

Sierra Club of Pennsylvania, Southeastern PA Group Executive Committee Meeting

March 1, 2017 Meeting

ExCom Members Attending: Ken Hemphill, Mathew Himmelein, Dave Moscatello, Prasad Ramnath, Dennis Winters, JimWylie

Attending by Phone: Gerald Brown , Alexa Manning,

ExCom Members Absent: Pat Beaudet, John Butler,

Other Members Attending: Bridget Chadwick, Emily Davis, Karen Melton, Margaret Nerston, Nick Rizzuto, Bob Silverman

The Meeting was called to order by Jim Wylie at 6:20 and asked for additions to the [agenda](#).

Secretary: Minutes were approved as emailed

Treasurer: Balance C4: \$7382, Balance C3: \$424.39

Standing Committee Reports

Conservation Committee: (Jim)

Transportation: Bridget Chadwick / Dennis

Bridget said that the US is meeting most of the Paris agreement goals but not those around transportation. She has compiled data about transportation from a variety of sources and would like to find an outlet to share this information.

People's Climate March: Jim

Things are starting to come together. Sierra Club national has assigned some organizers and I think hired some temp staff (not around here). Jim has applied for a SC stipend for transportation. I think it will be about \$1,000 that we can use for subsidizing in-need riders. He has a group of about 10 volunteers that are helping him with logistics. Some are connecting with general PCM/Philly planning meetings for topics beyond transportation, like art, messaging, outreach, etc. MORE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!

The most common questions: are there Sierra Club buses? Yes. How much are tickets? About \$50. Where is info on how to purchase? TBD, but you can purchase from RallyBus.net now - : Broomall, West Chester, Eastwick and Doylestown.

Penn East Pipeline Information Session - March 7

Joanne Kilgour (Director PA Sierra Club), Jeff Tittell (Director, NJ Sierra Club) and Maya K van Rossum (Delaware River Waterkeeper) will be presenting on the Penn East pipeline alternate route that might cut through PA and avoid sections of NJ

Event info <https://sierra.secure.force.com/events/details?formcampaignid=70131000001DxhZAAS>

"Ready for 100:" Dave

There was a kick-off meeting for Philadelphia Thursday, February 2, 2017, 6:00 pm at the CoHo (2401 Walnut St.) and a Rf100 video/ conference call Thursday, February 16, 2017. There was discussion about a flyer to promote this project. If we wish to use C3 funds to support it, it flyer cannot mention a specific political issue

Resist Rally

There will be a Rally in support of the EPA at Noon on March 7. Larger actions are planned in the future.

Climate Hearing

There will be a hearing of the Climate committee of Philadelphia City Council on March 22 at 3:00 in Council chambers.

Dave's other reports are attached ([Dave's](#))

Political Committee:

Jim spoke with Dave Hamberger, Chapter Political Committee Chairman, who likes the idea of a distributed committee and sees it as a good way to expand activism within SPG. He advised that we have training sessions, both at the SPG level and at chapter level – there is something in the works for the weekend of Star Gazers Award weekend. He recommends the political teams read up on SC policy manuals and reach out to him for any assistance. Specific volunteers for political lead have been identified in 4 out of 5 counties – Bucks is outstanding. But we have time.

Chester County Political Committee Report - Alexa

Karen Melton set up a conference call meeting with Bill and Alexa to discuss the political endorsement process and procedures. This meeting was very informative.

Alexa has been in contact with several candidates running for mayor/ supervisor positions in Phoenixville, West Chester and West Goshen who have contacted Jim or other local Sierra Club people with their interest in being endorsed. Some candidates may have primaries. Should this be the case, we may hold interviews in the near future. Several candidates have already contacted us about endorsement. These candidates will be reviewed by county groups. The group will present the recommendations to the executive committee (ExComm). Since two levels are required for endorsement, these recommendations will then go to the chapter.

Newsletter/Communications: (Ken Hemphill)

Ken will continue to work with Pat on Content and editing. The deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is April 1. The newsletter will be emailed on April 15. Bridget said she would write an article about personal transportation energy goals.

We have 2 emails per month – Tom Torres will be using them.

Jim reported that Sierra Club is using a new web platform which is Drupal based. Jim has worked with Drupal before and is skeptical, but in some cases consistency is good. His hope is that we can set up one master page for SPG and have 5 sub-pages for each county that can be managed by sub-admins. He applied for the Drupal template. Bucks and Chester already have separate pages.

Margaret suggested we could use Instagram to promote Sierra Club events.

Education Committee: (Karen Melton)

Two speakers will be talking about pipelines impacting our region on March 20th. We will hear from two speakers, Bernie Greenberg and Karen Feridun, who are closely tracking these projects and helping to lead opposition efforts. They will discuss the PennEast pipeline, Mariner East 2, and DTE Birdsboro. Important actions have recently been taken by the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) enabling these projects to move forward.

The April program will focus on natural environment

Karen proposed we reduce costs of the lecture series by eliminating printing and mailing postcards, and by making robocalls only to people who have received postcards and phone calls in the past and do not have email (about 200), and otherwise announce programs via email only. She will ask other organizations to post information about events on their websites or facebook pages. She will also try to standardize the day, perhaps the third Monday of the month with 6 programs per year.

Nomination Committee: (Alexa Manning) No report

Old Business

Executive Committee Replacements:

Karen Melton will chair the Education Committee but has declined to serve as an ExComm member. Ken nominated Margaret Nerston for the ExComm and Mat seconded. The motion passed. Bill will serve as an advisor to the political teams. As political teams form in each county, Karen, Alexa and Bill will work with them.

Outings: Amy

Amy and Tom Torres lead an Outings Leader training on Saturday, February 18, 2017 & Climate March Sunday Feb. 19, 2017 which was attended by Dave and 7 other people. They still need first aid and CPR training.

Member Engagement:

County Organization: Jim

Jim was pleased to report we have made progress in all 5 counties. Bucks and Philadelphia have had their kickoff meetings, have a leader's email list and are planning to have their second meetings (without Jim) in March. Delaware is planning a kickoff meeting in March (Swarthmore) and Montgomery is TBD, but he expects it will be in late March or early April in Abington. Minutes for the Bucks County meeting are [attached](#)
New Member Engagement Letter: Margaret

Margaret presented a draft of a letter she drafted. ([See attached](#)). This will be emailed to new members as we receive their information.

County-level meetings: Groups in Philadelphia and Bucks Counties have met. Leaders have been identified. Happy Hours have been plan with local politicians in Bucks and Chester Counties. A happy hour is being planned for Rep. McCarter to which Joanne will be coming.

SEPTA Nicetown Plant:

The coalition group has several activities going on. They are encouraging constituents to put pressure on Councilwoman Cindy Bass to oppose the plant. They are phone banking and distributing flyers.

Don't Spray Me:

This West Chester County project which encouraged residents to opt out of the spraying by the village has expanded for mosquitoes. It now includes Round Up avoidance spin off.

Fracking in Delaware River Basin: Sharon Furlong

[See report](#)

New Business

Methane Leaks:

Bob Silverman presented data on urban methane gas leaks. Methane leaks increase ground level ozone, asthma and stress urban trees. Bob traveled down several Philadelphia streets with a team from Boston and a vehicle with methane detection equipment and provided a slide showing the level of methane at points along the trip. This team had already completed a study of methane leaks in the City of Boston. He is seeking funding for a similar project in Philadelphia with an estimated cost of \$100,000. GoFundMe was suggested as a possible source. Dave will look in to funding from Sierra Club.

Senate Bill 22:

This bill legislation that would establish an independent commission to draw up Pennsylvania's congressional and state legislative district maps. It has both democrats and republicans as sponsors.

Chester County Fund raiser: Jim

Chester County is having a fund raiser entitled "Paint Chester County" at Galer Winery. They need to print posters and need funding assistance. Ken moved that we loan Chester County up to \$100 to cover the cost of the posters. Jim seconded. The motion passed.

Announcements:

Meeting Call-in Number:

1-866-501-6174, PIN is 1004100#.

Bucks County Report

Tyler State Park outing on Feb 11. Well attended with a 30 minute firepit chat at the end. This was also a training event conducted by Amy for Jim Kaff and Angela McClain.

Brian Fitzpatrick Meeting on Feb 23

Meeting Summary - Bucks County Sierra Club Committee meeting with PA 8th District Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick

A group of Bucks County Sierra Club members met with Congressman Fitzpatrick on 2-23-2017. The members thanked him for his votes against anti-methane regulation, stream pollution from mining, against HR69.

Congressman Fitzpatrick has a team flagging every environmental vote. He said that he had met with the Sierra Club team in DC. The Congressman was very clear on his stand against anything that created irreversible change, pollution in particular but also the handing of Federal lands to States which inevitably ended in private hands. He was also against diminishing the role of the EPA and felt that carbon emissions should be regulated. He was concerned with the choice of Pruitt for EPA director. Although he was unaware of the Antiquities Act, he was willing to support it as long as private land was not involved.

He indicated that he had met with Clear Path an organization that believes in market-based incentives to limit carbon. (ClearPath on their website seem to have a <https://clearpath.org/> seem to have a different agenda however).

When challenged on the REINS Act he believed that this was a balance of power issue and meant to limit the powers of the executive branch. Bucks County Sierra Club plans to clarify some of the more draconian aspects of REINS for the Congressman.

He also said that he was part of the "Problem Solvers" caucus which is a bipartisan group. He felt that in all legislation there is a middle ground and not ideological extremes.

He was also interested in understanding why Bucks County gets a "F" in air quality from the American Lung Association. He also stated that he had clearly opposed both Elcon and the PennEast pipeline.

He was interested in forming a constituent committee on various issues and wanted to work with Bucks County Sierra Club and other local environmental group on the environment. He wished to work with SC in a bipartisan fashion with open minds. He also wanted to be informed on upcoming environmental legislation by the Sierra Club DC office.

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Bucks County meeting - March 11. To post on Meetup to invite new members

Tentative agenda

Outings

Member Engagement ideas?

SPG Newsletter contributions?

Peoples Climate March

Brian Fitzpatrick

Political point person

New membership

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Sunoco's Mariner East 2 project now under construction.

Pinelands Commission Meeting, Crowne Plaza, Cherry Hill, NJ February 24, 2017 9:30 am - 1:30 pm (+)
A motion was made by a commissioner to table consideration of the pipeline through the pinelands to the next pinelands commission meeting, after the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) hearing. The motion failed. The audience of well over 300 people was not amused. Much shouting, chanting and singing ensued. Several commissioners spoke eloquently about how this pipeline did not meet the requirements of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP), which requires any infrastructure to 'primarily benefit the residents of the Pinelands'. The commission then voted on pipeline approval, prior to accepting public comments despite over 100 people having signed in to comment. Nevertheless, the pipeline was approved with eight (or nine?) 'yea' votes, six nay votes, and one abstention. After the citizens in attendance vociferously expressed their disapproval, the commission began to accept public comments with a three minute limit. The first speaker was Jeff Tittle, who launched his comments by announcing that we will see the commission in court again. Dozens of speakers followed, all in opposition to the pipeline. However, many of those signed up to speak left before having the opportunity, seeing no point after the vote was taken, or perhaps they needed to go back to work. To be continued...

Also appended are summaries of some articles on advances in the costs and deployment of clean energy technologies, as a reminder of how far we've come, how quickly we can advance needed technologies with the right incentives, and what's at stake at the Federal level.

Renewable Energy Drumpfs of the Month:

Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt, confirmed 52-46 to head the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): Toomey voted in favor, Casey opposed.

Center for Media and Democracy FOIA obtained thousands of emails between Pruitt and fossil fuel companies; emails detail EPA head's close ties to fossil fuel industry, The Washington Post February 22, 2017

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/02/22/oklahoma-attorney-generals-office-releases-7500-pages-of-emails-between-scott-pruitt-and-fossil-fuel-industry/?utm_term=.967916087a65&wpisrc=nl_p1most-partner-1&wpmm=1

Coal, oil and gas companies to pay less in royalties after Interior decision. The Washington Post February 24, 2017 https://www.washingtonpost.com/amphtml/politics/coal-oil-and-gas-companies-to-pay-less-in-royalties-after-interior-decision/2017/02/24/a3164016-fad5-11e6-bf01-d47f8cf9b643_story.html

Covanta is currently not selling their REC's from their trash to steam plant in Chester and they were going to give me a price. That is counted as renewable energy.

Duke energy was getting PPA at 5 and 8 cents for solar for long term purchases but natural gas was 3.5 cents. Still think that is the way to go.

EPA isn't allowed to use Climate Change on their printed material.

PGW filed for a rate increase because of reduced sale of gas because of warm winters.

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DRBC MEETING, Feb. 15, 2017

Over 400 people rallied to this meeting, first demonstrating outside and then submitting to a bag search and a wand pass over in order to enter the Washington Crossing Visitor Center's auditorium, which only held 2/3rds of the group.

There were over 16 items on the docket to be read into the record (which was also filmed/recorded) and after each one or a block of several that were bundled were introduced and read, comments from experts and the audience were allowed. Most permit requests were not significant as they were only renewals of already established levels of water use. Questions were first raised concerning the significant request for the doubling of the permitted taking of water from the Delaware River and the subsequent discharge of "used" water back into the River by the Department of the Navy, located in the Philadelphia area. Objections to the amount of water, the significance of that doubling, the condition of the water to be discharged back, along with questions regarding the impact of such removal on a system that is already stressed and promises to become more stressed as sea levels rise and salt water possibly makes further intrusions into this fresh water system, then dominated the public comment portion of the proceedings. In addition, comments were made regarding the fear of accelerated degradation to the water's entire ecosystem, along with noting that there was a lack of an adequate EIS to accompany this substantial and new request. Groups whose representatives commented included but were not limited to: Delaware Riverkeeper, New Jersey Sierra Club, The Green Party, several riparian based environmental groups from both Pennsylvania and New Jersey, Bucks County Conservation Committee of the Sierra Club and the Bucks County Coalition on the Environment.

Things became very heated and many comments were made when reviewing the last item of the docket that involved a plan for development of the entire River Basin. Page 31 in particular was objected to by not only all of the above groups, but many many others, because of its wording that indicated that fracking style, unconventional mining activities would be allowed after the 5 year moratorium on those activities was potentially lifted at the end of this calendar year. Speakers from four states of the Commission: New Jersey, New York Pennsylvania and Delaware were represented, including students, groups representing the interests of African Americans and other People Of Color, Native Americans and their concerns, some academics from schools and universities in the area, businesses and industries that believed a lifting of the moratorium would negatively and severely impact their business and the values of land held, and finally, private citizens. It was obvious that people and their groups travelled great distances in order to show their disapproval for the lifting of the moratorium. Issues were raised regarding environmental and public health degradation, waste of resources, inadequate and outdated public health data and research, non inclusion of recently discovered information regarding suppressed data on pipeline and well explosions, contaminations and other accidents, undue financial power and influence being exerted against public officials, community and individual harassment by industry representatives, congestion of the area involved, the fact that the River is the prime source of drinking water for over 17 million people in the Basin area, the highly profitable and historical outdoor tourism and recreation industries, the exposure to pollution such a lifting would cause to many surface streams and high water tables that are part of this geological and hydraulic area, and finally, the frustration the audience felt for not being heard adequately and for having to force their way onto the playing field when their lives, their properties and their communities were at stake. This part of the hearing became heated and at times, volatile. Prepared statements were read into the record by Maya Van Rossum but were simultaneously yelled by selected members of the audience. In addition, chants and audience participation were orchestrated by speakers such as the head of the Catskill Mountaineers who have helped to spearhead resistance in the New York lower mountain region, and Jeff Tittle of the New Jersey Sierra Club. It must be said that the Commission was quite tolerant of the outpouring of emotion from the speakers and the audience and only got belligerent in response to Josh Fox, filmmaker extraordinaire (who had commented earlier) who was complaining of not being allowed to be seated with other news staff. However, that situation was contained before he was escorted off the premises.

After the meeting was officially adjourned, the entire group marched out and dispersed peacefully, vowing to be back on March 15, 2017.

P.S. There is a Strategy meeting on March 4 hosted by Delaware River Waterkeepers that some Sierra Club members are attending.

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SIERRA CLUB

Dear New Sierra Club Member,

Welcome to the Southeastern PA Group (SPG), our local organization of the Sierra Club's Pennsylvania Chapter! We are delighted that you have joined us as a new member. SPG is composed of members, activists, and followers in Philadelphia, Delaware, Chester, Montgomery, and Bucks counties. For any campaign the SPG adopts, it keeps one focus at its root: to **Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet!**

We encourage you to participate in some of our many programs and initiatives. Below illustrates just a few of the programs we organize, all volunteer-lead and orchestrated.

- RESISTANCE to policies, candidates, and officials who do not prioritize our mission, and endorsing those who do
- Promoting Ready For 100, our campaign that pushes for 100% renewable and clean energy use at the municipal level
- Environmental education and discussion at the Community College of Philadelphia
- Local group outings (hikes, bikes, and paddles) to natural areas and educational facilities

To kick off your membership, please follow us on our Facebook page and stay updated with our website. You can find further information on how to join programs and attend meetings through these pages. We can't wait to work with you!

SPG Website: <http://Southeastern.PASierra.org/>

SPG Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SierraclubSE/>

SPG Meetup (for outings): <https://www.meetup.com/Philadelphia-Sierra-Club-Outings/>

SPG Volunteers Email Forum: <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/sierra-philly-volunteers>

Jim Wylie
Sierra Club, Southeastern PA Group, Chair
jim.wylie@verizon.net

- **Introductions**
- **Approval** of [Feb minutes](#)
- **Announcements**, agenda updates
- **Treasurers Report** – [spreadsheet here](#) (on ExCom members can see)
- **Communications**
 - Spring Newsletter
 - Other Emails/Action Alerts
 - Web Updates
 - Social Media
- **Member Engagement**
 - Welcome New Members Letter
 - County Organizing
 - Happy Hours w/ Elected Officials
- **Educational Programs**
 - Pipelines – Mar 20
 - Next?
- **Politics**
 - Life after Bill
 - Training
 - Endorsement Schedule
- **Outreach**
 - Tabling Coordinator – Emily
 - Supplies – [Expense Request](#)
 - Calendar
- **Outings**
 - Training the Leaders
 - Outings Calendar
 - New Staff
- **Resist**
 - March to support the Paris Climate Accord – Feb 19
 - Action March 7 at EPA – What Would Life Be Like Without The EPA?
- **ExCom NomCom**
 - Any Nominations to fill Bill's seat?
- **Conservation Committees**
 - Ready For 100 - PHL
 - [Letter to OOS](#) – feedback on Energy Mast Plan
 - Testify at Council Climate Hearing – March 22
 - Events tied to PCM
 - Ready For 100 – Burbs
 - Draft Flyer
 - Re-Branding
 - People's Climate March – Apr 29
 - Transportation
 - Events tied to RF100
 - Scientists March – Apr 22
 - [Paint Chester County](#) – [Expense Request](#)
 - Don't Spray Met – RoundUp Avoidance
 - Nicetown SEPTA CHP plant
 - Gas Leak Monitoring – [Funds Request](#) – we will do this whenever Bob pops in
 - Presentation by Bob Silverman – [watch video](#)
- **ExCom Meeting Calendar** – do we want to pencil in any off-campus meetings? Call-in only?