



# New Britain Township

## *Environmental Advisory Council*

Kathleen Davis, Chair	Daniel Fox, NBT Manager
Brooke Newborn, Vice-Chair	MaryBeth McCabe, NBT Supervisor
Mary Margaret Briggs, Secretary	
Kathleen Dutill, Member	
Jaime Walker, Member	

Minutes – April 25, 2024

**Attended:** K. Davis, B. Newborn, M. Briggs, J. Walker, K. Dutill, M. McCabe, D. Fox

Daniel Fox, new Township Manager introduced by M. McCabe. Meeting was called to order by K. Davis @ 7:01 pm.

**Discussion:**

- Call to Order
- Approval of Minutes - Upon motion by B. Newborn, seconded by M. Briggs, the council unanimously approved the March 28, 2024 minutes.
- Announcements – by K. Davis
  - E-Recycling is planned for Saturday, May 4, 9 am to 1 pm (electronics, no shredding event).
  - Spring yard waste collection drop off is planned for May 7 – 11 (hours posted on NBT website).
  - Peace Valley Nature Center, native plant sale, May 17-19, 10 am-3 pm (general public). Members sale on May 16.
  - Cedar tree planting, West Branch Park, Sunday, April 28, 1 – 3 pm. Volunteers appreciated.
  - PEC ordinance review has begun.
  - Open space survey preparation has begun.
- Presentation given by Ken Jones (volunteer and NWA) on New Britain Restoration projects – Mr. Jones provided an informational session of projects in the township. Trees planted within the areas were obtained with grants (no NBT tax revenue used). Benefits to the township for MS4 were also discussed.
  - Marshall Circle (started spring 2022) - basin filled with cattail; the township was previously mowing around the basin. Volunteers naturalized the area. Trees were



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- planted in the upland area and wet-loving trees in basin area; along with shrubs in front area of basin.
  - Circle Drive (2022) – passive open space was previously being mowed; an earlier small meadow was established in the basin (2019) – a larger area, about 3 acres was planted with about 150 trees, now there is less mowing and better stormwater management.
  - West Branch Park (2023) – wetland & flood plain. Existing soccer field was elevated by the township due to the flood plain. Riparian buffer (to the Neshaminy) is very thin; the area between trail and buffer was being mowed. Now it is unmowed, to expand the riparian buffer in which native trees have also been planted.
  - Veterans Park (2023) – the plan for this park was meadow surrounded by trails. Trees funded with grants have replaced trees that had died since the park opened.
  - Future possible project – Walden Way
  - Mr. Jones also led a discussion about diseased ash trees we have lost, in the community. He also discussed the survival of “volunteer” trees. Volunteer trees are trees that naturally grow, due to birds and other animals depositing their seeds, which then germinate and grow on their own. Carol Weston-Young (NBT resident) also noted sassafras trees are now at risk for being killed by a beetle introduced in Georgia (which is moving up towards PA). The beetle kills trees within 2 years. The danger of diseased trees, if they fall near a walking or bike path, was also discussed.
  - Maintenance of the restored areas is by volunteers. Mr. Jones also mentioned that NBT Public Works employees can be trained on identification of good & bad trees, etc.
  - K. Davis suggested we also create a list of acceptable plantings for planting near paths & trails.
- Recommendations to Board of Supervisors regarding Zoning and SALDO amendments were discussed. K. Davis noted the EAC has been reviewing recent ordinance amendments distributed from J. Granger in February and it is the EAC’s responsibility to advise the BOS regarding environmental concerns related to ordinances. While it is the EAC’s responsibility to advise the BOS, ultimately, the BOS decides what changes will be made.

General Administrative Fees, Woodlands, and Butler Avenue Overlay District recommendations were discussed. Parking, Traffic, and Sidewalks ordinance amendments will be discussed at a future EAC meeting.

General Administrative Fees, Woodlands, and Butler Avenue Overlay District recommendations were combined into one memorandum as follows:

- General – EAC advises the BOS to take advantage of its right to engage a professional planner (or other professional consultant, such as a forester or architect) to advise it on land development proposals, at the developer’s expense. The Pennsylvania Municipal Planning code gives the municipality this authority, and it is explained in



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detail in the State's document "Subdivision and Land Development in Pennsylvania" Planning Series #8, Sixth Edition.

- Woodlands
  - *Re: §27-2400.f. Woodlands. In areas of woodlands, the following standards shall apply: 2. (c) The planting of replacement trees shall occur on site, or on a property within New Britain Township designated and approved by the Board of Supervisors, unless the owner/developer offers a fee in lieu of the required replacement, such fee being approved by the Board of Supervisors, in its sole discretion.*

The EAC recommends that the provision for a fee in lieu of replacement trees be eliminated in this section and anywhere else it appears in our ordinances. The provision for such a fee is not required by law.

- *§22-502.1.G.3 The planting of replacement trees or woodlands restoration shall be done in accordance with a woodlands management plan prepared by a licensed forester as may be required by the Board of Supervisors based on the nature of the trees removed and nature of proposed trees.*

The EAC recommends that such a plan by a licensed forester always be required.

- *§22-713. 2. Preservation and Protection and Existing Vegetation. A. All subdivisions and/or land developments shall be laid out in such a manner as to minimize the removal of healthy trees and shrubs on the site. If required by the Township, the applicant shall produce evidence from a qualified professional that no alternative layouts are possible that would reduce the loss of individual trees, vegetated areas and woodlands.*

The EAC recommends the township engage its own professional consultant and not rely on statements from a developer's professionals. The Township is entitled to its own independent report and should take full advantage of its rights in this regard.

- Butler Avenue Corridor Overlay District. § 22-722. This section of NBT code has not been updated since 2018 and other code changes conflict with the Butler Overlay district language (e.g. planting list).

The EAC recommends the BOS update § 22-722.

B. Newborn moved to vote to approve the recommendations; M. Briggs seconded the motion. The motion was passed 3-2 (Ayes, Newborn, Briggs, Davis; Nays, Dutill, Walker).



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Zoning Map – NBT website (scanned vs PDF) – M. Briggs noted that the zoning map is difficult to read on the eCode website; she asked D. Fox to look into replacing the current map with a map that has the ability to Zoom.

Lighting in New Britain Township – Discussion from the last meeting was continued. M. Briggs suggested moving forward, the EAC should recommend to the BOS to update the Lighting code, which is 22 years old. She took note of the suggestion by T. Young (NBT resident) at the last meeting, to form smaller community/neighborhood groups and thought this could be useful to expand that idea and recruit neighborhood “leader” volunteers. M. Briggs suggested we look at short, medium, and long-range goals both with updating township lighting (e.g. street lights) and in promoting lighting education for residents (e.g. website, newsletter, fall festival displays). M. Briggs also brought a light shield to show EAC members how a small item like a shield can reduce light pollution and light spillage in the community.

- Planning for Fall Festival – education, native planting, lighting, volunteers for neighborhood groups (captains). September 21. (unknown if there will be a rain date)
- Other business – none.
- Public comment on non-agenda items – Terry Young offered words of encouragement. Engineer and other employees need to do the detailed work.
- Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by B. Newborn, seconded by M. Briggs. Meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Davis, Chair

*The Next Meeting of the Environmental Advisory Council of New Britain Township will take place on **Thursday, May 23, 7:00 pm** at the New Britain Township Building, 207 Park Avenue, Chalfont, Pa. Agenda is posted to the Township website prior to the meeting date at [www.newbritaintownship.org](http://www.newbritaintownship.org).*