussions of China’s “National Sword.” In the past, approximately 92% of US recyclables went to China for processing. This action essentially stopped all but the most pure recyclables from entering China. Consequently, over the last year recycling prices have dropped dramatically and most recently the cost of processing recyclables as risen to between \$55 and \$124 per ton. While municipalities, businesses, haulers, and residents on subscription services have had to bear these dramatic cost increases, Palmer Township residents, have not. This is a result of the

way in which Palmer's last recycling contract was written. As far as yard waste revenue, Palmer believes that to minimal to moderate as it is hard to quantify.

- v. Palmer has been taking steps to update signage and our educational materials accordingly. The newsletter was the first of many comprehensive educational materials that will be addressing the problems of contamination both at our centers and in our curbside recycling collection.
- vi. The Township has been working to hire an additional attendant for both centers for many months. Locks at the yard waste center were changed some time ago, but if residents are seeing anyone enter the recycling center, they should call the police promptly. Our new recycling center will have substantial cameras.
- vii. Oatis is unaware of any type of "permit" at the Recycling Center.

5. NEXT MEETING: October 24 , 2018

- A. **ADJOURNMENT** - Dittmar made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Starace and approved by all.

Submitted by C. Oatis