Kutztown Environmental Advisory Commission Minutes

Monday March 7, 2022

In-person meeting at Kutztown Borough Hall: EAC Members: Todd Underwood, Kathy Kelly, Lisa Ladd-Kidder and Cheyenne Friscia

Meeting was called to order by Todd Underwood at 7:00 pm.

Minutes from February 2022 were approved.

New Business

1. Budget
   a. Giant approved the $1400 (through KCP) for the tree planting. This is great news
   b. No update on the application for a Grant for the Main Street Park Kiosks and QR codes for the tree identification. A current map of trees is to be developed.

2. Team Members
   a. Student Rep: Cheyenne Friscia, a KU Sophomore Biology student, has been officially approved to join the KEAC team.

3. Annual Report 2021
   a. The report was reviewed with one minor revision to reference SB597. Lisa will represent KEAC at the February Council meeting for the annual report review. Note: February Council meeting notes not posted as of this date.

4. Subcommittee Reports
   a. Community Education
      • There is no April Kutztown block party.
      • Todd announced last month that there will be an Earth Day event at the Berks Ag Center April 22-23, 2022. Kathy checked and found out the following information:
        * Friday April 22 is the pickup for pre-ordered plants as well as information on seeding native plants. The following day, Saturday, April 23rd from 11am-3pm there will be the first annual Conservation Celebration. This event will also include informational booths and activities, as well as food trucks and live music. Some of the following include Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Smokey the Bear, and Penn State Master Watershed Stewards and Gardeners. Both events are meant to highlight conservation and environmental efforts in Berks County and beyond.
   b. Parks and Trail
      • Per Brian Bailey, the new bench and trash can for the White Oak Pollinator Garden have arrived and are scheduled for spring installation.
   c. Water and Air Quality
      • Keith Leinbach summarized the Fuel and Electricity (greenhouse) data for 2020 and compared it to 2008. However, there were several line items missing from 2020 data and new items not included in 2008. He will continue to obtain the data.
      • No update concerning the Foundry’s reactivation plan.
Kathy compiled a water rate comparison with information supplied by Lisa on the Borough’s rates in comparison to Topton and Fleetwood. All three municipalities use a tiered rate system. Kutztown rates are the highest of the three. Lisa suggested we investigate further and make recommendations revising Kutztown’s current tiered structure. Kathy will investigate by looking at rate structures of other similar sized municipalities. One approach maybe 3 tiers, household, small business and large business.

Lisa reviewed her summary of water testing for metals from the monitoring wells near and around the Kutztown Quarry. The good news is that the metal levels from the monitoring wells are below the established maximum contaminate levels (MCL). However, the levels of Perchoroethylene (PCE) appear to be rising over the latest years. The KEAC is suggesting an increase in testing frequency for the Borough’s wells from once every three years to at least once a year in addition to the testing required at the quarry monitoring wells per the Water Supply Agreement (WSA) with New Enterprise Stone and Lime Company (NESL).

d. Recycling and Trash
   - The Math Department at KU is working with Public Works to improve overall efficiency. This is a class project for the Spring semester. Lisa to follow up and see how they are progressing.
   - Lisa brought up looking into reducing and/or eliminating all the junk mail and advertising flyers distributed weekly. Cheyenne will look into finding out ways for individuals to opt out.

e. Parks and Trails -Todd Underwood (chair)
   - Saucony Creek and Trail Cleanup. This section needs the most attention between CVS and Turkey Hill. Todd mentioned that the shrubs do a good job of catching debris. However, a few places need some replanting.
   - North Park Cleanup will require the most help. Lots of weeding, clearing out dead vegetation, downed branches, and general cleanup.
   - Many student groups have participated in the past and have expressed interest in helping again. These groups range from elementary school through KU.
   - In summary, Cheyenne has volunteered to get the April cleanup organized and setup.
   - Lisa mentioned that the Borough had had a grant for individual citizens to subsidize tree planting on their property. The money per property was $50-$75 and she thought the total pool was $3000. Todd will follow up.

Meeting ended at 8:30 pm