



# New Britain Township

## *Environmental Advisory Council*

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

Minutes – February 22, 2024

**Attended:** K. Davis, B. Newborn, M. Briggs, K. Dutill, J. Walker, J. Granger

**\*Regrets:** M. McCabe

Meeting was called to order by K. Davis @ 7:01 pm. Due to technical difficulties, the meeting was not recorded.

**Discussion:**

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes - Upon motion by B. Newborn, seconded by J. Walker, the council unanimously approved the February 13, 2024 minutes.
3. Announcements –
  - K. Davis announced the council will recommend to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) to consolidate the November 28 and December 26 meeting dates to one date, December 5 (Thursday).
  - K. Davis noted the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) Network Conference will meet virtually on Saturday, February 24; all EAC members will be participating in at least one session. <https://weconservepa.org/eac/>
4. Reports on conversations with Chairs of neighboring EACs –

B. Newborn spoke with Warrington Township EAC chair, Fred Suffian. – There are 8-10 members on their EAC, which was created in 2004. EAC advises the BOS on environmental matters and landscape plans of developers; the EAC also reviews and recommends ordinance updates (e.g. bamboo ordinance). Each spring, a community service day is held with 75-150 volunteers (including high school students and clubs). Plans made over the winter for projects, e.g. economically priced rain barrels. The EAC works with various organizations throughout the state and county [e.g. PA Horticultural Society, Neshaminy Watershed Association (NWA)]. It participates in Warrington Day and will have nominal giveaways. They also have an Ecoscape



# New Britain Township

## *Environmental Advisory Council*

demonstrator, which teaches children about runoff. The EAC includes information in a township quarterly newsletter, which is mailed to residents as well as a monthly online newsletter. The EAC has a budget and they also solicit donations. One part-time township employee, paid through their budget, works with the EAC. The EAC annual township report is published on their website. The EAC solicits large grants from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR): it obtains smaller grants from local sources (e.g. Giant food stores). Funds have been used to place educational signs along the hiking trail located at the 202 Parkway. Their most successful projects have been tree planting initiatives throughout the township. Lions Pride Park was created with grant and Lions Club funding. Some obstacles they have faced have been in naturalization of areas, where planted trees were removed by unknown persons. Some residents have expressed complaints about the township's management of open space.

<https://warringtontownship.org/government/advisory-boards/environmental-advisory-council/>

J. Walker spoke with the Chair of Doylestown Township EAC, Jim Baldassarre. Mr. Baldassarre spoke about the EAC's efforts in planting trees. PECO ('Growing Greener') and Bucks Beautiful are good sources for small grants and donations of trees and plants. The EAC will point out available grants but the township staff make the applications. The EAC must get approval from the township BOS for its projects. Projects have included placement of bird houses, promotion of native gardens, and efforts to reduce light pollution. The Doylestown Township EAC is recognized as a Pennsylvania Bird Town (<https://birdtownpa.org/>).

<https://www.doylestownpa.org/government/boards-commissions/environmental-advisory-council/>

K. Dutill spoke with Andrea Strout, member of the Buckingham Township EAC. The EAC was formed in 2017 and it meets 10 months out of the year (does not meet in the summer). Its primary interactions are with the BOS and Planning Commission (PC). Their EAC typically does interact with the Parks and Recreation Committee (P&R). From time to time, they are consulted about impervious square footage on projects. The EAC also does an annual clean-up on Earth Day and they hold a plant sale. Most EAC projects focus around trees and meadows. High school students assist the EAC as volunteers for these projects. The township's EAC has 5 members (BOS has 3 members). The EAC also has recently held an educational seminar on water quality (2 part). The EAC is also focused on protecting creeks and streams throughout the township. <https://www.buckinghampa.org/government/boards-commissions/environmental-advisory-commission/>

K. Davis spoke with Tom Price, New Britain Borough Environmental Advisory Commission Chair. New Britain Borough did not have an *official* EAC until last year, when its Bird Town Committee was formally converted to an EAC by Township Council ordinance. The former Bird Town Committee members became the EAC members. The Bird Town Committee's goals were to encourage citizens and the community to create excellent bird habitat, such as planting native pollinator plants, promoting "lights out" practices, and installing bird-safe windows. In 2022, the Bird Town Committee succeeded in having New Britain Borough certified as a National Wildlife





# New Britain Township

## *Environmental Advisory Council*

Federation “Community Wildlife Habitat,” one of only five such certified municipalities in the state of Pennsylvania. The Bird Town Committee – now the EAC – has long worked well with the Borough’s other environmentally active committees. These include:

- The Nature Preserve Committee: looks after the Wilma Quinlan Nature Preserve; won a PECO grant for trees and a DCNR (Department of Conservation and Natural Resources) grant to buy land adjacent to the original preserve.
- The Shade Tree Commission: responsible for creating a Tree Plan for the Borough; hired Bartlett Tree Experts to provide a detailed tree inventory and management plan for the Borough; reviews all applications for subdivision and land development, and makes a recommendation to Borough Council for approval, or denial, on the basis of compliance with the Borough’s Shade Tree regulations. Now the EAC will also review development plans.
- The Parks and Recreation Committee: stewards the Borough’s parks and open space, particularly Orchard Park; oversees the Borough’s Community Garden.

Obstacles: People-power. The Borough does not have a Public Works department; therefore the Borough cannot provide help with heavy work. However, it is now partnering with Chalfont Borough and the situation may change. Other obstacles: the volunteer pool is aging – need to connect with younger generation; always looking for new methods of community outreach. One suggestion is to put kiosks in parks in order to inform the public about the EAC, its activities, and volunteer opportunities. <https://www.newbritainboro.com/committees/eac-environmental-advisory-commission-revised/>

M. Briggs spoke with John Magee, Chair of the Warminster Township EAC, which is 10 years old. The EAC has 4 members currently; however they can appoint up to 7 members. Designated EAC members sit on Warminster’s Planning and Parks & Recreation committees. The EAC has not applied for grants; however, it plans to work with NWA on future grants. Last year, their EAC rolled out 4 successful educational projects, including projects in collaboration with Riverkeepers and the Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust. Some obstacles the EAC faces include communication with the community, limited project opportunities, no budget, and community opposition (misconceptions). Stormwater management initiatives in Warminster began due to previous township supervisor who joined the EAC. Mr. Magee noted the development of relationships in their EAC has been important. The Warminster EAC’s most successful relationship is with their municipal authority (water, sewer, stormwater), with whom the collaborate with on cleanup days. The municipal authority manages funding of environmental stormwater projects, such as culvert clean-out, via a stormwater fee paid by residents. <https://warminstertownship.org/environment/>

M. Briggs spoke with Donna Fiedler, EAC Secretary for Middletown Township. The EAC has 7 members, including an environmental engineer, and is over 40 years old (established 1981). EAC recommendations must be approved by the BOS. For example, Planning Commission (PC) submissions are sent to EAC for review. The EAC discusses PC submissions as agenda items and sends its recommendations to the BOS. The EAC’s interaction with the Parks & Recreation (P&R) committee is facilitated by a township staff liaison assigned by the township manager. EAC event and calendar announcements are managed through this liaison (Paul Kopera, P&R Director). A



# New Britain Township

## *Environmental Advisory Council*

big success/ ongoing initiative of the EAC is their Climate Action Plan (CAP). Middletown Township is the first municipality in Bucks County to begin a CAP (2021). Mid (2025) and long-term goals (2030, 2040, 2050) are outlined in its CAP (<https://www.middletownbucks.org/cap>). A CAP long term goal is to reduce carbon/ greenhouse gas emissions. Middletown township staff write their grant submissions. The EAC successfully supports a community garden, cleanup days, tree planting twice a year, highway cleanup days, and educational opportunities. The EAC has a program guide that is mailed to residents and is also available online. Obstacles the EAC faces include land development recommendations are not followed by the BOS, or if they are approved by the BOS, they are not always followed by the developer. <https://www.middletownbucks.org/Government/Boards-Commissions/Environmental-Advisory-Council>

### 5. Spring Events –

Easter Egg Hunt - NBT P&R will support set up of an information table at its annual Easter Egg Hunt (March 23). Ideas for handouts include an EAC introduction flyer and pamphlets from BCCD . Margaret volunteered to manage the table. Kirstyn Gudknecht (Peace Valley Nature Center) volunteered to help create a flyer and she will provide a flyer for the nature center's native plant sale.

eCycling Event (May) – the event is a drop-off/ drive-through format; however, there may be an opportunity to hand out flyers while cars are waiting in line.

Ken Jones (NWA) noted in the past, Master Watershed Steward events included a “Parent Trap” demonstration. The project’s success drew children to the booth to play in a watershed model sandbox, complete with toy animals. The children enjoyed playing while the Master Watershed Stewards spoke with the parents.

### 6. EAC Networking and Outreach Plans/ Projects. After EAC members’ reports on local EAC discussions, networking and outreach opportunities were discussed. Several members of the public also spoke with ideas and recommendations.

- Neighboring EAC contacts established since the last meeting; EAC members will continue to expand its EAC member network
- BCCD – Karen Ogden (Bucks County Conservation District); <https://bucksccd.org/>
- NWA (Ken Jones) – <https://neshaminy-watershed.org/> Mr. Jones noted there will be an upcoming volunteer opportunity within the township, to transplant native cedar trees.
- Peace Valley Nature Center (Kirstyn Gudknecht) - Ms. Gudknecht noted a monthly birder meeting is held at the center. <https://www.peacevalleynaturecenter.org/>
- Bird Town – Lucy Jones noted many surrounding communities are designated Bird Towns. Chalfont Bird Town will be having a spring clean-up day in April (Trish Harrington, contact person). Ms. Jones urged the EAC to consider application of New Britain Township as a Bird Town. Contact Heidi Shiver, the President of Pennsylvania Bird Town.





# New Britain Township

## *Environmental Advisory Council*

- School contacts – EAC members suggested the council reach out to the environmental clubs at CB South & West for older volunteers and to middle/elementary schools (St. Jude, Butler, Tohickon, Pine Run, Unami) for younger student educational opportunities.

B. Newborn suggested we pick smaller range of projects and then expand out.

Terry Young (NBT resident) – thanked the EAC for its detailed discussion and time in conducting the interviews in item # 4. He thought there were many great ideas but he suggested the NBT EAC focus on 2-3 key items. In prioritizing the EAC list, he suggested one EAC member be designated as the grant coordinator, to manage grants with the appropriate township staff member. He also suggested one EAC member act as liaison with the NBT P&R committee and the NBT Planning Commission. B. Newborn noted there was a member vacancy on the NBT P&R committee. M. Briggs also noted a Veterans Committee liaison with the EAC would be needed, to coordinate EAC participation at the NBT Fall Festival.

7. Plans for development of By-laws – K. Davis recommends delaying exploration of By-laws, as council guidance is already covered by the newly implemented NBT Volunteer Handbook. K. Davis moved to take Bylaws off EAC action item list and revisit at future date if needed. J. Walker seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.

8. Update on SALDO and Zoning –

A training opportunity for EAC members on SALDO site plan review was discussed by K. Davis. Timeline is being arranged for first or second week of March.

SALDO parking ordinance amendment – M. Briggs requested a copy of the recent amendment, presented to the BOS from Gilmore and Associates, EAC review. J. Granger noted there are occasions where parking could be shared (mixed use).

9. Other business –

The EAC discussed the future possibility of hosting speakers (e.g. Chalfont Bird Town) at an EAC meeting, perhaps on a quarterly basis and announcing the speakers to help inform the community about NBT's new EAC.

NBT resident, R. Surao suggested if the Council promotes the new EAC, as a story (e.g. The Patch, Bucks County Herald, they would publish the story at no charge.

Semi-annual NBT newsletter. – EAC news and events, and “tips” can be published in township newsletter (text to J. Granger for publication). For example, educational materials which inform the public about the impacts polluted stormwater runoff discharges can have on water quality will benefit the township with regard to MS4 requirements.



# New Britain Township

## *Environmental Advisory Council*

10. Public comment on non-agenda items

K. Jones (NWA) – spoke about recent volunteer work completed at West Branch Park within riparian buffer. Included a small planting of trees, with volunteers from SEWA International. There are several sites within the township (Marshall Circle, West Branch Park, Circle Drive) where volunteer work was completed. These are opportunities for the EAC to inform the public about some of the recent projects completed in the township. Mr. Jones also noted a portion of NBT is a recipient of a grant, which Brian Munroe (PA State Representative) helped facilitate. Upcoming in the late summer/early fall there will be a public education event regarding watershed friendly properties – it will be a multi-municipal event (likely in coordination with Warrington). Events such as this promote MS4 publicity.

11. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by B. Newborn, seconded by K. Dutil. Meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Davis, Chair

*The Next Meeting of the Environmental Advisory Council of New Britain Township will take place on **Thursday, March 28, 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).*