
West Reading Environmental Advisory Council

500 Chestnut Street
West Reading, PA 19611
610-374-8273

E-mail: eac@westreadingborough.org



MEETING MINUTES

January 22, 2024

Members Present

Chairperson Patrick Kaag, Nicole Weik, Samantha Kaag, Ty Gardner, Bethany Bower

Call to Order

Mr. Kaag called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Ms. Bower and seconded by Ms. Kaag to approve the minutes of November 27, 2023. Motion carried.

Winter Free Market 2024

Mr. Kaag stated that the turnout for the free market was very good. Ms. Kaag suggested that for the spring free market we utilize the field for more space. She also mentioned that we should start promoting the spring free market. Ms. Bower suggested promoting the event on more than just Facebook. Ms. Weik suggested putting together a flyer and handing them out to local businesses. Ms. Bower questioned how the cleanup went after the event. Ms. Kaag stated that anything not picked up was placed in the donation box. Ms. Weik suggested reaching out to The Opportunity House for the next event. Ms. Bower suggested reaching out to The Community Aid Thrift Shop on 5th street. She stated that they have worked with non profits before. Ms. Bower also suggested looking into The Rudden Foundation since they take and store furniture. Ms. Bower volunteered to contact The Community Aid Thrift Shop and Ms. Weik volunteered to contact The Opportunity House. Ms. Weik made the motion to have the Earth Day Cleanup and the Spring Free Market on April 21st 2024 from 10am -2pm. Ms. Kaag seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Ms. Bower asked if furniture will be accepted at the spring event. Mr. Gardner expressed a concern with people not being able to take furniture they want and it causing an issue. Mr. Gardner suggested having someone managing the furniture and taking reservations. Mr. Kaag pointed out that furniture can be an issue since it can be more likely to be infested. Ms. Kaag suggested having a registration policy which would then state what types of items we would accept. Mr. Kaag stated that the buy nothing group asked that we don't restrict what we take. Ms. Bower expressed that in that case the buy nothing group might need to take over this event.

Ms. Bower stated that there seems to be two types of people to target for this event. She stated that there were people who want to donate but also people who would want to shop. Mr. Gardner suggested advertising at local thrift shops. Ms. Weik suggested asking The Opportunity House if they could help get the word out about this event. Ms. Bower stated The Berks Coalition to End Homelessness sends out weekly emails and that could be a place to advertise this event. Mr. Kaag stated that he wants to make sure we are prepared for a lot bigger of an event if we start advertising more. Ms. Kaag expressed that she would like to make sure we assign tasks to everyone. Ms. Kaag stated that she was concerned about having items leftover that weren't able to be donated. Ms. Weik mentioned that since the cleanup is at the same time there will be a dumpster that could be utilize for any items leftover that aren't able to be donated. Mr. Kaag asked about if food could would be

something that should be allowed to be donated. Ms. Kaag expressed a concern with having food and potentially having someone get sick. Ms. Kaag suggested having people register prior to the event to help know how many tables and space we might need. Ms. Kaag stated that she could be in charge of starting a Google Doc for the registration. Ms. Kaag also mentioned that we should remove the “meet your neighbors” from the event information because it makes it seem like it is only for West Reading residents.

Ms. Kaag stated what all the action items are going to be moving forward for this event. Ms. Kaag is going to do the Google Doc, graphic with the QR code, advertisement for Facebook and the flyer, and send an email to add to the information to the website and news letter. Ms. Bower is going to reach out to The Community Aide Thrift Shop. Ms. Weik is going to reach out to The Opportunity House.

Mr. Kaag stated that he would like to have this event four times a year. Ms. Kaag mentioned that she thinks four times a year is too much and maybe just twice a year. Ms. Kaag suggested doing one in the Spring and one in the Fall. Ms. Weik suggested pairing them with the cleanup since the dumpster will already be there.

Memorial Garden Update

Mr. Kaag stated that the garden is almost complete. Ms. Kaag asked when the dedication will take place as she would like to be looped in as the Mayor to make sure this is done appropriately. Mr. Kaag stated he will reach out and let her know. Mr. Kaag mentioned that he would like all of us to keep an eye on the garden and if anything is wrong to contact the borough immediately to make sure it is taken care of appropriately.

TPS Pocket Park

This space would be located at Third Street, Pine Street, and Sunset Rd. Mr. Kaag stated he is looking into continuing the curb and expanding the green space on Pine Street. Mr. Gardner stated that he is concerned that this might be a traffic and infrastructure issue not an EAC issue. Mr. Kaag stated that he would like this to add to the green space within the borough but is not looking to make this a park for kids to play at due to the dangerous traffic. Mr. Kaag stated that this would also prevent the removal of one of the trees on Pine Street which would need to be removed if the sidewalks have to be fixed. Ms. Kaag stated that she would like to hear what the TNI committee thinks before she is fully onboard. Mr. Gardner suggested turning it into a dog park. Mr. Kaag stated that there have been prior concerns about adding a dog park with the smell and noise. Ms. Weik mentioned that she thinks having a dog park in West Reading given the amount of dogs in the area would be beneficial. Mr. Kaag suggested putting in benches or shrubs to prevent kids from playing there since it is dangerous with the traffic.

Pollinator Gardens

Ms. Bower stated that she would really like to do a pollinator garden, native garden, or potentially a wildlife garden. Mr. Kaag stated that the more areas we manage the less space has to be mowed by the borough. Mr. Gardner mentioned that Branden Moyer who owns a honey business gave him a lot of good advice on how to build and maintain a pollinator garden. Mr. Gardner stated that he is looking to update the Veteran’s Memorial and turn it into a pollinator garden. Ms. Kaag stated that after talking with public works they would like to keep this memorial on the West Reading side. Ms. Weik mentioned that it would be a good idea to move the garden from outside the pool since it would cause bees to potentially be an issue for pool goers. Ms. Bower suggested moving it to Delaney Circle. Ms. Kaag stated that it might not be a good idea as that area of Penn Ave is looking to be updated and changed and the circle will be removed eventually. Ms. Kaag suggested walking the borough once it is warm to look at potential spots for this memorial.

Earth Day Cleanup

Mr. Kaag asked if we are going to look for sponsors for this event or any other event. Mr. Gardner suggested reaching out to Dumpster Dudes again. Ms. Kaag suggested pairing with some of the businesses to see if they could help clean up their area. Mr. Kaag suggested reaching out to Western Berks Water Authority to see if they could provide water and volunteers. Ms. Kaag suggested reaching out to the Boy Scouts and potentially colleges.

for volunteer hours. Ms. Kaag went through the action items. Mr. Kaag is going to reach out to Dumpster Dudes, Ms. Kaag is going to reach out to Western Berks Water Authority, Penn State, Alvernia, and Wyomissing School District, Mr. Gardner is going to reach out to Aerotek and the Boy Scouts, Ms. Bower is going to reach out to RACC, and Ms. Weik is going to reach out to Albright. Ms. Kaag suggested combining the Earth Day and Free Market flyer together and have her and Ms. Weik work together on the flyer.

2024 EAC Member Goals

Ms. Weik mentioned continuing to work on an awareness flyer on different types of take out containers to hand out to businesses in the borough to help reduce plastic use.

Ms. Bower stated that she would like to work on adding different types of gardens to the borough. She also stated that she would like to host some informative workshops for the residents. For example a master gardener workshop or how to build a pollinator garden. She also stated she would like to have the EAC be more involved in the Vines and Vibes event on May 19th. Ms. Kaag suggested having a tent which could share information about the EAC.

Ms. Kaag would like to move the community garden back under the borough and onto borough property.

Mr. Gardner would like to redo the veteran's memorial and try and secure funding so its no cost to borough. He stated that he is already looking into some grant options.

Mr. Kaag stated that his goal for the 2024 year is to make the Fall Free Market be a huge event.

Ms. Kaag suggested having a place to list all of our events for the EAC members. Ms. Weik suggested utilizing the Google Doc. Mr. Gardner stated that he can create a Google Drive that all members can have access too.

MS4 Monthly Update

Ms. Kaag mentioned that residents shouldn't be raking in the Fall. Bees use the leaves to hibernate and it gives them an extra layer to protect them from the cold. Mr. Kaag also stated not to rake them into the street because they can clog the storm drains. Ms. Kaag suggested that we bring this up again closer to the Fall.

Global Update

Mr. Kaag shared that recycled plastic is being used as an asphalt binder. This will help with the recycling crisis.

Adjournment

Moved by Ms. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Gardner to adjourn the meeting at 7:48p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Weik

EAC Member