

I. OPENING

CALL TO ORDER: The Environmental Advisory Council meeting of Lower Saucon Township was called to order on Tuesday, May 10, 2016 at 7:02 PM, at 3700 Old Philadelphia Pike, Bethlehem, PA, with Sandra Yerger, Chairman, presiding.

ROLL CALL: Members: Sandra Yerger, Chairman; Laura Ray, Ted Beardsley, Dru Germanoski, Allan Johnson, Hazem Hijazi; **Absent:** Tom Maxfield. **Associate Members:** Thomas Carocci & David Jauregui. **Absent:** Michael Boyle and Glenn Kaye; **Hellertown Liaison:** Terry Boos; **Jr. Council Member:** Absent - Kyle Bambu; **Staff:** Leslie Huhn, Assistant Manager.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ANNOUNCEMENT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION: The EAC did not meet in Executive Session.

II. OPEN SPACE SUB-COMMITTEE

A. PROPERTY UPDATES – No update

III. NEW BUSINESS – None

IV. DEVELOPER ITEMS – None

V. UPDATES/REPORTS

A. OPEN SPACE REFERENDUM – DISCUSSION ON RE-ENACTMENT OF EIT TAX FOR OPEN SPACE

Mrs. Yerger said our Planner came up with a definition of what maintenance and improvements were. She was also in discussion with Linc Treadwell about the legalities of the referendum question. He came up with a suggestion, which was in the draft form. When we bought Polk Valley Park, there wasn't an open space fund. The Township took out a loan and we have approximately \$600,000.00 that we owe on the property. The park has been used as open space and Linc Treadwell said this could be part of the question to purchase this property with the open space money and pay it off.

Mr. Carocci said he's for it being part of the question. Mrs. Yerger said this would be a special addendum using some of the balance to pay off that debt.

Mr. Germanoski asked what was in the open space fund now? Mrs. Huhn reviewed the questions that the EAC had asked at the last meeting regarding the monies in the open space fund.

Mr. Hijazi asked about the maintenance? Mrs. Yerger said she talked to Linc Treadwell about utilizing up to 10% of the money for maintenance and improvements on an annual basis. The law allows 25%. If the referendum passes, then a policy will be drafted for Council to spend the money for maintenance and improvements on a case-to-case basis.

Mr. Carocci said the language in the house bill says "maintain and improve" and he thinks the word "improve" may help to get some votes. Mr. Germanoski said he thinks improvements should be defined. Mr. Carocci said even though the word "improvement" wouldn't be in the referendum, Council could legally use the money for improvements.

Mr. Carocci said he thinks any maintenance or improvement over \$2,500.00 should be discussed with Council publicly. If we put in up to 10% for the referendum question, and Council wanted to spend 25% on maintenance and improvements, they could probably do it as that's the state law.

Mrs. Yerger said a lot of times, for property like Woodland Hills, DCNR will jump to put in improvements like trails and parking.

- MOTION BY:** Mr. Germanoski moved that the EAC recommends to Council to approve the recommendation by our Solicitor, Linc Treadwell, for an addendum to the open space EIT question, with the addition on the last sentence, “utilizing up to ten percent (10%) of the annual revenue collected to maintain and improve open space lands”.
- SECOND BY:** Ms. Ray
- ROLL CALL:** 6-0 (Absent – Mr. Maxfield)

Mr. Germanoski left the meeting. Mr. Carocci said he thought we would do something separate to instruct and try to make a recommendation to Council on requesting a limit of open space funding on how it is spent. Council would need to approve an amount or develop a policy. The recommendation could be to ask Staff and Council to work towards a policy recommendation on how to spend or utilize money for a maintenance or improvement project.

Mr. Carocci said he'd like if money is spent on maintenance or improvements, it would have to come to the EAC first so they could weigh in on it and then be discussed at a Township Council meeting and put on the website.

Mr. Hijazi said he didn't know if the EAC should be involved. Mr. Carocci said there's no environmental impact, but if we want our neighbor to vote on this, he'd be more comfortable saying if they are spending 10% on maintenance and improvements, that there's some transparency aspect to that. Mr. Hijazi said governments are always going to put their hands on the money and find a way to spend it.

Mrs. Yerger said she thinks what Mr. Carocci is worried about is if there's not a policy or procedure in place, we won't know about it. Mr. Carocci said it should be over a certain dollar amount. Ms. Huhn said she thinks they can develop a policy by asking Staff and the consultants to come up with something and there needs to be a review process. Ms. Huhn will come up with a draft policy for the next EAC meeting.

B. DISCUSSION ON FARMLAND PRESERVATION

Mrs. Yerger said Northampton County is way behind in projecting preservation of farmland. On the southern and eastern border, we still have some decent size farms. We may want to reach out to those residents and send them postcards telling them we will work with them. The average age of the American farmer is pushing 60 years old now. The majority of people are in favor of the farmland preservation.

Mrs. Huhn asked if someone would like to write up an article for the newsletter. Ms. Stanlick said she would do that. Mrs. Yerger said the funding is there, and the State and County are looking for farmland to preserve. The current County Council are very much in favor of and supportive of farmland preservation. We do have some substantial farms left abutting Williams Township.

C. TERRY BOOS – HELLERTOWN REPRESENTATIVE

Mr. Boos said the SV Farmer's Market opened on Sunday, May 1st with a ribbon cutting ceremony for Water Street Park.

D. HAZARDOUS HOUSEHOLD WASTE EVENT – MAY 21 – 8:30 AM TO 2:00 PM – NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Mrs. Yerger said she'd like the October 8th date in the newsletter and on the website.

E. ANNUAL VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION PICNIC – JUNE 13 – 6:00 PM TO 8:00 PM @ TOWN HALL PAVILLION

Mrs. Yerger said let Diane know before June 3rd if you are going or not.

F. DISCUSSION ON NATIVE PLANT SALE DATE

Mrs. Yerger said they can use Edge of the Woods. The EAC agreed on September 18th for the native plant sale at the Farmers Market. Mr. Boos said they can put pamphlets out announcing the sale with a list of the plants at the Farmers Market. Proceeds go to the Saucon Creek Watershed Association. This should go on the website and in the newsletter.

VI. OLD/MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Mr. Johnson spoke about having a horse trail by the Woodland Hills Preserve at the edge of the Benner property (did not get all as I could not hear him). Mr. Boos said if the soil is not favorable, you will end up with the gully situation. Mrs. Yerger said she's concerned about the houses that are behind the property. She said we could walk it sometime. Mr. Carocci said that could be an improvement of an open space property. Ms. Huhn said you may also have some maintenance like with the Dog Park.

A. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF APRIL 12, 2016 MINUTES

MOTION BY: Ms. Ray moved for approval of the April 12, 2016 minutes, with corrections.

SECOND BY: Mrs. Yerger

ROLL CALL: 6-0 (Absent – Mr. Maxfield)

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Mrs. Yerger said they received some Penn State Extension pamphlets if anyone is interested in attending any of the workshops.

Mr. Boyer was present. He asked how much land is available in LST? Mr. Carocci said they put a map together showing potential open space lands that are available. Mrs. Yerger said there are hundreds of acres available. Mr. Boyer said is there \$10 million worth of land in the Township? Mr. Carocci said he believes there is.

Ms. Ray said Terry Boos and Ray went out to do the adopt-a-road cleanup on Saturday, May 7th. No one from the EAC was present to help.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY: Ms. Ray moved for adjournment. The time was 8:10 p.m.

SECOND BY: Mr. Beardsley

ROLL CALL: 6-0 (Absent – Mr. Maxfield)

Sandra Yerger, Chair