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**West Reading Environmental Advisory  
Council**

**500 Chestnut Street  
West Reading, PA 19611**

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**MEETING MINUTES  
January 28, 2019**

**Members Present**

Chairperson Jenna Hiester; Council Member Philip Wert; Residents Karin Long, and Patrick Kaag, Ryan Lineaweaver and Assistant to the Borough Manager Cynthia Madeira.

**Visitor**

Jim Keller

**Public Comment**

Jim Keller stated that he provided a letter of interest to the Borough Manager to request reappointment to this committee now that his job schedule has changed.

**Call to Order**

Chairperson Jenna Hiester called the meeting to order at 6:20 PM.

**Approval of Minutes**

Moved by Ms. Long and seconded by Mr. Wert to approve the minutes of November 26, 2018. Motion carried.

**Old Business**

- a) Update from Council – Mr. Wert noted a program coordinated through DCNR, named Tree Pennsylvania that would provide grant funds to municipalities to create an inventory of trees. Tree type and locations could be placed within a GIS database, allowing quick access to tree trimming records. Mr. Wert spoke with a coordinator of the program who had indicated that since our municipality is small they could potentially fast track the Borough into their 2019 program. This program would provide a student to obtain an inventory of trees in the area and Mr. Wert stated that we should have a response within a few weeks. The representative requested a meeting with the Borough Shade Tree Commission to include their involvement and possibly this could be a collaborative effort with the Environmental Advisory Council.
- b) Met-Ed Energy Audit – Mr. Wert requested a progress report from the Public Works Department for anticipated in-house improvements.
- c) Community Garden – Ms. Long inquired as to plans for a manager of the garden. A review of the agreement with the owner of the property is needed.

**New Business**

- a) Goals and initiatives for 2019 – Ms. Heister recommended choosing a few initiatives that members would be able to address thoroughly. Completion of the Sustainable Community Certification would provide a list of areas in need of improvement. Recommended items to pursue in 2019 were:

- Earth Day – The Recreation Director and Main Street Manager have been contacted to offer EAC assistance again this year. It was suggested to mail recruitment letters to local scout troops. Keep PA Beautiful could potentially provide a framework for programs such as Earth Day and the Community Garden.
- Community Garden – It was recommended to partner with Bethany Lutheran Church's food pantry to provide more fruits and vegetables to their program.
- Alternative Energy – The Ready for 100 program's goals are to reach 100% by the year 2035, a community presentation is scheduled on March 9, 2019 from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. at the RACC.

The official meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m. and members continued to work on the following sections of the PA Sustainable Communities Certification:

- Step 21 Housing Affordability – The Reading Hospital briefly offered a program for staff members to provide funds toward settlement on the purchase of a home in West Reading. There is the potential for a similar program to be offered once the medical school building is constructed by Drexel University. A LERTA program has been established to amortize increased real estate taxes by 10% annually for ten years on substantial improvements. The Zoning Ordinance provides three separate residential zones predicated on different housing densities (i.e. single family home, duplex homes and apartments).
- Step 22 Housing Sustainable Neighborhoods – The Economic Development Committee discusses and lists vacant/blighted properties on a monthly basis. The code department enforces the Uniform Construction Code and Property Maintenance Codes. Also, a system is in place to collect delinquent taxes through Berks EIT. No improvements are needed for this category.
- Step 23 Land Use & Transportation Mobility – Trails are maintained by the Borough; alternate transportation is provided by the Barta bus system, bike trail connectivity, bike sharing with the Reading Hospital and a bike lane is currently being developed to connect with the Borough of Wyomissing; ride sharing is available through PA Community Services; bicycle lanes and shared roadways are being developed; Police Officers are trained on rights and responsibilities of bicyclists; traffic calming techniques are being explored.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:09 PM.

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**Next Meeting: Monday, February 25, 2019 at 6:00PM at  
West Reading Borough Hall**