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## West Reading Environmental Advisory Council

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### MEETING MINUTES September 28, 2020

#### Members Present

Chairperson Jenna Hiester; Council Members Patrick Kaag, Samantha Kaag and Ryan Lineaweaver; Residents Jim Keller and Brian Adams; Borough Manager Nicholas Imbesi and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira.

#### Visitor

Council President Jack Gombach joined the meeting to share his gratitude towards efforts to beautify the community during the recent Community Garden cleanup events.

#### Call to Order

Chairperson Jenna Hiester called the Zoom meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

#### Approval of Minutes

Moved by Ms. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Adams to approve the minutes of August 24, 2020. Motion carried.

#### Community Garden

Mr. Adams shared highlights regarding recent garden improvements:

- Painted wooden flowers were dispersed along the front garden gates. These flowers are hung in such a way that they can be removed and relocated.
- Landscaping of the front garden gate area is planned for tomorrow should the weather allow. Garden lights will be installed after the area has been landscaped.
- A mural design has been submitted to the Main Street Manager for consideration. The mural is planned for the wall adjacent to the garden.
- Dilapidated beds were broken down and removed during last weekend's cleanup event.
- A letter has been submitted to Lowes requesting donations for the garden such as a shed, pergola, picnic table, benches, and garden lights.

Mr. Adams will keep the committee posted as to the continued progress within the garden. Ms. Hiester and Mr. Kaag thanked Mr. Adams for his amazing ideas and plans for the garden. Mr. Kaag noted his active search of an alternate location for a community garden should the owner of this land decide to develop this property. Members agreed that Borough owned land would be a more viable and permanent option as opposed to leasing garden space. Mr. Gombach noted various Borough owned parcels including space near Penn Avenue that may be feasible options. Mr. Adams indicated that Borough owned land could potentially generate an income through renting the space for resident functions.

**Pick Up PA 2020** – The West Reading area fall International Coastal Cleanup is scheduled for Sunday, October 4, 2020 from 10am to 2pm with the Community Garden as the designated meeting place. Supplies for the cleanup including tables and a tent will be gathered for the event. A children's craft area will be available and the Public Works Department will be providing a truck to remove the collected debris. A few large boxes were requested to transport electronic devices to the recycling center. A

laminated map will be at the registration table to designate work areas throughout the Borough. GNA Restaurant will be providing pizza and Kangen water will be available for volunteers. Everyone is requested to wear face masks and comfortable shoes. Mr. Adams will be setting up a sink with a hose to promote hand washing.

**Environmental Advisory Council Enabling Ordinance** – The following amendments to the existing Environmental Advisory Council enabling ordinance were discussed:

- A Vice-Chairperson designation was retained within the amendment to allow the committee to make this selection.
- Memberships from Borough Council or the Planning Commission were retained as a recommendation within the amendment.
- Associate memberships were included in the amendment to allow community members to periodically attend meetings for the purpose of advisement.

Mr. Gombach recommended keeping the ordinance simple and broad to encourage community involvement.

Motion to recommend Borough Council's approval of an amendment to the composition of the Environmental Advisory Council as presented. Moved by Ms. Hiester and seconded by Mr. Kaag. Motion carried.

#### **Projects or Initiatives**

Ms. Hiester shared her research of grant opportunities this past month. She has been in contact with a regional advisor from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources where a number of project goals are available with applications that begin in January 2021. Further discussion is planned to work towards more sustainable practices since the Borough is small with minimal open spaces.

#### **Update from Council**

Mr. Imbesi thanked Mr. Adams for his donation of mums to decorate Borough Hall.

Mr. Kaag offered to take on the roll of Environmental Advisory Council Chairperson in the new year if needed. Ms. Kaag encouraged Mr. Adams to consider this roll as someone who has time and skills to dedicate to advancing the environmental needs of the community. Mr. Adams was open to the idea and requested committee member thoughts and feedback to move forward as team members.

Ms. Hiester shared a renewed sense of excitement now that the Borough Manager and Mr. Adams have joined these meetings.

**Adjournment** - The meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

**Next Meeting: Monday, October 26, 2020 at 6:00PM**