

**Whitemarsh Township Environmental Advisory Board**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**May 20, 2019**

The May meeting of the Whitemarsh Township Environmental Advisory Board was called to order on Monday, May 20th, 2019 at 7:00pm in the large meeting room of the Whitemarsh Township building, 616 Germantown Pike, Lafayette Hill, Pennsylvania.

Members Present: Lou Ann Merkle, Debbie Heuckeroth, Edward Brant, Gordon Geasland, Kate Johnston, and Debra Harris.

Also Present: Sean Halbom, Asst. Township Manager, Laura Boyle-Nester, BOS Liaison

1. CALL TO ORDER – 7:00pm.
  
2. NEW BUSINESS
  - a. Vice-Chair Merkle – Made a motion to amend the agenda to allow Redtail Restoration to present first. Seconded by Debbie Heuckeroth. Motion passed.

Greg is a seasoned ecologist and gave some background about his company, Redtail Restoration, he has worked for the Fish and Wildlife Service and privately in six different states. He employs six staff members each of whom is college-educated in ecology or a similar science. RR works with multiple nearby municipalities caring for, preserving, and restoring natural areas.

Greg and Sean met at the basin recently. Cattail and phragmite were noticed as well as many other invasive species. RR offers a yearly contract billed at \$39.00 per hour, per employee. Greg believes that we can successfully chip away at the basin and improve it year by year with both preventative care as well as the steady removal of invasive species. Greg then offered to turn to an open discussion.

Ed asked what similar projects RR has undertaken. Greg responded that earlier this year RR began working for Upper Dublin Township in three of their parks. Like these projects, RR will seek to improve our natural areas over time with ongoing maintenance. He has also removed phragmite removal at Crossways Preserve.

Greg asked that he and his crew be permitted to judiciously use chemical applications to remove the invasive species, when necessary. Lou Ann asked if integrated pest management will be incorporated into this project. Greg responded in the affirmative. Specific chemicals that could be used were discussed but it was reiterated that it would be spot treated, not sprayed. RR can do this project without use of chemicals, but it would likely increase the time burden to remove the phragmite.

Debbie asked about glyphosate and its safety around bees. Greg was not aware of any issues specific to bees; however, he believes that all chemicals come with some risk which is why they are so diligent about applying them only when necessary. Debbie asked if RR sub-contracts and what their availability is if the workload were to increase. Greg responded that he is confident his crew can meet our needs along with their other projects and that the annual contracts help them to do this.

Lou Ann asked if RR would inform EAB prior to any use of chemicals. Lou Ann was also curious how RR may be able to work with volunteers. Greg responded enthusiastically and mentioned that his team has worked with volunteers on other projects to guide the volunteers.

Debra Harris asked for clarification about which cattails we were discussing removing. It was determined the cattails within the basin were being discussed. Debbie expressed concern about an open-ended timeline for this project. Ed asked for details about the bid. Sean explained that the bid was made based on a quote per human hour to perform this type of work. RR was the low bidder, but this project did not require a formal RFP process.

Ed asked what amount of work would be accomplished under this agreement. Sean and Greg both explained that it would be difficult to quantify what all could be accomplished at this stage, but that significant improvement could be expected with 100-200 human hours or work applied to the basin. Lou Ann asked if there is any way to hasten the process so that we are not missing important deadlines. Debra commented that EAB oversight will remain a part of this project moving forward.

Debbie moved to accept RR as the approved contractor for McCarthy basin maintenance. Ed seconded, the vote passed unanimously. Discussion continued regarding the current plan compared to the plan that was discussed at past McCarthy Park Working Group meetings. Sean explained that the original plan included work that would require hundreds of additional human hours beyond what the EAB budget could sustain. Debbie expressed concerns about delays to the project timeline and the potential for additional delays caused by working with Chestnut Hill College students. Lou Ann stated that the hiring for a township staff person to manage wetlands projects would be helpful, especially during a time when rainfall is increasing. Ed asked that regular updates from Red Tail be mentioned on the minutes.

### 3. UPDATES

McCarthy Park Working Group – Concern about the timeline was expressed but that has been discussed. The pollinator garden project has no point of contact, which was a smaller aspect of the original plan for McCarthy Park. There is interest in developing an overall plan for

maintaining all wetlands within Whitemarsh. That plan would give the Board of Supervisors a better understanding of the costs to maintain those wetlands. The working group discussed putting an RFP out to gather quotes so we would have a better understanding of the likely cost. Sean explained that it is not common practice to publish RFPs unless the Township intends to hire for the project being advertised. Debra suggested we begin by speaking with the Board of Supervisors about expanding the budget for next year. Lou Ann added that we could speak with surrounding Townships as well.

Recycling Working Group – Debra reported on the site visit to Mascaro’s recycling center. We toured the facility and took video footage for a future PSA.

Green Energy Team – Since the resolution passed, she has attended a Climate summit that was very informative. Natural Lands networking conference was this past Saturday, education and collaboration were discussed at that conference. Extreme weather and flooding was discussed as well as enhancing personal preparation. Lou Ann encouraged her fellow board members to attend any future events with her.

EAB needs were also discussed; funding being a top priority. Grant writing was shared as a potential opportunity for additional funds. Storm water management was also discussed as well as threats from the Spotted Lantern Fly. Lou Ann would like to sponsor a guest speaker to educate the public about SLF. Finally, *Catching the Sun* will be premiering at the William Jeans Library next week on Thursday. Kate asked that all invites to events be sent to her so that she can share on EAB’s social media pages.

Ed mentioned that he has reached out to a contact at the Philadelphia Eagles about renewable energy. He has not heard back yet. He does work for FMC Corporation and would like to know what, if any, conflicts of interests exist were Ed to try and partner FMC with some of the EAB’s efforts. Sean mentioned he would look into that.

#### 4. NEW BUSINESS

Lou Ann asked if any EAB members were interested in participating in the Fourth of July parade. The EAB members reported that they were either out of town or will possibly be out of town and cannot commit.

*Catching the Sun* – Once again, please consider attending and you are all challenged to bring five people with you.

#### 5. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH, 2019 MINUTES

Lou Ann noted the typo on the agenda calling for the update to the January minutes. A motion was made to adopt the minutes with the date (March 18) correction. Motion made by Debra, seconded by Ed Brant. This passed unanimously.

## 6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The EV stations are now fully operational; the first ten charges will be free so please send notice to anyone who drives an EV. We still have about \$1,500 in pending grant reimbursement due from PECO. The overall split was about 47% Township, 53% grant revenue. Much of our costs were reduced by using public works staff to perform the site preparations prior to install. The grant funds were made possible thanks to the *California v. Volkswagon* lawsuit.

27,554 pounds of electronics were recycled on electronic recycling day. That equates to about three full 18-wheel truckloads of materials. Much of those items are recycled or reused.

Lou Ann asked about getting word out about the EV stations. Sean explained that EV drivers have live map locators to find charging stations on their phones and in their vehicles. Sean expects that usage of the stations will increase over time as people begin incorporating these spots into their routines. Lou Ann also asked who she could contact to display a message on the sign at Miles Park. Sean asked that she email him.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public comment.

### ADJOURNMENT

a. Debra made a motion to adjourn, Ed seconded, all voted yes.