

Borough of Mechanicsburg
Environmental Advisory Council Meeting
October 3, 2006

EAC Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Attendance:

Borough Council Members: John McDermott

EAC Members: Cese Viti, Erin Arva, Glen Weber, Susan Richards, Ron Santo, Sara Nicholas

Borough Staff: Glenda Boyer

Guests: Rebecca Wertime, Race Miner

Reading and Approval of Minutes.

- Minutes were approved as prepared.

Report of Recycling Committee

- The committee is interested in rewarding businesses that are recycling and will highlight businesses successfully recycling in the Borough newsletter.
- Borough recycling, as measured as tonnage, has declined in the past year. One suggested reason for this is the increased use of plastic vs. glass in packaging, making the recyclable waste lighter in weight.
- The Committee would like to increase the amount of recycling collected at Jubilee Day and are discussing changing the positioning of the recycling containers to group them with trash cans.

Guests/Public Comment

- Rebecca Wertime of Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay attended the meeting to talk about urban forestry opportunities opened to the Borough. She informed the group about the importance of urban trees in controlling stormwater run-off, providing cooling that can positively impact asphalt wear as well as providing cooling and wind protection to homes and other buildings.

An initiative stemming in part from the loss of forest cover in the Chesapeake Bay watershed is encouraging municipalities to maintain and improve their tree cover. The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay has applied for funding to work with municipalities using a model for supporting urban forestry which they used successfully in Columbia Borough (Lancaster County). The project will help municipalities create a management plan for its trees and help it find funding to put trees in the ground. Funding is still pending for this project but if the Borough is interested, this opportunity is available.

Glen Weber is continuing his efforts to identify locations in the Borough that could accommodate new trees and shared his system with the group. Using parcel maps for that activity was discussed.

- Race Miner of Keystone Biodiesel in Shiremanstown gave the group an overview of his business. Currently, they produce two-million gallons per year of biodiesel using soybean oil produced in Pennsylvania. Their price is currently \$2.25/gallon. A grant program administered by DEP called Alternative Fuel Incentive Grant (AFIG) will provide reimbursement of the price difference paid by a nonprofit such as a municipality, for using alternative fuels. For most vehicles manufactured after 1993, no modification is required to run on biodiesel. Older vehicles may require a blended product instead. Miner also pointed out that biodiesel not only provides a locally produced product but also provides environmental benefits including an 85% reduction in particulate pollution.

New Business

- Erin will follow-up to determine if the AFIG grants apply to blended biodiesel.
- Glen will coordinate a joint meeting with the shade tree commission.

Old Business

- Newsletter article ideas were discussed. They include an article on rubber sidewalks and why they are environmentally friendly, an article highlighting local businesses' environmental efforts and one featuring shade tree facts. Susan will contact Rebecca Wertime for her tree factoids. The deadline for the newsletter is November 4.
- The EAC web page was discussed. Erin will send what she has written to the group.
- Glen has drafted a letter to PNC regarding funding for a rubber sidewalk demonstration site but will wait to ask the Borough Council to send the letter until the Borough engineer has looked at the sidewalk specs.
- A motion was approved to carry over to the capital budget the \$6,000 in funds originally budgeted for the Recycling Committee (Weber/Viti).
- Sara updated the group about her research into funding for alternative energy sources for the waste treatment plant. She had spoken to Penn Future; they discussed the issue with her and ruled out wind power and solar. One possibility they suggested is using a biodigestive gas process in which methane gas is generated that can be burned to generate electricity. The Borough engineer should know about the volume of methane produced by the facility and can determine if it is enough for this process. Penn Future also suggested looking at increasing energy efficiency of the plant's equipment and thought that grant money may be available for equipment improvement. Sara will write a memo for Glenda that will summarize the information needed to look at the biodigestive gas process further.
- Ron gave an update from Harry Baker about the activities of the Planning Commission: There is no new activity on the Hess farm development. The Commission will review each of the individual pieces of the comprehensive plan in their coming meetings and will put the plan on the Borough website.
- Cesi updated the group on potential grant opportunities.

Adjourn

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

