

**WHITEMARSH TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING AGENDA**

Monday, March 18, 2024 (Hybrid Meeting) - 7:00 P.M.

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83348015029>

Meeting ID: 833 4801 5029

MEMBERS:

 X GORDON GEASLAND X DEBRA HARRIS (Vice-Chair) X LEIA HERITAGE X KAREN KABNICK
 X DEBORAH SHREERO (Chair) X JAMES TONE VACANT

LIAISONS:

 X SAMANTHA ZRILLO, STAFF X PATRICE TURENNE, BOS

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Shreero called the March 18, 2024 meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

2. ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. Tree Planting Projects

Ms. Kabnick announced three planting projects: (1) Mathers Mill- planting on Sunday, March 24, 2024. This will be advertised in the *Whitemarsh Weekly*. (2) McCarthy Basin- planting on Saturday, April 6, 2024 from 9:30-12:00. There will be eight trees planted in the meadow and they will also be cutting live steaks and reestablishing plants. (3) Leeland Park- planting on Saturday, April 27, 2024. This will be the Township’s Arbor Day event. Sixteen trees will be planted.

After the planting project announcements, Ms. Shreero asked if there are any updates on the submitted grant proposal to plant trees on several Whitemarsh Township properties. Ms. Kabnick said that it is being reviewed by DCNR attorneys. The plan was supported by the Township and DCNR. Ms. Zrillo said that Township Manager, Craig McAnally, was speaking with FEMA about one of the properties that was purchased through one of their grant programs. Ms. Harris gave an overview of this topic to members of the public in attendance.

3. APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES *January 29, 2024*

Ms. Harris made a motion to approve the January 29, 2024 meeting minutes. Ms. Shreero seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

4. OLD BUSINESS

a. Naturalized Spaces—Redtail Update

Ms. Zrillo gave an overview of the work done by Redtail in January. The contract for the year is 375 hours, equating to 31.25 hours per month. Redtail worked 29.58 hours in January. Redtail cut and pulled Bush Honeysuckle and cut back Bamboo at Mathers Mill and at McCarthy Basin, they pulled and dug out Bradford Pear, Multiflora Rose, Buckthorne, and Japanese Honeysuckle. Ms. Harris said they are making a noticeable difference.

b. Township Day 2024

Ms. Shreero reminded the EAB that the topic of their table at Township Day is “Connecting with Nature.” Mr. Geasland and Ms. Harris are working to try to find animals to bring. Mr. Geasland said that most groups are already committed elsewhere for Earth Day. One group wanted to charge \$260 for 30 minutes and they are concerned about parking. Mr. Geasland noted he was still searching for a canoe and kayak to bring. Ms. Shreero asked who would be liable if children were to climb into the canoe and kayak. Ms. Harris asked if 30 minutes would be too long for a demonstration at Township Day. Mr. Geasland said he believes it would and it is not worth the money for Township Day because it would be too long for children to sit and listen in one spot and they have the table for hours. Ms. Harris said it would be a good event at Koontz Park. Ms. Shreero said perhaps in the fall they could arrange an event with them. Ms. Shreero then asked if Wissahickon Trails had any animals and said she would reach out. Ms. Harris asked if anyone knew where to get snakes.

Ms. Shreero said that a trail map is needed and asked Ms. Zrillo if she could get one. Ms. Zrillo said she will reach out to Montgomery County Planning Commission. Ms. Harris said she would like to see parks on the map as well.

Ms. Shreero moved on to the kids activity. Already in possession is a large roll of white paper for children to draw on and craft. Ms. Shreero asked Ms. Zrillo if she could order stickers of backyard animals and insects as well as markers and crayons. Ms. Zrillo said yes. Ms. Harris requested that the stickers be realistic and not cartoonish.

Moving on to the informative piece of the day, Ms. Shreero asked the EAB if they had any ideas. Ms. Harris said poster boards on pollinator gardens, habitats, and herpetology. She asked Mr. Geasland if there should be an informative poster board on river access. Mr. Geasland said that is not necessary—having the canoe and kayak will spark conversation. Ms. Shreero said that they could bring sticks, rocks, and other materials that create habitats and speak to those.

Ms. Shreero asked Ms. Zrillo if she can check where the banner is for the table. Ms. Zrillo said she would.

Ms. Harris said the Shade Tree Commission is going to be in the vicinity, but is going to concentrate on the Tree Giveaway.

c. Education Initiatives

Ms. Shreero said she was able to retrieve the information to post on the EAB social media accounts. Ms. Kabnick asked if we can coordinate with Parks and Recreation. Ms. Zrillo said she spoke with the Director of Parks and Recreation and they are willing to post EAB information every once in a while. Ms. Shreero said the EAB needs to write posts. Ms. Harris said she would like to have a meeting with Rob Brown, Media Production Coordinator, about how to create a good post.

Aside from social media, Ms. Harris said that there is an Urban Forestry Fellow at Morris Arboretum that may be able to do in-person education in the Township parks. The Fellow said he would be willing to teach residents about mulch volcanos and how to properly plant trees. Ms. Harris said she will follow up with the Fellow and with the Director of Parks and Recreation as long as the EAB supports this idea. Ms. Shreero said she supports it. There were no objections.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a. Sustainable Property Program—Next Steps

Ms. Shreero said she foresees this taking up to a year to implement. It should be broken down into sections for implementation. Ms. Shreero gave an overview of the program to the members of the public in attendance. Ms. Zrillo said it could take up to a year and a half to implement and the action items from Whipain's PowerPoint Presentation could be used as a framework. There are seemingly natural breaks every third action item that can be equated to four months. This way, the advertisement step would fall over Township Day 2025. A Gantt Chart can be created and used for guidance. Ms. Shreero said the members should first review other Townships and research similar programs. Ms. Zrillo said she could make a shared document for members to put their findings.

Public in Attendance: Victor Low

Mr. Low said that LEED certification requirements are similar and can be used to help form questions for this program.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public in Attendance: Carol Maclean, Debbie Miller

Ms. Maclean said that the amount of litter in the Township is concerning and it is getting worse. She provided a hand-out to the members with her written concerns and resources of ways to get involved. She stated she was an active member in the local Trash Mob, and participated in the Manor Road pick-up that took place the previous day. Ms. Maclean stressed that more needs to be done beyond the Trash Mob. Signage should be posted on the electronic Township sign. There is an abundance of trash, specifically plastic bottles and cans, near traffic lights.

Mr. Geasland said the Township police does not strictly enforce the litter problem, but they should. Ms. Harris suggested to Ms. Maclean that she should mention this at a Board of Supervisors meeting. Ms. Shreero said that a prevention program is needed.

Ms. Harris said that cigarette butts are also a common item that is found along roadways.

Ms. Miller mentioned that there is no proactive activity or child education.

Ms. Shreero said that the EAB can do a Public Service Announcement.

Ms. Harris asked what other Townships are doing about litter and said this should be researched.

Ms. Shreero asked if it can be put in the *Whitemarsh Weekly*. Ms. Zrillo said she would reach out.

Ms. Miller said that there should be a cleanup event on Germantown and Joshua roads. The EAB said those are County roads and their permission would be necessary. There are also safety concerns.

The overall consensus was that there needs to be more messaging to the public about not littering and this is a topic that needs to be revisited.

7. BOARD COMMENTS (none)

8. Next Meeting Date: *May 20, 2024*

9. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Geasland made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Shreero seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.