2018 Membership
The Kutztown Environmental Advisory Commission (EAC) members at the beginning of 2018 were Todd Underwood, Jeri Carroll-Sievert, Joe Sebzda, Melissa Engelhardt and Shireen DeNault. At the February meeting, officers were elected as follows: Jeri Carroll-Sievert- Chair, Todd Underwood- Vice Chair, Shireen DeNault- Secretary. Ben Carter continued as the Kutztown University student representative until his graduation in December 2018. Joe Sebzda resigned from the EAC in January 2018. Thus, at the end of 2018, four seats of the EAC were full.

Report on Progress in Subcommittees:

KU Environmental Committee -Todd Underwood (chair)-
The EAC facilitated service activities for KU students and faculty. These included creek cleanups, habitat restoration, installation of Wood Duck boxes, and the development of a visitors map of North Park. See Parks & Trail section below for details.

Community Education - Shireen DeNault (chair)-
The EAC strives to educate the community on being environmentally conscious. We hope to connect more with the community and started the year by creating a social media account with Twitter (@Kutztown EAC). In April, we had a stand at the Kutztown Block Party. We focused on water preservation providing facts about water usage and how we can better conserve water. At the stand we provided native seeds, recycled pencils, reusable water bottles, information about the EAC and how you can help the environment. On Earth Day (April 22nd), we hosted an event for children to participate. Patt McCloskey read a book about earth worms to the children and hosted several activities. On May 10th, we hosted a rain barrel workshop at the Kutztown Community Library. Karin Wulkowicz from Penn State University led the workshop and we received most of the rain barrels from Coca Cola. We hope to continue having these educational workshops for children and adults in the upcoming years.

Air & Water Quality - Jeri Carroll-Sievert (chair)-
The EAC investigated concerns brought forth by a Pine Street resident regarding the use of an herbicide by the Allentown and Auburn railroad that drifted on to her property and that was sprayed in the wellhead protection zone along the tracks. The resident also had additional concerns regarding exhaust from the idling of train engines at the train station. The EAC recommended that the railroad be required to have a certified pesticide applicator do any future spraying of herbicide and the herbicide chosen for at least the wellhead protection zone should be compliant for use near ground water supplies. The EAC further recommended that an air quality study should be conducted to assess the concerns about air quality near the idling train engines. An environmental chemist at Kutztown University was contacted about conducting the air quality study.
Parks & Trail - Todd Underwood (chair)-
In 2018, the EAC facilitated a great deal of environmental improvement activities along the Sacony Creek, Sacony Trail, and at North Park.

The EAC facilitated two cleanups of the Sacony Creek by the Kutztown University Outdoors Club (one in February and one in October).

The EAC worked with a Kutztown University student to carry out a formal tree survey along the Sacony Trail/Creek in September. The survey identified that Green Ash was the most dominant tree species in this area. Unfortunately, this species is being attacked by the invasive Emerald Ash Borer and the trees are already starting to die. Future planning is needed to replace the loss of this important native tree.

The EAC purchased native trees and shrubs and organized activities carried out by Kutztown University students in Environmental Biology classes. In mid-April, about 60 students worked to restore habitat by removing invasive plants along the Sacony creek and planting 88 native trees and shrubs in this same area.

EAC members continued to maintain and enhance the native plant demonstration garden at North Park. The EAC purchased and installed a native pollinator habitat sign at the garden and purchased and installed leaf cutter bee pupae in the bee house at the garden. These bee pupae will help these native bees become established in the structure that was built by a Boy Scout the previous year. EAC members also weeded the garden periodically and added mulch as needed. An EAC member built 5 Wood Duck boxes using lumber donated to the EAC. The KU Ornithology club helped install these along the creek at North Park in February.

The EAC worked with Dr. Richard Courtney, a Kutztown University geography professor, to develop a trail map for visitors to North Park. A webpage version of the map was created as well so visitors can download the map to their phone for use while hiking. The final map was printed and installed at the kiosk at the parking lot in North Park. Unfortunately, the map was stolen within the first week. The EAC worked with Brian Bailey to have the sign reprinted on aluminum so it could be mounted to the kiosk using security bolts. The new sign was not installed until 2019.

Finally, the EAC helped supervise the work of the borough’s environmental management intern, Sean Ward. Sean worked on trail maintenance in the park and on the Sacony Trail. At North Park, Sean weeded invasive plants out of the rain gardens, transplanted native Sycamore trees from the rain gardens to the stream bank, worked to control Canada thistle, and worked with Larry Lloyd, Berks Nature, to control the highly invasive Tree of Heaven and Japanese knotweed growing on the banks of the Sacony Creek.

Other Notable Work
We encourage and recognize community members who influence and educate the public to promote a healthy environment. Individuals who go above and beyond are dignified with a “Stewardship Award”. The 2018 award went to a woman who goes above and beyond to help her community, Lisa Ladd-Kidder.
Summary and Future Directions
In 2018, the Kutztown EAC completed its eleventh year of meetings and activities. The committee worked diligently to make progress on many of the annual goals. Noteworthy accomplishments were: the Rain Barrel Workshop, Earth Day Event with neighborhood children, tree plantings, North Park Trail Map, and Stewardship Award. Entering 2019 with four seats on the commission filled, the EAC looks forward to continuing to investigate environmental issues affecting the borough of Kutztown and coordinating efforts with Public Works and Borough Council to effect meaningful change. The EAC will continue to address and revise its annual goals based on progress and new business as it arises.

Respectfully submitted,

Shireen DeNault
EAC Secretary