

- I. A. **CALL TO ORDER:** The Environmental Advisory Council meeting of Lower Saucon Township was called to order on Tuesday, March 11, 2025 at 6:36 p.m. with Dru Germanoski presiding.
- B. **ROLL CALL:** **Members:** Chair, Dru Germanoski, Vice Chair, Jennifer Helton, Secretary, Kathy Pichel McGovern, Laura Ray, Chad Heimbecker, **Associate Members:** Janine Bohnam, Russell Sutton & Curt Balch; **Staff:** Carol Schneider; **Absent Jr. Council:** Harry Vicic; **Absent Member:** Allan Johnson & Cheyenne Reiman; **Absent Associate Member:** Winfield Clark.
- C. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- D. **ANNOUNCEMENT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION (IF APPLICABLE)** – None
- E. **JUNIOR COUNCIL - HARRY VICIC** - Nothing to report

II. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. **Support for The Watershed Coalition of the Lehigh Valley and Saucon Creek Watershed Association Grant Application at the Heller Homestead Park (Laura)**
Dru Germanoski

There is no Executive Session, and we have no report from Junior Council in his absence. So, moving into new business, which is support for the watershed coalition of the Lehigh Valley and Saucon Creek Watershed Association who are applying for a grant at the Heller Homestead Park. Laura, would you want to lead the conversation? There's a in the packet. We had a copy of the proposal, and then I think the operative action for us to consider is the draft of a letter from the EAC in support of that grant. So, Laura, if you have anything to add?

Laura Ray

Not really the outline that was given from this was written up by the watershed group actually probably Jennifer knows more, gives a good outline of what they want to do. Several of us were out there and walked around the loop. It needs help with the signs, even though they're not there for that many years, there's several that have broken off and are gone. Other ones are rotting, so the signs aren't in good shape. Also, even though it's a loop as a saying it's not well marked. So, we ended up getting lost off the loop, and we were no longer on the loop, so we came back another way. So, there's some help that can happen out there. And this was kind of like a spin-off lucky project of the other whole thing for the master Park plan. Watershed knew about this grant and thought we could start getting some work done out at the park. And we're all for it.

Dru Germanoski

I think that the opportunity to improve those grounds is a good one, and the Heller Homestead itself seems to be a popular place with residents. The times I've been down there, there were a number of other people enjoying an afternoon there. So, when reading through the material, the proposal, as it were, and reading through the draft letter from the EAC, I'm 100% supportive personally, and I didn't see anything in our letter that was out of line. In fact, I think it's consistent with what a good, functioning EAC would recognize as important support. So, is there any other discussion on that? Anyone? I'm sorry.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Thank you for doing that.

Dru Germanoski

I didn't do that. I received.

Laura Ray

I just put Dru's name on it. It's a forgery.

Dru Germanoski

This was a draft submitted to us.

Laura Ray

So, make it easy peasy for everybody. So, I mean, you can reword it.

Dru Germanoski

I didn't think it needed any rewarding. It seemed very consistent with what I would consider be my views in support of something of this sort, and maybe it'll help start to get some momentum for larger accomplishments with outside funding at the Heller Homestead. So, I think it's a good step.

Jennifer Helton

The Saucon Creek watershed is also doing a letter supporting it in offering volunteer hours towards it.

Laura Ray

I can add so Parks and Rec. did a support letter last week, and also at our council meeting, council did a support letter, which I need to sign tonight.

Curt Balch

Where is the grant being applied to?

Jennifer Helton

Well, it's coming from the greenway, the mini Greenway grant that the DCNR provide and through the watershed coalition of Lehigh Valley, and we initiate it with the Saucon Creek watershed because of, you know, the ability to go in, and lot of it's more signage and support from the township.

Curt Balch

Are the grants preset amounts or just drawing from a fixed pool?

Jennifer Helton

It's a fixed pool, my understanding is, but we have to, the deadline is really tight. It has to be in in the next couple days. And so they're trying to get all the letters.

Carol Schneider

You'll see a copy there. It's already printed out for you just to sign off and I have, okay, postage on the I'll take it tonight on my way home tonight and drop it off.

Dru Germanoski

I was thinking that otherwise I would, as you just said, submit this to me in the email and I could put an electronic signature on it. But no, it's here. Do I hear a motion for me to sign this letter on our behalf?

Carol Schneider

Do you move that you sign the letter as written?

Dru Germanoski

Yes. Second?

Chad Heimbecker

I'll second.

Dru Germanoski

All in favor, aye.

Unanimous Vote

Aye.

MOTION: Dru made a motion to sign the Support Letter for The Watershed Coalition of the Lehigh Valley and Saucon Creek Watershed Association Grant Application at the Heller Homestead Park.
SECOND: Chad Heimbecker, 5-0-2 (Allan & Cheyenne were absent).

Dru Germanoski

Okay, wonderful. I shall sign this now.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

How much? I don't know. It gets up to \$10,000 per project.

Jennifer Helton

I believe, yeah, I can find out.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

But if you look at Lehigh Valley, green ways, everything's right there, spelled out, because we will look. We were looking at it for something else, but it's very specific, and I think you can only, you can get granted up to \$10,000 the I'm pretty sure the deadline is either this Thursday or Friday.

Laura Ray

That's why we gotta get this stuff.

Curt Balch

My only question, do we get for the full \$10,000?

Jennifer Helton

No, they've worked with the township and everything. And there's a you get the grant, and then there's the equal and you can apply it towards volunteer hours. And so what the letter that came from the township requested, like support from Roger and his maintenance crew for mulch and various items

Curt Balch

We don't, we might like, we don't need to have an itemized request with the initial grant,

Jennifer Helton

Not at this time. Yeah, no, in the future.

Curt Balch

They'll expected with the ask, but the initial letter is okay without asking. I only ask because I've worked with some grant requests where you better have what you're asking for, and it right there.

Laura Ray

The asker is actually the Watershed Coalition, yeah, we're just, we're just their supporters.

Dru Germanoski

There are no developer items, so we have updates and reports. This is a relatively sparse agenda. It's nice for a spring evening. Let's move forward on updates and plastic bag update. Laura Ray, do you have an update?

III. DEVELOPER ITEMS - None

IV. UPDATES/REPORTS

A. Plastic Bag Update (LR)

Laura Ray

We do. Me and Chad both do. Do you want to summarize Chad?

Chad Heimbecker

Sure, I can add a little to it. Laura and I stepped out a couple weeks ago and we visited about 10 businesses in the area. I had a nice conversation with employees and owners alike. There's about 50 businesses on our list, so I would still like to go interview some more over the next month, obviously, and get a bigger feel. A lot of businesses are definitely using plastic containers or single use plastic items. I would say that there's the minority use paper. Products already, but there were some advantages. Noted that using paper, especially for takeout food, keeps the containers upright, which is just one of those things that they you know, the business community already recognizes advantages away from just plastic, so I didn't feel like there was a lot of pushback. It didn't seem like there would be a big issue. I didn't hear a lot of complaints or argument or, you know, hostility to the conversation, to everyone was very nice about it, and it would be more like, if this is what we were told to do, that's we supported. There was a few people that actively were talking about helping the environment this way and taking pollutants out upstream. So, I'm going to, I think we should, you know, go forward with interviewing some more businesses and get a broader scope. But you know, we've made some progress, I think, in getting a sense of the receptiveness.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

When you say businesses did that include restaurants?

Chad Heimbecker

Yes, it was. It was over here on 378 the ones that are on the strip mall where the B Social is from one end to the other. So, there's like eight or so businesses in there.

Dru Germanoski

Did you get a sense that some of that support would relate to them providing paper or preferring for customers to bring their own reusables?

Chad Heimbecker

Well, I think obviously, if you have a takeout place, it's going to be we might have to put that into the how we write this in some ways that I don't know if that's how that's structured in here, but if you're coming in to shop at a store and you're taking goods with you, having a reusable bag is understandable, but if you have a company that's selling you buckets of soup your takeout order, you're not going to show up with your recyclable bag for that, they're going to come to your house with that. So that might change this, but I still think that that's without making any overt accusations or but the takeout establishments, for sure, have the largest amount of plastic waste, right? Stacks of styrofoam containers.

Laura Ray

We're going to start small.

Chad Heimbecker

We're going to focus on the plastic bags here, I think that's, I think that's something that is an incremental change that we can make. And, yeah, stability and the sturdiness of the bags is going to be an issue, but that's something that I think they're going to have to figure out. And whether they choose to charge five or ten cents additional for these bags would be at their discretion.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Do you have any idea if plastic bags cost more or less than paper bag?

Chad Heimbecker

They're less, plastic. We should do a cost prep on that for a lot of them, but, and then some of them, the other thing was that they have them printed with their logo. So, they would want to get the plastic the paper bags printed as well then too, perhaps. So, that would be going into allowing them to have a transition period of a year or so to move out the old stock. But let's go talk to some more and see if there's any huge pitfalls in this.

Dru Germanoski

In our experience. It seems that either doggie bags from restaurants or a lot of take out or seem to just be moving more towards paper in our experience. So, I never thought about the notion of stability of containers standing upright better in a paper bag. It's kind of interesting.

Laura Ray

I'll say I went to a couple more businesses off the spreadsheet. Okay, I don't know if you mark that in there, the ones we went to.

Chad Heimbecker

I updated the spreadsheet with the ones.

Laura Ray

And then I think we can review it, because some of the businesses aren't bag type businesses. So, we can, I don't know if we mark them like that or not, or if you did, you know what I mean, like, categorize them, auto body shop or whatever we were at the, well, that barber shop was closed over here, whatever, whatever we saw, some stores that it's not the kind of store that would, yeah, the gym, actually, we did go in there and ask them if they sold any kind of products, and they, you know, like, if they sold any nutritional stuff.

Chad Heimbecker

They do, they do smoothies.

Laura Ray

I had good encounters over the weekend, and actually, like a customer, joined in the conversation. When I was talking to the woman up at Bechdolt's, very positive feedback. Actually, Bechdolt's was handing out cloth bags and. She told me that she goes. Some people won't take it. They want the plastic bag, which is, I don't understand that, so I'll put my notes in our spreadsheet.

Dru Germanoski

The plan Chad is to perhaps visit a few more businesses. Yes, yeah, the more the better, I think, both in terms of getting good feedback and information, but also so trying to enact something like this doesn't catch people off guard. Which knee jerk reactions aren't always the most well thought out. So, if people have a chance to talk about it and think about it and learn of benefits, and I think it has a greater chance of being successful when implemented. So great. Thank you for your time on this.

B. Select Date for 2025 Electronic Recycling Event and Chairperson (9/20 or 9/27)

Dru Germanoski

Okay, next thing on the agenda is selecting a date for the 2025 electronic recycling event and establishing a chair person for that and the two dates of September, 20 or 27 are floated before us. So what? What do we think?

Chad Heimbecker

I'm good either day. Either date is open.

Russell Sutton

Kids are back at school.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

You tell me which day it's going to rain.

Chad Heimbecker

They go back, 27th.

Jennifer Helton

Yeah, 27th.

Chad Heimbecker

It was the 27th last meeting, if I look through those minutes.

Dru Germanoski

Do we want to stay with that?

Jennifer Helton

Yeah.

Dru Germanoski

Does anyone want to step up to chair that event?

Jennifer Helton

I mean, I can chair it if you want?

Dru Germanoski

Okay, well, let's make that part of the record. Jennifer is very interested in chairing the event.

Laura Ray

She enthusiastically volunteered.

Jennifer Helton

September 27th.

Dru Germanoski

Okay, great.

Jennifer Helton

Carol what are the hours are the hours one more time.

Laura Ray

We do 9 to 12, right?

Carol Schneider

And you would have to organize volunteers. The volunteers would get here about 8:30 a.m.

Chad Heimbecker

I'll be here.

Russell Sutton

I'll volunteer.

Jennifer Helton

Ok.

Janine Bonham

As long as I don't have any sports.

Chad Heimbecker

Yes, right, yeah.

Jennifer Helton

I'll bring a sign-up sheet and we can double check. I mean, it's not that long. If everyone wants to just stay Chad will make Banana Nut Bread.

Chad Heimbecker

I will, but for people who show up.

Russell Sutton

So, we're not going tires this year?

Laura Ray

No. I don't think we need to do that, maybe every other year. Right?

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Yes, it doesn't matter. It really doesn't matter. I think we went both ways. I don't know. I truly don't know. Like, should we do it annually, or should we do it every other year? Cathy Gorman and I were talking, I said this one before, like, on the one hand, now people know, so maybe they'll be looking for it. They don't show up every day, yeah? It really doesn't matter. We can make it every other year. Yeah, that's fine.

C. Educational Ideas for Residents (MS4, Rain Gardens, Rain Barrels)

Dru Germanoski

Next item, educational ideas for residents. What's listed? Listed, parenthetically, is MS4, stormwater management, rain gardens, rain barrels. I don't know if we have to limit ourselves to those items. I think those. I wasn't at the January meeting, so I wondered if those items were an outgrowth of talking about committee planning. I'll offer this thought that the stormwater management, MS4 best practices are kind of implemented by township engineers and so forth, and so that doesn't lend itself to much community engagement, does it? Whereas maybe some other things where people could actually change their behavior or adopt new practices might be of more help.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

So, I have two things to say, if you don't mind, please, no. The MS4 was for us to understand as an EAC because when we are asked, I don't know how I got put in here, you know, it's a boo boo, whatever. But the MS4, it was an idea from the EAC members, for the EAC members, so that when we're looking. That blueprints, and when we're asked for an environmental impact, we understand what exactly they're looking for. However, I just found out this week, we can't, as a committee, ask for Hanover Engineering to come and present to us. I didn't know that. I was unaware. It is for them, it's over time. It's that whole thing that just didn't occur to me. So, Cathy Gorman, you know, answered me, you know, very, of course, very polite. But basically, you can't ask township personnel to come in the evening. You know, they have to be compensated for that. So, the idea was for us to be educated, you know, to be educated. But I didn't know about the second half till yesterday or Monday, Friday.

Dru Germanoski

One way that we might be able to still make progress with this Carol. Help me with this. In my memory, we did distribute, I thought, with the township newsletter several years ago, a summary of MS4 best practices. Is that not true? Didn't we have a brochure?

Carol Schneider

There is a brochure. I think that's why that was still on here. A matter of redoing the brochure and getting out.

Dru Germanoski

So, it might be useful just for us to start by having copies of the brochure at our next meeting, on the agenda. And then, with my hydrology background, maybe I could expand on some of that, but it would be a starting point.

Jennifer Helton

One of the things that we could do is, with the North Hampton Conservation District, they have a new person that could probably come out, and I can email her and ask, Paige, did you meet her the other day and see if she can talk about MS4 or Nate in that group? You know, when that's just part of their role is helping EAC, so with your permission, then I'll send her an email.

Dru Germanoski

Why don't we do that? And also still have our brochure at our at our fingertips?

Chad Heimbecker

I want to say that I think it's a good idea for us to be educated on this, and maybe if we just need to find an alternate presenter, then the engineer of record for the township to come in. We can all learn from that.

Dru Germanoski

I think the county's personnel is a good idea. So, yeah, we should do that. If you're willing to do that Jenn.

Jennifer Helton

I'll do it tonight, because I have to respond to the letter. Another question, if I can, if you don't mind? Oh, the committee that Allan was volunteered to go to. I think we need to find a new volunteer to take that role. Unfortunately, I can't do it because it's during work hours. Is that an option that we could do due to his recovery period?

Laura Ray

Do you remember were they virtual things he was attending, or no?

Kathy Pichel McGovern

It was both.

Chad Heimbecker

Allentown on Front Street with their offices.

Laura Ray

Right, I didn't know if some were zoom to make it easier for somebody.

Janine Bonham

Are they during work hours?

Jennifer Helton

Monthly, right?

Chad Heimbecker

Quarterly, monthly, something? And randomly, they have public announcement sessions.

Dru Germanoski

Carol, just for keeping record straight, just keep in mind, we're basically just jumping a little bit out of sequence here. But that's okay, because this is on our agenda. That's okay. No, I don't think it matters. Let's while we're talking about it, we should. This is a matter of functionality and making progress. So, towards that end, we can come back to other educational discussion.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Because I wanted to talk about Chad in the EAC. We'll get there the next thing.

Chad Heimbecker

I want to go back and talk about rain gardens.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

You just, we were just talking about the MS4, right? And bringing somebody in from the county, right? So, that would be a perfect Lehigh Valley EAC topic, for sure, because I'm sure we're not the only ones that need to learn.

Chad Heimbecker

I'm going to go down through the Penn State Extension and see if there's anything in there too, from webinars that we can get our hands on.

Jennifer Helton

The thing about, and I'm jumping back to the LVPC, is that they're going to be changing that MS4, and that's what kind of led this conversation. Okay, so with those changes, we want to be on top of it, because they're really promoting some of these rain gardens and, you know, those areas.

Chad Heimbecker

Do you think anyone from LVPC? I could visit with us, like the other way around?

Jennifer Helton

It's in development now, like these committees are working on changing the ordinance and following legal structure.

Janine Bonham

I would be interested over the summer, because I'm not teaching, so June, July, August, though. I mean, I'm available during the day, so that would be an option for me, just not until then.

Jennifer Helton

Yeah, I think we have to get the schedule.

Dru Germanoski

So, it might make sense than to with respect to educational ideas for the residents, for us to have the EAC learn more about MS4, then we could better decide whether to push a rain garden or rain barrel program or something like that. But I think this is the starting point for you to reach out Jennifer, and we can have, if we can have that conversation with them as soon as our next meeting. That would be great.

Chad Heimbecker

Okay, well, with regards to the rain gardens, I attended the Penn State webinar on that a week ago, and you know, they went through sizing metrics based on roof examples, how much rainfall to where that you plant different species. And they went through a whole bunch of slides of native species. So, it was very informative on how they build these. I was surprised, but one of their tactics is to build it out by putting a cardboard over the sod to kill it out over the winter, and then you remove that. I would think you want to avoid any of the adhesives or anything from the cardboard, but I guess that's relatively mineral, and it breaks down so and they don't even take it away. They just plant right through it again. So, it was very informative, and I would definitely think that that's something we could bring to the community, as far as whether it's something for individuals on their residents to take, to implement these rain gardens for water run-off, or whether it's something in the township, if there's property that we have.

Dru Germanoski

What would you envision to be the most effective vehicle for conveying information in the Township, and we've done things like brochures along with the with the quarter. It's a quarterly newsletter, right, that we normally distribute? Or is it three times a year?

Carol Schneider

Three times a year.

Dru Germanoski

Yeah, so something like that. Or, do you think some sort of formal presentation or a distribution of web links to perhaps the Penn State. All of the above.

Chad Heimbecker

All of the above. I mean, we could host a rain garden speaker. I think that that would be advantageous. I think that we could take some of the existing resources that they were already showing and if we can leverage some of that art or content copy, put that together into whether it goes in the newsletter, and then these are going to be recurring webinars as well that I would like to get publicized. And I know that our website is in a transition phase, but hopefully once we have a new EAC landing page, we can update that a little more frequently and easily.

Dru Germanoski

Yeah, if there's, I mean, again, there's a lot of existing information and data sources. We just need to bring it to the attention of the residents.

Chad Heimbecker

Yeah. And that goes into, again, this whole we have all the EAC conversation about, how do you get this information out there from all these disparate groups?

Dru Germanoski

So, as a follow up, Chad, not to lean on you too much since you participate in that, would you be interested in trying to compile some of these web-based resources that we could then share, either through our website or perhaps as a little paragraph as part of the annual township mailing. What do we think?

Kathy Pichel McGovern

While you're thinking of the answer to that, I'm involved in a different organization. But one thing that helps, it's not a great answer, but you look for like-minded organizations, so you piggyback that information with the Saucon Valley Watershed. You know, you piggyback that information with the Lehigh Environmental. The Lehigh, I can't think of what they're called right now, the environmental, whatever group. So, you try to get the most bang for your buck kind of thing. When you're networking, you know that event, the rain garden event, you know you invite this person and you make sure you put it on their Facebook and their Facebook and their Facebook, that kind of thing. It helps. Yes, it helps spread. You may not be hitting Lower Saucon Township residents all the time, but at least you're hitting like-minded folks that you know, then the word kind of spreads that way. It's a suggestion.

Chad Heimbecker

For sure, and maybe there's other events that are coming up that we can advertise, that are being hosted. I know there's a rain barrel. They're looking for volunteers right now to go pick up 65 rain barrels, to take them to go do a demonstration for so there's things going on all the time. It's just a question of getting advertised. If we could specifically, maybe, you know, reach out. I know the extension here with the webinars, I can go back and try to contact the people that did that and request some additional information. I know that we've just been out with the master watershed steward. There are resources there to communicate and get assets from. So, I'll try to get an information set for us on that okay, if there is somebody who's willing to come out and do a either an outdoor event, or maybe there's a facility

in the township that we can go look at as a demonstration. I'm not sure do we have this at all in on township property that we can say, like, look at this award winning rain garden. That would be cool.

Dru Germanoski

Basically, what they did at the Lutz Franklin parking area and park there's, there's a pollinator garden there that is also serves as a rain water retention pond. Okay, so, in essence, functionally, that could be a showcase. There's parking there, a pavilion there. Kingston Park is what it's called by, adjacent to the Lutz Franklin school house. Okay, right. So that might be a venue for doing something. Then, you have the advantage of a rain or shine with a pavilion. And if the pavilions 25 yards away from the garden, I mean, they're right there.

Chad Heimbecker

Whether it's someone to come in and talk to us here, or if we have a field trip, that would be fun.

Dru Germanoski

So, when you reach out to the county for a presentation, we could, we could talk about this as again, and if you're, you're going to look into some of the data sources. Then I think at our next meeting we should be able to make, we should make some decisions, yeah, about hosting event. So, if we can explore that in the meanwhile, that would be great.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

If you need some help with that, Chad, I'll help.

Chad Heimbecker

Okay, I don't have much experience with rain barrels, but I know you.

Jennifer Helton

They're straight forward.

Chad Heimbecker

Yeah, you've done demonstrations before.

Jennifer Helton

Through Saucon Creek Watershed.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

We just did the last, last year, two years?

Laura Ray

It's been a few years. The last thing we did was the compost bins. Yeah, it's been a while for rain barrels here. I think the week after the rain gardens, they did the rain barrel one. I got most of that presentation.

Chad Heimbecker

I don't have the exact heat in front of me, but I know the rain. I'll look it up in a second. I'll and then I'll put it in the record.

Carol Schneider

Jennifer, the rain barrels that we have down at Seidersville Hall in the basement. Are they the townships?

Jennifer Helton

The Watershed.

Dru Germanoski

Carol, when does the next newsletter go out from the township?

Laura Ray

Last week.

Dru Germanoski

It seems like we just got one or something.

Laura Ray

I didn't get mine maybe.

Dru Germanoski

Okay, that's too bad.

Carol Schneider

It was just mailed, I think last Wednesday or Thursday.

Dru Germanoski

I haven't received one yet. It might be sitting there in my mailbox right now. I haven't been home yet to check the mail. But it's unfortunate the timing that we because I was looking ahead at the PA Department of Agriculture, nutrient management and spring greening newsletter that we received that would have been nice to include, perhaps, you know, with a mailing, but the timing, the timing we just missed.

Jennifer Helton

But we can put it on the website, right in Facebook?

Carol Schneider

The copy that we have in here? Do you have a clean copy? Unstamped?

Dru Germanoski

We should do that.

Jennifer Helton

I think so.

Dru Germanoski

I'm not trying to jump ahead, but it fits in the same category.

Carol Schneider

We need a clean copy to post. Unstamped.

Jennifer Helton

How did you all get it? Oh, it came from, it came from Shannon, right from the, I think it came from Shannon.

Chad Heimbecker

This letter? I'm not sure if they have it in a smaller format.

Dru Germanoski

Now I understand what you mean by the copy being stamped.

Chad Heimbecker

There's a rain barrel workshop on April 29 or May 10 at the Seed Farm in Emmaus. That's what's on here. So, that's another thing. Again, maybe we can post to our site, ultimately, about these kind of events in the community. Again, if we can get the larger regional groups to share that information on a

central database, and that might help make that a little bit easier. But yeah, I'll get some more information on rain gardens for that, and we'll see if we can get the MS4 from the county a little bit for just for our purposes. And, okay, can I talk about the EAC?

Dru Germanoski

Yeah, one quick question. Who's maintaining the Facebook page?

Carol Schneider

I do.

Dru Germanoski

Okay, so you can add these things on there if Chad sends them to you and so forth. Yeah. Okay, okay, fabulous. So that's what we should do. If anybody has dates of educational events along these lines, just forward from Carol, and we've got if the one important thing too is if these things change periodically, people who happen on the Facebook page here and there, will start to notice those changes. And then I think the natural that's a natural inspiration for people to come back and visit again and again, rather than looking at stale, you know, stale information.

Chad Heimbecker

You have to build engagement.

D. Lehigh Valley EAC (CH)

Dru Germanoski

Yeah, we all end up sort of starting to recognize when something's not being updated and then cease to visit. So, this is great that people are thinking of ideas to add to the pages. Keep trying to keep it current. Okay, so having discussed that, let's move to the Lehigh Valley. EAC, Chad, if you're ready.

Chad Heimbecker

Yes, okay, so I've reached out again to everyone in the group, and basically, I have taken on the role in trying to drive this forward. At this point, everybody else who was involved with the decision making is no longer in their positions. And so, if we want to keep this going, it's going to be a grass roots, literally kind of campaign. So, they sent me what was the original Lehigh Valley Environmental Advisory Council's interactive platform and Network Initiative summary from October 24th. This is the governing document on what we're trying to achieve here. And I was coming tonight to get some help and assistance in networking for that. So as it stands, I know that we've just joined we conserve, but there was a person who departed their Carolyn, okay, so I need if I could request new contact information for who we communicate with it we can serve so that I can reach out to them and have a conversation about what their capabilities are they're also saying that. They're also saying that they've inquired, and this is from Arundhati con Walker, who's saying that Birdtown PA were contacted, but they couldn't provide a platform, but not with the EACS that are not Birdtown members. Then Northampton Community College needs a faculty member to sponsor the effort. Was able to have a conversation with Anita Forester, interested in exploring the concept further. So, there remains a possibility there which so I'm going to reach out to that person as well, Alliance for Sustainable Communities as a possible supporter in this as well. So, I have a number of contacts, and I'm going to keep moving forward on this effort. I don't know if we have a solution yet, anywhere in the near term, but hopefully we can do it. And then again, since I've been taking the master watershed steward courses with Penn State Extension over the past few weeks, Jennifer and I were just out at a geology tour. It was awesome. We started up. At the Indian tower in Nazareth to look out over Northampton County. Then went down to see some fossils along the Delaware, south of Easton, up to the top of Martin Yeah, up to the top of the kid, attend any ridge where the Florida the boulder field, and then where the two formations meet, right there at the Lehigh Water Gap. So, we spent an entire day, driving around and learning about the geology of the county.

Dru Germanoski

Who led that?

Chad Heimbecker

Nate Pritchard, very well-spoken, very intelligent, easy to listen to. You know, it is very informative. Two weeks ago, I was at Grover Arboretum, where the Master Gardener there, a man with 60 years of gardening experience was teaching us how to properly prune Rhododendron. And that was fascinating. Wow, I've never had so much joy picking dead heads off a plant before. So that was awesome. And it's been a great course, but the point of bringing up that course is that they have a volunteer portal that has access to all these resources to go back and look at the old webinars, MP four files from the state, from the local, and it would be the a perfect platform. So, I talked to them while we were there. I said, hey, can we have maybe a conversation about what this system is? Can you open it up? Can we use it?

Jennifer Helton

It's Penn Extension?

Chad Heimbecker

I understand, but it's so good. It's actually, it's so clean for what we would need as a Lehigh Valley Regional EAC to be able to distribute and say, here's our calendar events, here's our PDF resources of our ordinances, like we've talked about. Here's our information on rain barrels. Here's our information on you know...

Curt Balch

This is currently behind a Penn State security wall?

Chad Heimbecker

Penn State has their, yeah, for their course, for their courses. You know, you're a student, you can get into these portals. So just this, is it, right? And to be able to deliver that, then you would rely on some other third-party services like teams or the Google platforms or things like that. So, it's like, then the question is the cost factor associated with hosting this whole thing and putting it together, and whether all the local EACs would be willing to put in some fund towards this.

Curt Balch

But it sounds like the material exists...

Chad Heimbecker

Penn State doesn't have the material that we're trying to distribute.

Curt Balch

So where is that existing?

Chad Heimbecker

Every EAC has, where own our own websites with our own documentation, our own list of calendar events, our own Facebook feeds, to be able to have that kind of come into one centralized location. I mean, that's kind of the ultimate goal here.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

The lady that spearhead is just in the beginning. Is she still?

Chad Heimbecker

The girl who came here was from Muhlenberg. She was an intern in her internship has ended.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

There was the meeting, that first virtual meeting. There was someone there who was spearheading the whole thing. I want to say Whitehall, but I don't really remember.

Chad Heimbecker

I think that's right. Oh yeah, I'm not sure, yeah,

Kathy Pichel McGovern

She's no longer there, okay.

E. Lehigh Valley Planning Commission - LVPC (AJ)

Dru Germanoski

So, okay, thanks, yeah, let's continue working on this. You put a lot of energy into it. Yes, very helpful. So, let's just formally with the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission. We don't have a report from Allan for obvious reasons. So, Russ, you would like to okay, so let's have Russ do that and report back each meeting and we'll move forward. Carol, have we heard anything about Allan? Is he doing well?

Carol Schneider

Last I heard was what everybody else heard. He communicated that it would be a few months.

Jennifer Helton

Okay, so he indicated that it would take a few months. Yeah, he is home. He's part of the Watershed, and he's doing fine, but he is home now.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

VI. TOWNSHIP CORRESPONDENCE

A. PA Dept of Agriculture - PA Urban Nutrient Mgmt- Spring Greening

Dru Germanoski

We have no public comment tonight, and so the Spring Greening. Are we going to try to get a clean copy of that?

Jennifer Helton

It's just what I want to do. Are you everyone was talking I got a PDF. It's on a lot of the township websites throughout the state. So how it's being distributed. That's a great source of getting it put on.

Dru Germanoski

So, we can put that on the page easily.

Jennifer Helton

When I found it, it was all different, you know, communities, government entities, okay?

Dru Germanoski

So, before this sort of brings us to the point of reviewing minutes, but one thing I want to bring up is that I think we need to start moving forward, whether we do it with just the open space committee working together to have a conversation about revisiting the open space program and reviewing and then proposing any changes we think are appropriate that we could then bring back to the whole committee. I think we need to do that. We talked about doing that previously, there are some obvious needs for updates to the open space plan, the whole issue of the managing of the open space funds, given that they can be apportioned into acquisitions as well as maintenance. So, I think we have to, as we requested at the last meeting, to learn the financial breakdown of those funds. I haven't heard anything back, so I can correspond with Carol again to try to get the record.

Laura Ray

I've seen it, but maybe it wasn't shared more than Council.

Dru Germanoski

Okay, yes, we started to keep track. We didn't receive it. Okay, if you can bring that data to us at the next meeting, and then we could, we can pull together the Open Space Committee to function, in essence, as a subcommittee to look into the open space plan and discuss revisions, I would propose that we have an extra meeting among that group somewhere to do this, because we talked about doing that at the December meeting, and it's it is desperately in need of revision. So, I want to make sure that we get that ball rolling, so to speak.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

You also read my mind, because I was going to bring it up as well. We also discussed about inviting Lower Saucon Township presidents that qualify to educate them. That was all part of that same conversation.

Dru Germanoski

Well, one of the key questions we should have is, do we want to look at revising the plan and then sharing new information with residents. There's no reason we can't reach out to people with large parcels of real estate. And so that's something that I could actually get information.

Jennifer Helton

I think a revision would be important to do the revision, and as a matter of fact, I'm working with somebody that works in an EAC and Nazareth or Macungie, and getting some information. So, I was, I think it's important that we do a subcommittee we can just meet on an off meeting.

Dru Germanoski

And Laura just informed us that with respect to one of the open space acquisitions that's in process, that you reached out for a partnership, and we might want to discuss making that a standard practice of ours, again, as part of our revision.

Laura Ray

Yeah, Cathy's working on trying to get something set up, maybe even tomorrow. I don't remember what she told me, a zoom call with the solicitor that we have for open space, along with heritage. Our solicitor would be on it, but just to talk through, because we used to have a contract with heritage, and they would work from beginning to end. So, where we are right now with the one, the one that we just approved to move forward on, is kind of in the middle already, okay? So, if they would have the kind of catch up to do, right? So, hoping they can do that, because I think that's a big gap that we have where working with the property owner through the whole process and really getting a feel for them. Because I don't know how much you guys actually even talk with the property owner.

Dru Germanoski

We meet with them, and then, and then score the property.

Laura Ray

Yes, yeah. There's probably could be a lot of open questions that people have that there's nobody to answer or explain, how the process goes, why it takes so long. So, the one before kind of dropped off after, you know, we got, we did the appraisal, and then they were contacted with an amount, and, you know, not, they said, no. So, it's like, you know, maybe if there would have been more our conversation along the way as to what to expect or not expect, or, you know, it might, you know, I'm hoping we could maybe still salvage that.

Dru Germanoski

I'm just looking here at the packet that's before me, and it's a moot point to request funding information. It's here. Oh, so I didn't realize that. So, that's very good. Thank you, Carol. Please pass on thanks from EAC to whoever compiled the data. Okay, yeah, so it was an answer to your motions that you have. Yeah, okay, great. I didn't realize that. And getting here kind of right at 6:30, I didn't, I didn't look through this information. Okay, so this is, this is the response to our motion. So, this is good news. We have information to work with. Yeah, this is, this is perfect.

Laura Ray

I'll have to look for it, right? And I knew I saw it, yeah.

Dru Germanoski

So, this is a nice, detailed account. It has broken down the 25% and the 10% allocations. So, at the moment, it looks like just try to summarize that there is 11 million in the open space fund total, and that breaks down to 2.3 million and for maintenance and 8.9 million for purchase or open space acquisition. I feel a little better because I was doing back of the envelope calculations at the last meeting, and I wasn't too far off. Yeah, I wouldn't have been pleased if I was way off. So, that's lucky, but so this gives us, as we move forward, most importantly, it gives us an indication of what the funds are that are available. So, we'll always be operating in a more financially informed manner than we ever were previously. That's good. So, this is great. I will write Cathy a thank you letter on our behalf for doing this work. It's really helpful to us.

Laura Ray

Yes, so I think you mentioned about looking at property or whatever, about looking at properties, the large parcels, and I know we already had that same list several times before. Obviously, there's no new ones that turned up, I think maybe we might do good to look at maybe smaller parcels that are adjacent to conserved properties that might have some value.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

You must be careful with that of what you're considering smaller

Laura Ray

Well, not like one acre, but you know, it doesn't have to be 10.

Russell Sutton

When it says maintenance expenses. Who's responsible for that?

Jennifer Helton

That's to manage it, like the heritage being paid services, or if there is something on the grounds that need, if it's open space.

Russell Sutton

Who actually does the maintenance?

Laura Ray

It's probably the township, mostly, or unless they have to hire a service.

Dru Germanoski

That's one of our that's a major limitation of ours. We can only make recommendations. So, the actual decision making is done for all of this is done as a township level, yeah, Council, so, but we can make, we can now make recommendations within the context of the financial situation. So, I think this is a big step forward for us to know exactly what we're dealing with.

Chad Heimbecker

So, if I'm reading this right, we had 2.3 million available for maintenance, which goes towards what we were discussing last meeting, right?

Dru Germanoski

So, at the last meeting, which is a talking roughly, the numbers were roughly \$41,000 or was it \$43,000 right? In that range. So, now we can contextualize that and realize that it's a very small percentage of what's available.

Chad Heimbecker

There's already been spent \$800 almost \$900,000 of that. 2.3 that's not what's left.

Jennifer Helton

No, no, you must look at the whole thing.

Curt Balch

\$387,000 is the current balance. It's what's left.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Can we just start with, you know, funds received is that taxes?

Laura Ray

When, when was the tax in place?

Dru Germanoski

Surcharge. It's not a surcharge.

Laura Ray

It was a tax.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Per capita, per household?

Laura Ray

No, it was a point two, five mill on your property, assessment.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

It was a property tax.

Dru Germanoski

Referendums on the vote.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

So, the funds received came from property taxes.

Laura Ray

Voted a special open space tax.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

And in grants, and then interest, and then expended, then professional fees, then debt payment, then what's 25% and 10%.

Jennifer Helton

That's the what we discussed last time during the certain years you could, you had moneys available,

Curt Balch

The caps that were associated.

Laura Ray

We talked about, we're only allowed to have 10% that you could use, yeah, or 25% so she didn't break it down year by year, but it's really not important.

Curt Balch

So basically, they slid over.

Laura Ray

She did it right.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

It's when you don't know. It doesn't you know.

Jennifer Helton

And so, the maintenance and imbalance, yeah, with was spent.

Chad Heimbecker

What was that? \$500,000 last year?

Laura Ray

That's the Easton Road ballpark. So that's the big maintenance.

Russell Sutton

Or which one is that?

Laura Ray

Not really maintenance, but that's where that came from.

Chad Heimbecker

You know, the 62% of all maintenance money that's been spent so far.

Dru Germanoski

That was a one-year expense. Is that true? Laura Ray, that was Council. That was a result of a council vote.

Laura Ray

That's yeah.

Dru Germanoski

So, hopefully that won't be a regular outlay.

Curt Balch

I'm going to guess that was actually for clearing and whatnot, that kind of expenditure.

Laura Ray

It had to be a it was built on a hill, so they had to make it flat.

Curt Balch

Maintenance uses. So, I've got to expect that had something to do with retail.

Dru Germanoski

That was more of a construction than an actual maintenance, maintenance of the property, which turned into construction. Or enhancement of the park.

Russell Sutton

If they run it from the hydrant.

Jennifer Helton

But that's not anything to do with this.

Russell Sutton

Do they get metered for that? Do they pay for that water?

Dru Germanoski

I don't know. That would be from Hellertown Water Authority. I would think or Bethlehem.

Laura Ray

That was Bethlehem.

Dru Germanoski

That would Bethlehem there. That's that odd property break down where Bethlehem is.

Jennifer Helton

Because it ended, where we land in here. No, I would assume the small amount in 2025, was that, like a late payment?

Laura Ray

Yes, like delinquent taxes that they keep trickling in.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

The Open Space property tax. Like a 10 year?

Laura Ray

Yeah. Five years. We passed referendums three different times. We had 15 years' worth. And then, so really, the last year was 2021 but then, you know, a fair amount of the tax money came in in 2022 yet, and the rest are like delinquents that trickle in.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Then you have to assume that you're not making this kind of money again. When you're spending this, it's gone.

Curt Balch

It's a static fund.

Jennifer Helton

Yeah, other than the interest earned.

Russell Sutton

Yeah, so what you spend.

Curt Balch

That's for investment returns.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

But otherwise, that's important to know.

Dru Germanoski

There's no conversation then for renewing the referendum, apparently.

Laura Ray

No, it probably wouldn't happen with that much money sitting in the fund.

Dru Germanoski

Sure.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

My point is, two or three people participate, right? That number is going to get significantly lower, and it's not going to be replaced, as we're on goal with that.

Russell Sutton

About buying a property?

Dru Germanoski

When you say two or three people participate, you mean in conserving land?

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Correct.

Curt Balch

Just \$9 million could disappear quickly if we have large properties.

Dru Germanoski

I think a big issue is that we really don't have a lot of large tracts owned by people who are interested in conservation. Or selling the property outright.

Jennifer Helton

Clarification, if I may add, is when they do appraisals, they're not appraising their home. It's not like real estate appraisal. It's just the land and so it's a whole different right. So, it's different.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

But are they appraising it?

Dru Germanoski

See the outlays are for different things we've mostly conserved lands where we're buying development rights not properties. Yeah, there's only properties that were outright purchases. And I think one reason why some property owners have their property assessed, they expect a much larger financial benefit for preserving their land, and then when they realize it's not nearly the cost of the value of the property, they decide not to do it.

Laura Ray

So, that's where having the conservancy involved at the beginning to really educate the homeowners on it, because it's complicated, and I hear the stories all the time at council meetings, and people don't understand the process, and, yeah, we're not buying houses. It's not all of your stuff.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

The development rights, that's a whole different involvement.

Laura Ray

And it has to be based on, not if, if we get a variance, and we could put 20 houses here, you know, you have to base it on as is.

Jennifer Helton

Current market.

Dru Germanoski

Someone in the know, of the dynamics, could probably go through these funds expended and say, oh, that was the so and so X and X property, that was a purchase or so forth. So, I can, in my mind, I think of the only three large property purchases come to mind to me. And so, it's probably some of those big years were when each of those three properties were outright purchased. I mean, the obvious one, most

recently is the former golf course, right? That was an acquisition, not a conservation easement. I think Polk I wasn't involved in this, but I think Polk Valley Park was probably one of them. And then there's an adjacent track to the golf course that was an outright purchase, but most of them are conservation easements, which are much lower expenditures. Okay, so we will, I will try to convene open space group to start conversations on open space or revision of the open space program.

VII. OLD/MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

A. Review and Approval of January 14, 2025 and February 11, 2025 Minutes

Dru Germanoski

And so that brings us to review and approval of minutes, I see that several people have recommended some corrections to January minute minutes. So, let's start with January minutes first. Are there additional corrections? Has anybody picked up on to revise January minutes or correct January minutes.

Russell Sutton

So, in other words, once all these funds are used up, there gone?

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Yes.

Dru Germanoski

Unless you know there was a new reference referendum that floated before the township during of voting.

Jennifer Helton

Carol a couple questions on the minutes. When we do a yay and it's all of us, you put EAC, okay, I don't know if that's always clear to me that I don't know if you should say five yay, seven Yays. I don't know?

Carol Schneider

Tell me what you want.

Dru Germanoski

I mean we could report it several ways. We could say unanimous when it's unanimous, the majority, or a breakdown numerically of the vote. So is there? Is there any reason to have a preference for that?

Jennifer Helton

Yeah, I didn't. I read the notes, but I didn't catch it. But as she would put EAC, if it was all of us, like we did one tonight. And I find that a little confusing, but that may just be me.

Dru Germanoski

I think it might be sensible then to just simply say one of two options, unanimous or three options, unanimous, the majority or so it would be no just those two, because it would either be unanimous for or unanimous against, or majority for or majority against.

Carol Schneider

All you have to do is just repeat it that way into the minutes. Repeat it that way into the minutes.

Dru Germanoski

Yeah, that's fine, because we never want to identify individuals I don't believe and so which we haven't either. Is that amenable to everybody that way? Okay,

Chad Heimbecker

Yes.

Dru Germanoski

So, with the January minutes are, do we move to approve them as amended? Okay, all, I'm sorry,

Laura Ray

Laura, I had a pile for January, I think, sorry.

Chad Heimbecker

I have no additional comment on January.

Dru Germanoski

February minutes? I didn't have any, I didn't see anything that I felt.

Laura Ray

I only had one.

Dru Germanoski

The trivial things, repeated words and so forth. But I figured to let that go. That's the that's when we stumble, when we speak and I say, we should, we should.

Carol Schneider

Laura, I got 11 of them that you had for changes for the January and then February, you have a correction for typo for Brien Kocher's name.

Laura Ray

And I think I have it spelled wrong anyway. Yeah, I had, I think I had it spelled correct. Ein, yeah, yeah, like, yeah, yeah, yeah. He's not an I A n as an I E n, but it was opposite. Anyway. He's a trick speller.

Dru Germanoski

Okay, so it sounds to me like January and February minutes are approved as amended.

Laura Ray

And I have an item before we adjourn. I didn't find a space to put this in here, but Heritage Day is on May 17th, 10 to 3. They hold things down at the Grist Mill in Hellertown, and then also at the Heller Park. So, if the EAC is so inclined to consider maybe setting up there as a place to distribute information or hand out, you know, have discussions that would be a place so we can think about it. So, I just wanted to mention it.

Dru Germanoski

Yes.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Let me segue that very quickly, If you don't mind, I'm the vice president of Lower Saucon Township Historical Society. So just so you know, Heritage Day is about colonial times, like the Lutz Franklin school house and like between the 18 negative just so, you know, it's done apples and oranges with this. I don't think anybody's going to mind if you're there. That's not the point. But we're trying to from the Historical Society. We're trying to bring in, you know, historical artifacts and presentations and stuff and spinning wool and all that fun stuff for the kids at for we will be at the grist mill, and then Hellertown Historical Society will be at the Heller Homestead, and they do the same thing, and they have the Civil War reenactors, and they have, you know, so that's the venue. The venue is Hellertown and lower so I can historical societies and more like, you know, from colonial times up to, like, the mid 1800s so just FYI. So, I do remember last year the citizens were there, which is fine for responsible development, was there. You guys were in the corner. Yeah, but it's just FYI. That's the venue, and then if you want to participate.

Laura Ray

Okay, but it's Creek side, so it's a good location for water environmental kind of things.

Jennifer Helton

Saucon Creek Watershed can go in together, like we did before. You want to do that.

Kathy Pichel McGovern

Yeah, it was cute. The families walked from the Heller Homestead to down the rail trail to the Grist Mill. It was very nice, very nice.

Laura Ray

Just something to think about.

Dru Germanoski

Good. Okay, motion to adjourn?

Chad Heimbecker

I'll make a motion.

Dru Germanoski

All in favor.

Unanimous Vote

Aye.

Dru Germanoski

Okay, thank you everybody.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT
Dru Germanoski

MOTION BY: Chad Heimbecker moved for adjournment. The time was 8:12 p.m.

SECOND BY: Kathy Pichel McGovern, 5-0-2 (Allan & Cheyenne were absent)

Next EAC Meeting: April 8, 2025 @ 6:30 p.m.