

# ALBANY TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

## MEETING MINUTES

**Kempton Fire Company Social Hall**

**2461 Route 143, Kempton, Pennsylvania**

**Monday August 7, 2023**

**7:30 - 8:30 pm**

**Attending:** Bracken Brown, Chair; Noah Rauch, Laurie Goodrich, Anita Zawada. **Absent:** Tom Kerr, Stephanie Stoudt, Randy Hensinger.

**Secretary's Report:** Noah recorded the July minutes. Minutes were circulated by email and at meeting. Minutes reviewed and approved unanimously.

**Burkholder Duck Farm:** The engineer, Mr. Nye, developing the land development plan for the duck barn asked to meet with the EAC to discuss the tree species used for the screening on two sides of the barn area. The barn is to hold 19,000 ducks that will cycle through every six to eight weeks. It will also have a body composting shed. Ducks usually have 3% mortality. A nutrient management plan has been submitted to county. Screening is mostly to block view to neighbors but possibly to help reduce dust. He reported NRCS has weighed in on plan though no documentation was given.

The proposal is single tree line of a non-native willow species or arborvitae. We expressed concern about the non-native species and deer browse on arborvitae. Also, the current plan has the tree buffer along property line near neighbors which is located downhill from proposed site of the barn and would not really block view except for that neighbor. Engineer mentioned it might be better to move buffer closer to building but also expressed concern that dust from fans can be too much for arborvitae. He also mentioned a drip feed could be installed for the trees for first two years. Bracken suggested the willows could have issues but maybe a hybrid species would not spread. He told the engineer the EAC would need some time to discuss the options further as a group. He thanked the engineer and said we would be back in touch with our thoughts on trees for the buffer. The engineer requested we get back in touch by email so they can keep project moving ahead. The EAC members agreed a buffer might be best if composed of at least two species and to be three staggered rows of trees so if one species does poorly the others will be hopefully growing well.

Other environmental questions discussed afterwards were (1) the distance of barn to Pine Creek tributaries, (2) the high quality status of the Creek and how runoff into stream would be addressed or avoided, (3) water usage and impacts on nearby water resources, (4) the fan noise, dust, and vibration that can spread farther than one would think (Laurie reported a friend lives a mile from a chicken house has annoying constant vibration), (5) the composting animals and how smell may impact local neighbors and how manure will be managed and spread (and impacts on waterways, and (6) the viewshed impacts to Pinnacle and other lookouts in region, etc.

Bracken will call Larry Lloyd , Berks Nature, about trees that might be recommended and we agreed to look into other issues. The EAC agreed we should consult Trout Unlimited and Maiden creek Watershed Association on the stream and how to best protect the environmental quality and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy on watershed impact. The EAC may compose a letter synthesizing what we find for Planning Commission and Supervisors.

### **Current Activities**

**Township Video:** Noah posted an excerpt on Facebook and members have posted a few photos over the summer. He hopes to have time to work on it later this year.

**Township Tour:** The goal of the tour is to highlight best practices to protect the environment of township. Bracken spoke to Larry Lloyd of Berks Nature. Larry is willing to assist but is not available on Saturdays in October. We discussed scheduling tour on a Sunday afternoon in October instead and Bracken will check dates with Larry. Noah checked into vans and found a 15-passenger van we can rent for the day for \$179. We discussed if we would need two vans and decided to try to carpool for any other people that might go along. Laurie suggested we can maybe get HM minivan. Bracken will find a Sunday that Larry is free and schedule the tour. Sites we would visit might include Bad Farm, Trexler streamside area, Chris Schucker farm, Old Philly road Usler easement area, Bolichs meadow. Larry will have good suggestions of stops.

**Social Media:** Noah reported we have had over 500 visitors to the Facebook page and that posting the scenic photos is helping boost engagement. He is going to change up the main photo soon to make it fresh. Bracken suggested we launch the ‘identify this photo’ location challenge perhaps to keep engagement going.

**Public Programs:** Bracken will try to nail down a date for the Tick program, possibly in late September or November. Noah will check with Stroud Water Center to see if they will do water quality and quantity program. Laurie will look into getting a talk from the PA Game Commission on bears, bobcats, bats, or another wildlife topic. The goal is not to have program in December so with tour in October, we might push some talks into winter. Randy had also suggested a native American talk. Bracken suggested we could offer it jointly with the Historical Society. The Leni Lenape Museum or other contacts we have through Hawk Mt might be one source.

### **New Business**

No new business. After the meeting the EAC members sat in on Planning Commission discussion of the duck barn plan.

Submitted by,

Laurie Goodrich

Albany EAC Secretary