

I. OPENING

CALL TO ORDER: The Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) meeting of Lower Saucon Township was called to order on Tuesday, March 8, 2022 at 6:30 p.m., with Dru Germanoski, presiding.

ROLL CALL

Members: Sandra Yerger, Dru Germanoski, Allan Johnson, Ann Spirk, Cindy Oatis, and Laura Ray (6:38 p.m.); **Associate Members:** Kaitlyn O'Connor Sommer and Tom Carocci.

Staff: Stacy Werkheiser and Carol Schneider

Absent: Member: Michael Boyle; **Associate Members:** Nicholas Lynn and Glenn Kaye; **Hellertown**

Representative: Terry Boos; **Jr. Council Member:** Bela Silverman

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ANNOUNCEMENT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

II. OPEN SPACE SUB-COMMITTEE

A. PROPERTY DISCUSSION #2022-1 – Dru said no action has been taken on this yet, but he will do the background preliminary geology soil next week and share that with the Open Space Sub Committee and then contact the landowner to try to schedule a visit.

III. NEW BUSINESS

Dru noted that Terry Boos, Hellertown Representative, is resigning as the EAC Hellertown Liaison. Terry asked that we announce the Farmer's Market will open May 1, 2022 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Also, prior to the meeting, Tom reviewed the by-laws and they had a brief and informal discussion about the Hellertown Liaison and there was really nothing clear in the by-laws, he would open this up for conversation, but preliminarily they reached the conclusion that this is a helpful liaison to have given that Lower Saucon surrounds Hellertown. It is not a matter of courtesy, but something that can be helpful to Lower Saucon. Dru opened the floor to other comments and thoughts. Sandy added that she is not sure that Terry was ever officially appointed by Hellertown – he did it because he was very involved in Hellertown and would go back and convey important information if it involved Hellertown, although she could be wrong. Tom added that his thought is if they think having a Hellertown Representative is important, which he does think it is, that they don't wait for Hellertown Borough Council to appoint someone. Tom said the EAC bylaws do not mention the word Hellertown Representative, but if we follow when a member resigns, the Township Council Manager is notified and they post the vacancy in the newsletter on the website. Tom recommends that the Hellertown Representative vacancy be posted on the website and newsletter and see if any Hellertown residents apply. If we do get applicants, then the Township Manager will review and see if the person is a benefit to EAC and recommend them to Council and Council would approve. They don't need Hellertown Borough's authority to have a Hellertown Representative on Lower Saucon Township. Sandra agreed. Kaitlyn added that if they will do this, it may be helpful to reach out to Hellertown and have them place it in their newsletter as well. Tom said yes, we can ask the Township Manager to contact them and see if they will place on their website as well. Dru added this would not be a member, just a liaison as this is different. Dru asked Tom Carocci if he moved to solicit a request from the Township Manager to reach out to Hellertown as well to advertise it on the website? Tom said yes. Motion passes 5-0 (Laura Ray and Michael Boyle absent)

A. HELLERTOWN BOROUGH WATER AUTHORITY – Dru wanted to wait for Laura to arrive, but he started with a background. He and Laura attended a Water Authority meeting a month ago where they were about to receive, and received that evening, a Forest Management Plan for the Watershed Authority property, bearing in mind that much of that property is located in Lower Saucon Township. One of the members let Dru know that this subject was on the table, realizing he was a member of the EAC and that it would eventually come before the EAC. Laura and Dru attended, and he shares this information, and will give background that he received upon asking the question before getting into the report, the idea behind this was the Watershed Authority wanted to try to manage the watershed in a way to maintain the quality and quantity of flow from the watershed to continue to provide sufficient high quality water to Hellertown. They initially, as he learned upon requesting information on why there wasn't a hydrologist reporting, contacted a hydrologist, and the

hydrologist suggested they solicit a proposal and evaluation from a forest manager. As it turns out, the report that he heard and saw was presented, and Dru was curious to know if they were hearing something from a standard forest manager or a logger. The company that gave the presentation had a logo on their clothing that they are loggers. What they heard was a report for forest management – not for any purpose of water resource management. Water resource management was never brought up by the loggers. Instead what they heard was a report on managing the forest for logging and for continual harvest of trees in the future. Dru said the significant focus of the plan that was submitted was to manage the forest in such a way that they would take trees out but also manage it in a way to continue to be able to harvest trees into the future. Dru asked Laura Ray if that was a fair representation. She agreed. She wrote down the name of JR Timber Management. Dru made the suggestion there that what he thought they needed was a forest manager who specializes in forest management holistically including hydrologically. He was expecting to hear a plan that talked about taking certain species of trees, maybe planting different species of trees that would affect evapotranspiration rates and the functioning of the forest to facilitate the best hydrological management of the resource. He is not being critical of the loggers, as they were educated, but educated in forest harvest. He is not being critical of the fact they did not discuss hydrology – it was rather clear that their forest management comes from the perspective of managing a forest resource timber in particular. Sandy asked if there were other companies there? (inaudible question) Dru stated there was nothing stated about any benefits to the water. Dru said when he raised the question, it was not their area of expertise. He would suggest that it would have been much more helpful if there was a hydrologist who cooperated with them who explained what the benefits to the water resource would be or to consider to find another forest manager who specialize in an ecosystem forest management where water resources are part of the expertise, and this is not what they heard. Dru said whatever they decide, they will see some proposals brought before the EAC. Laura said there is a meeting tomorrow night, and it is on the agenda again, but she was not sure the timber person would there. Dru said he would try to go to the meeting. Laura said she believes their meetings are the 2nd Wednesday of the month and this one is at Borough Authority. Tom asked if it would make a difference if Dru goes tomorrow and suggests that the EAC would suggest they hire a hydrologist. That the EAC would want to see that first? Dru said about seeing something more holistic. Tom said he doesn't want to necessarily force them to do anything, but if the EAC thinks they are going to need a hydrologist report, Dru could tell them this now rather than when they are before us presenting something. Sandy asked Dru if he shared with them that this is what he is – a hydrologist? Dru said he didn't feel he had the authority to speak on behalf of EAC or anyone other than himself. Dru said he would be happy to raise the issue tomorrow night that they feel would be helpful and beneficial to EAC if they have to render advice to Township Council to be able to do so from a perspective that they feel is more environmentally holistic.

Kaitlyn asked how much permission they need from Lower Saucon Township to do this? Kaitlyn mentioned that the timber laws dissipated restricting what people can take. She wanted to know if we had any say or if this was just a courtesy. Dru referred to Tom as being on Council, as EAC makes recommendations to Council. Tom said he respects Dru's area of expertise when reviewing. Laura added that she thinks the Zoning laws that they just get a permit. Tom said they need to review what they need whether it is permit or any type of variance to get the zoning permit. Sandy and Laura said they didn't think it would require a variance. Sandy added that, unfortunately, their stricter timbering ordinances were struck down at a state level, but she believes they would have to go by the current timbering ordinance. Tom said it is tough to say without seeing a permit application to review and asking the Zoning Officer if a hydrologist report is required, for example. Dru said there was no application at meeting that he heard; the logger was making a presentation to them for information. Dru thought the meeting that was taking place tomorrow may have more action taken. Dru suggested they be proactive and ask Zoning Officer to look into the Timber ordinance and what the various requirements may be and what role they may play in that process. This will help them be prepared for the next step. Sandy said someone needs to contact Jim for the current Timbering Ordinances that are now in place, as she remembers they were modified per the state but they need a reference. Dru asked if everyone would like Stacy to obtain the Timbering

Ordinance from Zoning Officer, and they all did. Ann asked how many trees are involved and Dru said this was not minor. Laura added that they have a lot of property and they were breaking it down into blocks, and the timber management only evaluated tree lots. There are hundreds of trees behind Erin Lane and Polk Valley Road. Laura also said there is a lot of landlocked land and is not sure what their strategy is to get out of there, but she knows she does not want them coming down the logging road by her. Laura said before they start timbering, they spray herbicides everywhere, which was alarming to her because it is not good for the water. Dru said that seemed inconsistent with a water quality management strategy goal. Dru said the loggers were proposing ways in which they continue to promote the recruitment of more ecumenically valuable trees, so when they open the ground up to sunlight, it is going to start a natural succession of what starts sprouting up and those things may out compete some of the new growth trees that they still viewed from the standpoint of harvesting. Dru drew the analog that this sounds like a farmer cultivating corn and using herbicides to keep the weeds from competing with the corn. Rather than a holistic ecosystem management plan. There was at least one resident from Erin Lane there who was very against this and they see this as them coming in and taking the largest and most valuable and they also felt that they were not hearing the argument how this was managing the water resources rather the timber is what was being managed. Sandy asked if Dru got any impression from the Water Authority on what their goal was and why they were even starting this process? The start of the process was, apparently, that this was suggested by one of their members as a means to try to make sure they were managing the water resources properly over the long term. So, they started with a hydrologist who suggested they talk to a Forest Manager, and that is where he thinks things went off the rails a little bit and they contracted a Forest Manager that is more of a logger with a logging perspective rather than a Forest Manager who had sub joint background in hydrology to change the composition of the forest for trees that were less phreatophytic and would pump more water out of the soil.

Tom suggested to Dru he may want to communicate that to them tomorrow night at the meeting if they are going to need a permit, and like Laura mentioned that it is landlocked, and if they need a temporary easement for a road or to build some type of temporary gravel road, all of those things will have to go before Zoning and Planning. He said he is not sure Planning and Zoning will go along without a holistic study approach, and doesn't see Council going along with it unless there is a holistic approach done. Tom said he may want to give them a heads up that this is what will probably be required if these loggers need temporary roads, easement, he isn't sure and they would have to talk to Jim in Zoning. He said it is tough for Jim to advise them without having an application in hand. Dru said Tom's point is well taken as Dru has the impression, based on what Tom is suggesting, that we try to inform them of what we need to be able to make recommendations upfront so that a lot time, energy, and money isn't spent and trying to prevent a do-over. Sandy added that Dru made it clear that this is a logging plan and it is not really a watershed management plan. They are missing a huge element of the hydrology. Dru said to be fair, he is not sure what the hydrology said but he was told that they first hired a hydrologist who suggested they hire a Forest Manager. He said what they heard that night was really a tree management plan, not a healthy ecosystem watershed preservation plan. He feels comfortable with what the committee is entrusting him to do tomorrow night, and he will communicate these things as the committee wishes. Allan stated he had a suggestion regarding forest management, they planted a lot of pine trees on their land and very close together and now they are drying out and is thinking there could be a forest fire problem. He said if they are thinking of managing the forest, they should think about thinning out the pine trees. He said he knows the timber managers are not interested because there is no money. Laura said they didn't start in the pine area. Allan said the organization who is managing the land should think about this, and it is their responsibility to do something about cutting down the fire hazard of those trees. Dru said he will convey this as well. Tom said this a good point, and maybe the fire chief can go and look at it and advise EAC and Council what his thought on this are. Dru said this is a long-term plan, at least from the point of view of the loggers. They are talking about being able to come back in 20/30 years, or even 10-year intervals. Laura confirmed the meeting tomorrow night is at the Borough Authority Building by the pool at 7 p.m.

IV. DEVELOPER ITEMS – None

V. UPDATES/REPORTS

A. ELECTRONIC RECYCLING FOR FALL 2022 UPDATE – Cindy said they received all of the documents from Wendy at RRS, and date of November 12th is confirmed. RRS provided all of the information for the application to the county and DEP, so she will be submitting that in the next couple of days. From there, it is logistics to come up with a rough plan and hoping Laura Ray will assist since she has done this before. Cindy said she talked to Wendy from RRS and she didn't feel the event would be problematic. Cindy discussed Public Works (PW) and what they will need to know what is needed for traffic control, is a police officer needed, should the Township use the pre-register option. Sandy said she recalls from the last event, the flow seemed to go well. Dru added he thinks it makes the most sense to listen to people who have the most experience, and if they feel extra help is not necessary, then EAC should listen to them, and Cindy agreed. Cindy said they ordered two trucks and when those are full, we will be looking at turning people away. She said Wendy from RRS assured her that they will do everything they can to accept things onsite if possible and redirect them to other locations where they can drop off. Wendy said there is no predicting what people are going to bring. Dru suggested to Cindy to ask Wendy to give up feedback based on what she is experiencing elsewhere and that people may have basements full of stuff after COVID. He would like her to help us decide, and Cindy said that is what she did with the two trucks based on our population. Laura said it has been a while, even before COVID since we have done one of these, but Cindy said the expectation is that some residents used the events held by Northampton County before they shut them down in 2020. Sandy mentioned she noticed a dump of items on Ringhoffer Road. Cindy asked if we knew what the Township is currently doing with the items that are picked up on the side of the road. Carol added that the Township has computers upstairs in the Township Building. Carol is not aware where PW is taking items they find on the road. Tom added PW would only find items on public land – not private land. Carol mentioned that Adopt-a-Road has not taken place yet. Tom added we can ask Roger what they do with the items they find.

B. LAND CONSERVATION MAILING AND WORKSHOP FOR 2022 DISCUSSION – Sandy added her contact at Heritage Conservancy that she was working with has left. She is speaking with Chris there who relayed they are in the process of replacing the person who left. Chris told Sandy that she felt it would be better to hold the mailing until the end of summer and did the workshop in the fall. This way the new person will be able to familiarize themselves with our Township, and share EAC goals and objectives. Sandy asked how everyone felt about this. Dru said this sounds sensible as we need to work with the contact at Heritage, and we can move it along as soon as we can. Sandy also thought this would be good too since summer vacations are over, and would allow time to work with potential landowners. Dru agreed that summer is tough, and it makes sense to wait until fall.

VI. OLD/MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS – None

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS – None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY: Laura Ray moved for adjournment. The time was 7:10 p.m.

SECOND BY: Allan Johnson

ROLL CALL: 6-0 (Michael Boyle absent)

Sandra B. Yerger, Chair