



ANNUAL REPORT 2008

BOROUGH OF KUTZTOWN ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMISSION

History

On December 18, 2007 Borough Council enacted Ordinance No. 17-2007, which established an Environmental Advisory Commission (EAC) for the Borough of Kutztown. The EAC consists of seven voting members (six borough residents and a Kutztown University student or high school student), a Borough Council Liaison, and a Planning Commission Liaison. Borough Council appointed Sarah Bellois, Amiee Bollinger, Jeri Colicchio, Art Goldberger, Robyn Jasko, and Todd Underwood as the initial members of the EAC. The primary purpose of the EAC is to examine environmental issues relevant to the Borough of Kutztown and its residents and to make recommendations to Borough Council on environmental policy. The EAC also participates in environmental outreach and education for the residents of Kutztown. The founding meeting of the Kutztown EAC was held on January 21, 2008.

2008 Report

At the initial meeting of the EAC in January, officers were elected as follows: Amiee Bollinger – Chair, Sarah Bellois – Vice Chair, and Todd Underwood – Secretary. For 2008, the Borough Council Liaison was Kevin Snyder and the Planning Commission Liaison was Lisa Ladd-Kidder. The first student member, Lisa Prendergast – a student at Kutztown University, joined the commission in February.

EAC members spent the first few months learning about environmental issues in the borough, determining how the EAC would operate, and choosing which activities the EAC would focus on. The initial objective of the commission was to establish a set of goals for 2008 and beyond. Through the first few meetings considerable time was spent discussing possible objectives. At the April meeting, members voted on and adopted a set of annual goals and a set of goals for each of 2008, 2009, and 2010 (Appendix 1). At the May meeting, members volunteered to serve on subcommittees that address each of the annual and 2008 goals (Appendix 2). The remainder of the EAC meetings for 2008 focused on addressing the annual goals and those for 2008. Below is a summary of the progress toward accomplishing each of these goals.

Progress Toward Annual Goals

1. Maintain regular communication with Kutztown University's Environmental Committee.

Dr. Christopher Sacchi, Chair of the Environmental Task Force at Kutztown University, gave a presentation at the July EAC meeting regarding the role and objectives of this group. Discussions focused on how the EAC and task force can effectively engage the KU community and how to work together on environmental issues that affect the borough. Preliminary ideas to

be pursued in the future are holding joint EAC/KU community recycling events for electronics and hazardous wastes.

2. Communicate and/or educate borough residents and local media (when needed) on pertinent environmental issues.

The EAC invited a writer from the Kutztown Area Patriot newspaper to our May meeting to publicize our organization. A cover story on the EAC was published in the May 22, 2008 issue of the Patriot.

In May, the borough established an e-mail address for the EAC to communicate with the public. Later, a webpage was created that explains the EAC's role and objectives, lists its members, and provides an e-mail link to get feedback from the public. A link to this page (www.kutztownboro.org/keac.html) was placed on the main Kutztown Borough webpage in December.

On September 14, EAC members set up a table at the Community Expo Day in Kutztown to promote recycling in the borough.

The EAC has identified the Community Development Office on Main St. as a location for advertising EAC events and information.

3. Produce an annual report for the EAC.

A draft of the 2008 annual report will be submitted at the January 2009 meeting.

4. Request and review information on the borough's efforts to meet the 12 standards of the Climate Protection Agreement.

On August 19, the EAC presented a letter to Borough Council requesting an update on the borough's efforts to meet the standards of the Climate Protection Agreement. Malcolm Eidle, Borough Council President, gave a presentation at the November meeting detailing what he knew of the borough's efforts to date. Mr. Eidle requested reports from each of the borough's supervisors on their efforts, but has yet to receive any reports.

5. Establish community workshops on growing native plants, planting trees, planting vegetable gardens, home composting, residential home energy audits, and decreasing energy use.

A composting workshop was held in April with several people attending. Plans are underway for early 2009 to hold public education programs on Sunday afternoons on home energy efficiency, bats and homes, and climate change.

Progress Toward 2008 Goals

6. Monitor borough air and water quality sampling plans and data to make recommendations on plans and ways to improve air and water quality.

There was an early focus in 2008 on water quality as it related to wellhead protection (see goal #9 below for details). In July, EAC members toured the drinking water filtration plant and discussed water quality issues with Walter Hess. Preliminary data on water quality in the Sacony Creek were obtained from the Maiden Creek Watershed Association. The EAC will continue to gather information on water quality in the Sacony Creek and in the borough wells before making any recommendations on efforts to improve water quality or its testing by the borough.

The EAC investigated the possibility of conducting a baseline air quality study in Kutztown. A consultant from Spotts, Stevens, and McCoy Engineers and Consultants attended the July meeting and discussed objectives and possible options for an air quality study in the borough. The EAC requested a quote from this consulting company on the cost of conducting a preliminary background study and proposal for an air quality study. The EAC has yet to receive a quote. In September, EAC members met with Gavin Biebuyck, an environmental consultant at Liberty Environmental and member the board of directors of the Pennsylvania Institute for Children's Environmental Health, to discuss the air monitoring station at Kutztown University. They learned that the monitoring station at KU likely is generating much valuable information for assessing air quality in the borough. In addition, this monitoring is very costly and the EAC will carefully consider the need for any further testing. Mr. Biebuyck will attend the February 2009 EAC meeting to give a report on the first full year of data collected at the KU station. After Mr. Biebuyck's presentation, the EAC will reexamine the need for any additional air quality monitoring in the borough.

7. Study borough recycling program and recommend changes to increase recycling rates in the borough.

Improving the recycling program was a major topic of discussion and planning for the EAC in 2008 with objectives of increasing recycling compliance and the types of items recycled. The commission received presentations from Norm Milnes, Public Works Superintendent, and Rachael Birckbichler, Director of Community Development, on the recycling program and the recycling code and its enforcement. After much discussion within the EAC and with Mr. Milnes, it was determined that promoting recycling was a priority, that plastics #1-7 (not just select plastics) could be recycled, and that paper/cardboard products could be comingled. The EAC drafted a new recycling flyer that was promoted on September 14th at the Community Expo Day. A new recycling flyer for all residents needs to be developed to more clearly communicate what and how to recycle. Unfortunately, the 2009 borough recycling flyer was mailed to residents before the EAC was able to revise it. Efforts are also underway to reach out to and assist landlords and businesses in the borough with recycling compliance.

8. Study borough's CFL program and make recommendations on how to implement the program.

At the borough's request, the EAC investigated options for the recycling of compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) within the borough. This is to go along with the borough's planned CFL giveaway promotion. The EAC found a company in Allentown that recycles CFLs via prepaid mailer containers. The containers hold 35 CFLs and cost approximately \$75. Alternatively, individual residents can recycle CFLs on their own for free by bringing CFLs to Home Depot. The EAC recommended placing a few recycling containers at public buildings in the borough, e.g. public library. Borough Council found this recycling option to be too costly and rejected the EAC recommendation.

The EAC is currently investigating options for recycling long tube fluorescent bulbs from borough buildings.

9. Study borough's wellhead protection plan and Sacony Marsh management & trail development plans to make recommendations on implementing the plans.

Early attention was paid to the wellhead protection plan with presentations to the EAC in February and March, respectively, by Jaymes Vettraino, Borough Manager, and Larry Lloyd, Berks County Conservancy. There was much concern over the spreading of sludge (biosolids and food processing residuals) on a farm near the borough's wells in Maxatawny Township. This issue generated much concern among EAC members. However, the EAC's role in this issue was one of self education. The issue appears to have been resolved in March when the borough signed an agreement with the farmer who agreed to stop spreading sludge on his land. The EAC has maintained contact with Larry Lloyd, Berks County Conservancy, and receives regular updates regarding wellhead protection and revegetation activities on the borough farm.

In June, the EAC sponsored an invasive plant removal event along the Sacony Trail and Creek. Five people worked to remove 18 garbage bags of invasive garlic mustard.

At the request of the Berks County Conservancy and with the approval of Borough Council, the EAC has agreed to coordinate volunteer maintenance activities along the Sacony Trail. The EAC was also approved to establish a KU student internship to assist in coordinating these maintenance activities.

Other Activities

In June, the EAC received an e-mail from a borough resident concerned about bats inhabiting attics of Greenwich Street houses along the Sacony Creek. An EAC member contacted Dr. Karen Campbell, a bat expert at Albright College. Dr. Campbell offered advice on what to do about the problem. In July, Arthur Goldberger, Dr. Campbell, and the borough resident were interviewed by the Kutztown Area Patriot and Channel 29 Philadelphia TV news about this issue. The EAC recommends erecting bat boxes along the Sacony Creek to encourage the bats to move out of the attics. The foundry has given tentative permission for posts and bat boxes to be erected on their property along the Sacony Creek near these houses. The EAC will pursue working with volunteers (e.g. boy scouts) to build and erect the bat boxes.

Summary and Future Directions

In 2008, the Kutztown Environmental Advisory Commission completed its first year of meetings and activities. Annual and yearly goals for 2008-2010 were adopted in April. The remainder of the year was spent addressing the annual and 2008 goals. The commission worked diligently to meet all of the annual goals and most of the 2008 goals. In the future, the commission will continue to address the annual goals, will revise our 2009-2010 goals based on current progress, and work toward meeting these goals. Finally, the Environmental Advisory Commission will continue to investigate and gather information about environmental issues affecting the Borough of Kutztown.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Todd J. Underwood".

Todd Underwood, EAC Secretary
January 19, 2009

Appendix 1. Goals of the Kutztown EAC from 2008-2010.

Annual Goals

Maintain regular communication with Kutztown University's Environmental Committee.

Communicate and/or educate borough residents and local media (when needed) on pertinent environmental issues.

Produce an annual report for the EAC.

Request and review information on the borough's efforts to meet the 12 standards of the Climate Protection Agreement.

Establish community workshops on growing native plants, planting trees, planting vegetable gardens, home composting, residential home energy audits, and decreasing energy use.

2008 Goals

Monitor borough air and water quality sampling plans and data to make recommendations on plans and ways to improve air and water quality.

Study borough recycling program and recommend changes to increase recycling rates in the borough.

Study borough's CFL program and make recommendations on how to implement the program.

Study borough's wellhead protection plan and Saucony Marsh management & trail development plans to make recommendations on implementing the plans.

2009 Goals

Encourage energy audits on borough buildings and regular maintenance on borough equipment.

Establish an environmental newsletter.

Study the use of pesticides and herbicides by the borough and make recommendations on how to make pest and weed management practices more environmentally friendly.

2010 Goals

Examine ways to increase use of recycled products by the borough and make recommendations on how to achieve this.

Investigate a "green power" option for borough utility customers and make recommendations on making this option available.

Research creating a community composting and mulch center and make recommendations on the feasibility of this center.

Investigate ways to increase the availability and use of alternative energy sources (e.g. solar or wind power) and make recommendations to the borough on how to achieve this.

Appendix 2. EAC subcommittees to address annual goals and 2008 goals.

Annual Goals

Subcommittee 1. KU Environmental Committee

Todd Underwood (Chair) and Amiee Bollinger

Subcommittee 2. Communication and Education

Robyn Jakso (Chair), Sarah Bellois, and Jeri Colicchio

Subcommittee 3. Annual Report

Todd Underwood (Chair) and Amiee Bollinger

Subcommittee 4. Climate Protection Agreement

Sarah Bellois (Chair) and Todd Underwood

Subcommittee 5. Community Workshops

Amiee Bollinger (Chair), Sarah Bellois, and Robyn Jasko

2008 Goals

Subcommittee 6. Air and Water Quality

Jeri Colicchio (Chair) and Arthur Goldberger

Subcommittee 7. Recycling Program

Arthur Goldberger (Chair), Sarah Bellois, and Robyn Jasko

Subcommittee 8. CFL Program

Arthur Goldberger (Chair) and Sarah Bellois

Subcommittee 9. Saucony Marsh and Wellhead Protection

Todd Underwood (Chair), Amiee Bollinger, and Jeri Colicchio