

Kutztown Environmental Advisory Commission Minutes

Thursday January 4, 2024

In-person meeting at Kutztown Borough Hall: EAC Members: Todd Underwood (Chair), Kathy Kelly (Secretary) by Zoom, Lisa Ladd-Kidder (Borough Council Liaison), Cheyenne Friscia (KU student rep), CJ Penzone, Randy Wert

The meeting was called to order by Todd Underwood at 7:10 pm.

- Cheyenna moved to approve the minutes from the December 2023 meeting and 2nd by Randy.
- Announcements
 - In regard to the proposed Maxatawny Warehouse: THE TOWNSHIP HAS ANNOUNCED THAT DUKE HAS WITHDRAWN IT'S NPDES and STORMWATER PERMIT APPLICATIONS and the next CONDITIONAL USE HEARING HAS BEEN CANCELLED! We can only hope that Duke is done.
 - Not sure how relevant this work is now, but here is a summary of the water level data evaluation of the Kutztown Borough Wells, NESL MW#6, and Duke's Test Well. In summary, more testing and evaluation is required to adequately assess the impact on the Kutztown Borough wells. The February (wet season) testing needs to be repeated for a 5-day period. In addition, a 5-day test needs to be performed during August (dry season). CED (or someone) must supply their calculations of the safe water yield of the aquifer. An independent professional geologist needs to review and comment on the geological aspects of the area between the proposed warehouses, Kutztown Borough wells and the NESL quarry.
- Public Comment
 - Todd will work on the 2023 Annual Report and have it ready to submit for February 2024.
- New Business
 - Discussion of New Projects/Goals for 2024
 - Team will stick with the current subcommittees.
 - If there is a block party, we will participate.
 - Election of New Officers
 - Todd for Chair: nominated by Cheyenne, 2nd by Randy
 - Randy for Vice-Chair: nominated by Todd, 2nd by Cheyenne
 - KK for Secretary: nominated by Todd, 2nd by CJ
- Subcommittee Reports
 - A. Community Education
 - KK will focus on PFAS research and education for the community, particularly firefighters and children. KK will start the research.
 - Continue to update the plant of the month on our webpage.
 - Develop a plan for environmental education especially with the elementary school. Adult volunteers will need to be vetted unless they are teachers or KU students. The focus would be in the Saucony trail area.

B. Water and Air Quality

- Q4 6a well water testing at NESL will be available by February 2024. KK to follow up on any increase in PCE concentration as the water level in MW#6 is decreasing.
- The spreadsheet project for the data collection process for greenhouse gas data and inventory by the Borough is currently on hold.
- Response from East Penn Manufacturing (EPM) in regard to the air permit renewal request comments. They stated that they are planning to have a response back to us by the end of January.

C. Recycling and Trash

- No update other than the Borough has published a 2024 schedule.
- CJ will research and do a white paper on plastic recycling. This will be posted on our webpage as well as the Borough's website.

D. Parks and Trails -Todd Underwood (chair)

- Saucony Trail resurfacing: No update.
- Todd, KK, and Randy participated in a tour and visit with Larry Lloyd and Brook Leister, Berks Nature, along the Saucony trail. KEAC led tree plantings have been done on the trail side of the Saucony over the past 4 years. Larry has done extensive work over the last 20 years involving planting new riparian buffers and changing the farming practices on the borough farm. The buffers that Lisa and Todd helped plant 15 years ago are doing amazingly well despite the deer and limited care they have received. A planting can change the landscape from bare ground or mowed grass to something that looks like a natural riparian forest. One of the areas they planted was a buffer to reclaim a large area of mowed lawn next to the Saucony Meadows apartment complex. Larry worked out an easement agreement where we were able to plant trees to expand the buffer around one of the borough's wells. Great to see that so many of these trees made it and are thriving.
- Todd ordered marker posts for the Saucony Trail (\$1K) and purchased a new rechargeable hedge trimmer, deer stopper, bird houses and small tools. These were delivered by mid-December. We spent our budget for 2023.
- Todd used the hedge trimmer to clear the edges of the trail from the swimming pool to Turkey Hill. The trail is now easily passible, and the trimmer worked great.
- Todd reported that the maintenance road at North Park (or Larch Loop Trail) was widened in places and the edges scraped with heavy equipment. In some of these places, a few of the trees we planted were likely destroyed. Trees that were tubed were avoided. Todd noted that he spoke to Brian Bailey who indicated this was not the work of the Public Works crew but could have been the county or Borough Electric Department. Lisa suggested that the EAC formally ask Brian to find out who did this road work to make sure communication occurs in the future.
- Todd discussed plans for 2024 for the Sacony Trail and North Park. Goals for the Sacony Trail in 2024 are getting the borough to resurface the north section of the trail between the pool and Turkey Hill, extend the Sacony trail from the observation deck to go up by middle school, add marker posts to the trail from the elementary school to the south end of the trail, and develop a map for the Sacony Trail. Goals for North Park in 2024 are sowing wildflower seeds along the maintenance road (or

Larch Loop Trail) where the road edges were scraped, obtaining a grant to plant trees in spring, planting trees and shrubs along the creek in spring, getting the borough to cut dead trees and invasive Norway maple trees along the road to the bathroom, and planting trees on the hillside above the bathroom in fall. One final goal is to publish the Butterflies of North Park and the Sacony Trail webpage on the borough's website.

Motion to adjourn by Todd Underwood at 8:25pm, 2nd by Cheyenne Friscia.