

East Vincent Township
Environmental Advisory Council Meeting
November 8, 2023, 7:00 PM

Elaine Milito opened the meeting at 7:00PM. In attendance were Chris Orzechowski, Chris Canale, Michele Adams, and Molly Wagle. Also in attendance was Township Manager, Robert A. Zienkowski. There were 4 guests.

1. Meeting minutes from October 11, 2023 were shared. There was a motion to approve the minutes.

Moved: C. Orzechowski Second: C. Canale Vote: Unanimous

2. Old Business

- A. Update Clean Energy Initiative

The township received a proposal from Practical Energy Solutions to create a Clean Energy Transition Plan modeled off of the plans created for the nearby townships (West Vincent Township, East Pikeland Township, West Pikeland Township, Schuylkill Township), do an energy audit of the township, and more. The benefits of moving forward with this are many:

- Cost savings: many of the recommendations yield long term cost savings for the township based on decreased energy usage
 - See an example here from Springfield, Montgomery County, where they saved \$194,000 in 2.5 years. They also utilized Practical Energy Solutions <https://www.springfieldmontco.org/media/5981/springfield-twp-energy-savings-bergey-to-boc-june-2023.pdf>
- Reduce carbon emissions & set example for the residents
- Increases attractiveness of the township for other environmental/ sustainability grants. If the township agrees to adopt the plan, it is something the township can point to when applying for other grants that we are serious about taking action, making us more attractive to grant providers
- Provides education to the residents

All 4 aspects of the proposal amount to \$20,000. Creative solutions for funding could include working with other townships within the Owen J. Roberts School District to work together on a multi-municipal grant through Chester County, if Chester County offers the VPP grant again in the spring of 2024.

Motion to recommend that the BOS agree to move forward with the scope of work in the proposal for the Clean Energy Transition Plan, and allow the EVT EAC to investigate alternative sources of funding, including potentially working with other townships to work on a multi-municipal grant.

Moved: M. Wagle

Second: E. Milito

Vote: Unanimous

B. Data Center Ordinance

The East Vincent Township, Environmental Advisory Council has a mission and vision to transform how buildings within our community are designed, built and operated, enabling an environmentally and socially responsible, healthy, and prosperous environment that improves the quality of life for our residents and natural resources. This vision is new to East Vincent but not new at all to the world. THE US GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL shares a similar goal and is the world LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is the world's most widely used green building rating system. LEED certification provides a framework for healthy, highly efficient, and cost-saving green buildings, which offer environmental, social and governance benefits. LEED certification is a globally recognized symbol of sustainability achievement.

Reference points:

- New construction or major renovation of buildings that primarily serve residential, K–12 educational, retail, data centers, warehouses and distribution centers, hospitality or health care uses.
- Core and Shell Development. Buildings that are new construction or major renovation for the exterior shell and core mechanical, electrical, and plumbing units, but not a complete interior fit-out. LEED BD+C: Core and Shell is the appropriate rating system to use if more than 40% of the gross floor area is incomplete at the time of certification.
- Schools. Buildings made up of core and ancillary learning spaces on K–12 school grounds. LEED BD+C: Schools may be used for higher education and nonacademic buildings on school campuses.
- Retail. Buildings used to conduct the retail sale of consumer product goods. Includes both direct customer service areas (showroom) and preparation or storage areas that support customer service.
- Data Centers. Buildings specifically designed and equipped to meet the needs of high-density computing equipment such as server racks, used for data storage and processing.
- Warehouses and Distribution Centers. Buildings used to store goods, manufactured products, merchandise, raw materials or personal belongings, such as self-storage.
- Hospitality. Buildings dedicated to hotels, motels, inns or other businesses within the service industry that provide transitional or short-term lodging, with or without food. Does not include restaurants alone.
- Healthcare. Hospitals that provide inpatient medical treatment, including acute and long-term care.

There are 4 different levels of LEED. Recommending a minimum LEED certification 4.0. It's extremely achievable and impacts the energy, environmental impacts, and even human health impact for the people inside the building.

Need to work with the BOS and planning commission to develop ordinance that is achievable and scaled to the appropriate threshold. Would need to understand how the township could incentivize such an initiative. This is a way to future-proof the township and help mitigate some of the issues the township is already dealing with.

Motion to the Board of Supervisors to put together the strongest recommendation that any and all non-residential and non-agricultural building and development be required to fully be registered and pass the LEED Certification in all three of the following, for buildings that are new construction or major 50% or greater renovations:

BD+C (LEED Building Design and Construction)

ID+C, (LEED for Interior Design and Construction)

O+M, (LEED Building Operations and Maintenance)

And allow to have a few working sessions w/ planning commission and township staff.

Moved: C. Canale

Second: M. Adams

Vote: Unanimous

3. New Business

- A. Environmental Review of Development Plans: Michele Adams led an exercise of performing an environmental review of development plans in the context of what to look for in plans and how they follow (or not) EVT's ordinances. The Ruth Farm development plan was used to illustrate this process. The purpose is to familiarize all EAC members to this process and for making recommendations to the township.
- B. Before plans are even evaluated, we need to ensure that all requirements laid out in the ordinance are provided. We have strong ordinances already, it's just not always being followed.
- C. It would be ideal for developers to submit their plans digitally and color coded.
- D. There was no observation for "cut and fill" requirement – this needs to be confirmed and added to the ordinance if it does not exist
- E. Just because the code says you are allowed a certain amount of buildings, it doesn't mean that the parcel has the carrying capacity for the maximum allowed units
- F. Action Item: Elaine to compare the existing ordinance compared to the proposed ordinance

4. Discussion

- A. Ideal to have a building warranty that is assigned to the township in the form of a policy. It allows the policy to fix stormwater issues. The builder needs to buy this policy, which is then held by the municipality. Would need to be added to an ordinance.

5. Public Comment

- A. Ruth Farm water quality has been impaired and the timeline has been pushed out further. Recommend all commissions to work together to work to maintain our natural resources. Discussions on status of plans submitted.
- B. FPR and PFAS a concern, important to keep these issues top of mind. Discussed Recovering America's Wildlife Act, and money can go to townships to do projects, especially if they are aligned with wildlife (align with state wildlife agency). If we can include any aspect of wildlife with riparian buffers, invasives, etc.
- C. It was recommended to propose amendments to township ordinance on FPR. East Coventry is regulating what goes in the FPR tanks. The East Coventry pit, if it leaks, the drain is in East Vincent and at the headwaters of Stony Run.

6. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn.

Moved: C. Orzechowski

Second: C. Canale

Vote: Unanimous