

Easton Environmental Advisory Council

# MEETING: 03/04/2025

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**Open at 6:00pm / City Hall 3rd Floor Conference Room & Virtually on Zoom**

## Attendees

Members	Public
<p>Nick Gorski, Ian Kindle, Mary Arlia, Stacy Melvin, Robert MacDonald</p> <p><b>Associate Members:</b> Tom Pritchett, Paul Schalow</p> <p><b>Absent Members:</b> Tony Klapatch, Ian Kindle, Analise Draghi</p>	<p>Miranda Wilcha, Todd Nemura, Kate Semmens (virtual), Rob Christopher (virtual)</p>

## Agenda

Motioned to approve the agenda Mary first and Robert second, 4-0

## **EAC Organization**

Meeting called to order at 6:13 pm (due to technical issues)

## **February Meeting Minutes Approval**

Motioned to approve the minutes Robert McDonald first and Mary second, 4-0

## **Public Comment**

No public comment was made

## Reports

### Nurture Nature Center:

Kate Semmens shared an update about Youth Climate Summit April 25-26, tables set up from 12:00-2:00 both days at NNC. Mary offered to organize a sign-up sheet for volunteer help.

NNC cleanup April 26, Lafayette Earth Day probably is April 25, EAC cleanup April 26.

Miranda shared an update about Arborfest on April 25, rain date the next day. Asked for volunteers to set up 1:45-2:00.

### Waste & Recycling Committee:

Mary is in touch with Mark Reed from Easton Community Gardens to explore potential collaboration. Miranda also pointed out that there might be future opportunities to coordinate food waste pickups with them.

EAC Cleanup first Saturday in April and April 25, back to Scott Park. Mary requested supplies (safety vests and trash bags) and asked to pick them up when ready. Another request for supplies should be submitted in November. Miranda said Rob will provide bags on an as-needed-basis. Buckets are needed for broken glass pickup.

**Transportation Committee:**

Nick shared an update that not much has changed since last month about Transportation, but gears are turning and we should see progress. Congestion pricing is easing commute time to NTC from Easton which is good.

**Greenspace Committee:**

There were no new updates made at this time.

### **Communications Committee:**

Robert MacDonald attended Blue Zones meeting Feb. 7. He found it was a very informative meeting about improving lifestyle to improve the environment. People wanted more public transportation in breakout meetings, and improved walkability. The step-by-step plan impressed him, finished with the discovery phase, currently in the building phase report, next is producing the final plan.

Todd Nemura shared that at Blue Zones the top two vote getters for Built Environment priority were: (1) maintain current parking infrastructure; (2) create more open spaces. He needs volunteers on May 10 at Easton Farmers Market to publicize the Blue Zones initiative; he will meet with Emily Roland to make specific plans this week. Mary asked Todd to share the plans with EAC when ready.

Robert MacDonald spoke at a City Council meeting in favor of decriminalization of marijuana.

Signup Genius, Google Forms are two possibilities for signing up volunteers for EAC events such as cleanups, etc. This allows EAC to keep a tally.

Nick asked about combining EAC email lists—Miranda and Rob used MailChimp to sort volunteer interest lists, etc. and can share with EAC, about 44 people total. She made an internal Excel sheet. Signup Genius is good for event sign ups like Arbor Day. MailChimp is best for sending out announcements to list members. Discussion ensued.



## **City Urban Forestry Update**

Rob announced an ornamental tree lighting ordinance was passed to keep trees healthy and safe. Rob will need to check all the trees, remove bolts, etc. He has been planning for spring projects with Miranda while she is still available. He has a plan to plant the hillside with a grant from Lehigh Valley grant, including flowering trees and easy maintenance plants. Delaware Canal Park underground pipe work will begin in August, East Area Sewer Authority. The Hackett Park shed was moved to a new location for improved access, steps and fencing should be completed in April/May. Sullivan Park will get annual maintenance. ArborFest will be April 26 on a smaller scale than he hoped. He spoke of how helpful Miranda has been to him and his department the past eleven months; he will miss her deeply and expressed his heartfelt thanks to her. Similar feelings expressed by multiple EAC members.

## **Old Business**

**Membership:** Nick announced he will invite the Planning Committee chair to attend EAC meetings as a voting member.

Robert MacDonald mentioned the City Council agenda included discussion of Easton Trail, but unclear how it will mesh with plans to revive the railroad line there. Responsible Recycling Services will sponsor electronics recycling events.

## **Public Comments**

Todd shared information about reviving community-based food culture based on the 2013 report "Buy Fresh Buy Local." Hard data is important and there is a need to survey community sentiment about food sources and supply. This may become one of the Blue Zone initiatives.

2024 Annual Report will be presented to the City Council at its March 26 meeting. Nick, Robert, Ian.

## **Wilson Warehouse Letter:**

Nick asked Robert to write the letter. The warehouse meeting is pushed forward to next month's meeting in April, due to delay of PennDOT information. Once the letter is drafted, Robert would send it to all EAC members for review.

Nick explained the Main Zoning change is reduction of heights of buildings, also will make it easier for homeowners to install electric charging stations. Nick wants to address access to charging stations for people without driveways and only have on-street parking. Also, he felt the height restrictions seem overly specific. Nick will send out a link to the Zoning change report for EAC members to respond to or express opinions at the City Council Zoning Board meeting March 12 or March 26. Possibly voting on Zoning packages will be at the April 6 City Council meeting.

Nick asked about the need for a Visioning meeting. Consensus was that the EAC has a clear vision of its priorities and no new Visioning meeting is needed at the moment.

The Complete Streets survey was distributed by the City of Easton today to the public. Nick will put it on the agenda for discussion at the next EAC meeting in April.

Mary will coordinate the Compost Session at the next EAC meeting and invite a person from Lafayette College.

## **New Business**

Mary explored the issue of salt use on streets in winter weather. She summarized the issues and alternatives. Dave Hopkins can tell us what type of salt is used by the city, Miranda said it is rock salt. Union NJ bans salt on sidewalks and homeowners must pay for damage to sidewalks caused by salt use. Magnesium-based (purple) salt is one alternative. Miranda shared information about oversalting that killed trees and led to a lawsuit. Nick informed us of the existence of a road salt action working group called Little Lehigh Stewards and suggested Mary reach out to them for discussion/ action next fall.

Mary wants EAC to identify a monthly focus for public outreach: Bike-to-work Day, River Cleanup, Dark Skies, etc. Nick suggested starting outreach with focus on Cleanups. Tracy Werner and Emily (?) are helpful resources for public outreach. Tracy will be starting a newsletter to go out to all 10,000 Easton households twice this year, after that possibly quarterly.

**Meeting adjourned at 7:36 pm; motioned by Mary, seconded by Robert - passed 4-0-0**

