

Sierra Club of Pennsylvania, Southeastern PA Group Executive Committee Meeting
City CoHo – 2401 Walnut St in Philadelphia
November 7, 2018

ExCom Members Attending: Pat Beudet, Sue Edwards, Jim Kaff Ken Hemphill, Kevin Little, Alexa Manning, Dave Moscatello, Prasad Ramnath, Dennis Winters, JimWylie

ExCom Members Absent: , John Butler - sick,

Other Members Attending: **Karen Melton, Emily Davis**

The Meeting was called to order ay 6:21. [Agenda](#)

Secretary: Pat made an edit in the minutes and the minutes were approved with the edit.

Treasurer: Dennis Winters

C4: Beginning Balance: \$11,750
Income: \$ 250 (PayPal)
Expenditures: \$ 0
Ending Balance: \$12,000

C3: Beginning Balance: \$ 8,835

Treasurer's report was accepted

Standing Committee Reports

Conservation Committee: (Jim Wylie)

Ready For 100

Besides the 2 new townships that have passed RF100 resolutions (Haverford in Delco and East Bradford in Chesco), there has been A LOT of activity in EAC committees around the area – including a few in Bucks County where we do not have formal RF100 organizing (we are looking for a leader). Definitely expect a few more resolutions passed in the coming months. (Whitemarsh EAC is sending a resolution to supervisors)

Many suburban officials and volunteers are closely watching the West Chester Area Council Of Government's process of issuing a Request For Qualifications (RFQ) for doing professional energy planning for the WC region (7 munis). 9 quality responses were received and are currently being reviewed and summarized for the Nov 15 WCACOG meeting where they will hopefully decide to move forward with issuing an Request For Proposals.

Stay tuned for news in Dec.

The resolution in Philadelphia has been divided into three parts at the suggestion of Julian Thompson in Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds-Brown's office. The first part, which concerns Municipal energy, will be presented in the next month. Part 2 dealing with electricity in the whole city and Part 3 dealing with heat and transportation will be presented in the first half of 2019.

A bill is currently in city council to sign a power purchase agreement that will allow the construction of an 70 megawatt solar facility which will be the largest in the state.

Plastics

We have many volunteers offering to help, but nobody has stepped up to take the lead for doing organizing around the issue of single-use plastics in the SPG area. Emily and Eva have done some tabling and contact info has been building.

Narberth Borough passed a bag-ban ordinance in Oct. Similar legislation is expected to be introduced in Philadelphia city council – perhaps as early as Jan. West Chester passed a resolution calling for the creation of an ordinance to reduce/eliminate grocery bags and straws.

Mark Squilla has introduced a plastic bag ban in Philadelphia.

We have an opportunity here. We should convene a strategy/planning meeting in Nov or Dec.

Political Committee:

Results from Joanne

The development of a questionnaire for the 2019 elections was discussed. Three major topics: plastics, Ready for 100, Fossil fuels; that are relevant in all of the counties were discussed. Jim, Meenal, Karen and Dennis will work on the questionnaire. [More Notes](#)
Joanne Kilgore is collecting information about the participation of members in the various campaigns. Alexa suggested a debrief to look at best practices

Newsletter/Communications: (Ken Hemphill)

Sondra Moore has taken over the newsletter. It did not go out in October because of need to send political endorsement emails.

Education Committee: (Karen Melton / Kevin Little)

Nomination Committee: (Alexa Manning)

019 SPG ExCom Election Slate

New

Ann DiCampello (Bucks)
Abbie Wysor (Delco)
Pratima Agrawal (Phila)
Meenal Raval (Phila)

Incumbents

Pat Beaudet (Phila)
Sue Edwards (Delco)
Ken Hemphill (Delco)
Dave Moscatello (Phila)

All running for 5 seats. Alexa (Chesco) is not running.

BTW – we should plan on an SPG/ExCom orientation lecture/workshop in Jan

New Member Engagement: (Prasad Ramnath / Pat Beaudet)

Outings: (Jim Kaff, Amy Kwasnicki)

Amy has been working on a training for outdoor leaders that will take place in February

Old Business

Eastwick: A support letter was sent to the Philadelphia Redevelopment authority regarding public land use in Eastwick. Because of the time frame, a discussion was held via email and the [attached letter](#) was approved

New Business

Announcements:

Meeting Call-in Number:

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

2nd Floor common area at City CoHo – 2401 Walnut St in Philadelphia

November ExCom Meeting Agenda (tentative):

6:15 - Introductions

Approval of Oct Meeting Minutes

Treasurers Report –

ExCom 2019 elections –

Endorsements/Campaign Support – (perhaps push to Dec)

Fall Newsletter –

Outings -

Eastwick Letter Of Support –

RF100:

Philly – PPA, MEMP hearings

Burbs – Haverford, E Bradford join list

Plastics -

Other issues

Plan for Dec meeting & social (?)

7:15 Wild Neighbors: Loving, Protecting, and Peacefully Coexisting With Wildlife

Philadelphia Metro Wildlife Center's wild animal ambassadors (SC grant recipients)

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Summary of Election Results for PA Endorsed Candidates (Joanne Kilgore, Chapter Director)

Tonight we had some amazing victories - thank you all so much for what you did over the course of this year, not just to get environmental leaders elected, but also to build a lasting infrastructure of engaged community members in your districts.

US Senator Bob Casey, who has been an ever-stronger voice standing up for our climate and our communities, will continue to represent PA in the US Senate. In addition, we are sending a cohort of powerful, compassionate women to Washington - newly-elected, Sierra Club-endorsed Congresswomen Madeleine Dean, Chrissy Houlahan, and Susan Wild - who will join their counterparts, Sierra Club-endorsed Congressmen Brendan Boyle, Matt Cartwright, and Dwight Evans, in the now democratically controlled US House of Representatives!

At the state-level, not only did we re-elect Governor Tom Wolf and elect Lt. Governor John Fetterman, but we flipped enough seats in the Pennsylvania State Senate to take away the Republican super-majority while also bringing in some true environmental champions - Sierra Club-endorsed Tim Kearney, Steve Santarsiero, and Maria Collett flipped seats, and are likely to be joined in the State Senate by Lindsey Williams and Tina Davis, whose races were too close to call at the time of this writing. Gaining strong, pro-environment voices in the PA Senate while also up-ending the Republican super-majority is a huge victory for the Sierra Club and the residents of our Commonwealth.

In the PA House of Representatives, some truly remarkable people have been re-elected in close races, and elected to serve for the first time in this office - Sierra Club-endorsed

incumbents Gene DiGiralomo, Perry Warren, Leanne Krueger-Brankey, Carolyn Comitta, Steve McCarter, Tim Briggs, Greg Vitali, Chris Rabb, Maria Donatucci, Pam DeLissio, Donna Bullock, Rosita Youngblood, Mary Jo Daley, Patty Kim, Matt Bradford, and Mark Rozzi will all return to Harrisburg. They will be joined by new members, also endorsed by the Sierra Club, including Sara Innamorato, Summer Lee, Elizabeth Fiedler, Danielle Friel Otten, Kyle Mullins, Joe Ciresi, Christina Sappey, Melissa Schusterman, Malcolm Kenyatta, Mike Zabel, Jen O'Mara, and Joe Hohenstein. Otten, Schusterman, Sappey, Zabel, O'Mara, and Ciresi are all seats that the Democratic Caucus will pick up, narrowing the majority in the State House in addition to the State Senate.

I look forward to working with each of you - and with these esteemed elected officials - toward a more just, equitable environment for current and future generations.

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2019 SPG Endorsement Strategy

In 2019 almost all SE PA county commissioner are up for election -- all three commissioners in Bucks, Montgomery and Chester Counties, and three of five members of the Delaware County Council. Philadelphia, which operates under a home rule charter has a governing body of 11 city councilmembers - all up for election in 2019 as well as the Mayor.

Proposal A

Pick a few issues to prioritize in the SPG area and make them our campaign issues. Endorse and support candidates that agree with our stance on these issues through responding to a questionnaire. The questionnaire responses will be made public.

Proposal B

Build a coalition around these issues. Meaning - solicit buy-in from other organizations that agree with our principles. Amplify the power of the endorsement.

The Issues - Primary

Will you support a goal of 100% renewable energy in your county. No later than 2050. Will you support developing a transition plan by 2020 with input from all stakeholders that results in fair and equitable access and opportunities for clean energy.

Will you support a single-use plastics ban in your county. Develop a transition plan. To include plastic shopping bags, plastic straws, polystyrene takeout containers.

Will you support a transition to non-fossil fuel based mass transit in your county by 2030. Will you use your position as county commissioner to advocate for SEPTA to transition to electric buses powered by renewable energy, and appoint members to the SEPTA board who support those objectives.

The Issues - Second Tier

Will you resist/prohibit/oppose the expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure: gas pipelines, gas burning power plants?

Do you support the protection of open space (are there specific goals in the 5 counties for expansion of protected lands?)

Will you work to improve the quality of the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers by enforcing pollution regulations and calling for DEP and EPA to do their jobs?

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To: Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority
Re: Eastwick Public Land Study
October 31, 2018

I am writing on behalf of the Sierra Club Southeastern Pennsylvania Group to offer our comments on the Eastwick Public Land Study, as represented in the July 26, 2018, Final Public Meeting Recommendations <https://philadelphiaredevelopmentauthority.org/community-engagement/lower-eastwick-public-land-strategy/>. Sierra Club is the nation's largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with more than 3 million members and supporters. In addition to helping people from all backgrounds explore nature and our outdoor heritage, the Sierra Club works to promote clean energy, safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and legal action. Our Southeastern PA Group (SPG) has served as a supporting partner to the Eastwick Friends and Neighbors Coalition (EFNC) since its inception, and a SPG volunteer leader serves on the coalition's board of directors. We serve our members throughout the region including in Eastwick with our advocacy efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the EPLS. We associate ourselves with the comments submitted by EFNC. We would like to underscore and augment their concerns as discussed below.

First, we are concerned that a greater degree of clarity is needed regarding the process for finalizing the Overall Vision and Feasibility Study on which the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority (PRA) will base next steps in planning the disposition of the relevant parcels. The July 26 presentation is unclear as to where the process stands, and how "the City with the community can make thoughtful decisions in public land development moving forward" as stated. We urge that EFNC and community residents' concerns about the current draft EPLS be fully recognized and considered in finalizing the plan.

Regarding the substantive elements of the EPLS, we endorse EFNC's approach to evaluating them. The additional criteria EFNC has defined for reviewing the study components are ~~restated~~ restated below. They reflect the lived experience and understanding of the community of members of EFNC's leadership as well as the outcomes of the rigorously conducted Community Assessment in 2013:

"The overriding principle is that: protecting residents' safety must be the highest priority and must be an absolute requirement before proceeding with the project.

In evaluating the impact of the project on the community's concerns about flooding, we looked at the following principal aspects of risk:

1. No increase in flood hazard risk;
2. No net loss of flood storage;
3. No change in flood elevations;
4. No change in local flooding;
5. No adverse impacts on adjoining communities including the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum (the Refuge); and
6. The burden of proof is on PRA before development could occur."

While prioritizing public safety, EFNC has considered how well the proposed solutions for the 3 parcels have balanced economic, broader environmental and social equity goals widely shared within the community.

We share EFNC's profound concerns with the concept for Site 1, the 128 acre site, most of which lies in the Special Flood Hazard Area, according to FIRM maps that are, in fact, dated. The EPLS provides for zoning the acreage and a cut and fill strategy to allow for an industrial development on 30 acres of fill and a residential project on 15 acres of fill, a large portion of the remainder being devoted to stormwater basins. A small third zone would be reserved for community open space. The approach seems misguided from multiple angles. First, while Interface Studio's first public presentation recognized the history of loss of the flood-water attenuating marshlands and the risks of catastrophic flooding to the community, as well as the 2013 EFNC-conducted assessment showing 82% of respondents support "use of federal money to purchase the 128-acre development site for preservation as a park or an extension of the Refuge," all that seems minimized or dismissed in the July 26 recommendations. In addition, the recommendations are shown to be favored by a minority and very small percentage of community stakeholders who provided feedback.

The approach is also very much at odds with the City's stated goals of building resilience in the face of anticipated climate change-induced increased incidence of heavy storms and sea-level rise. The 2015 Office of Sustainability report "Growing Stronger Toward a Climate-Ready Philadelphia," for example, outlines the expected increase in flood risk associated with these impacts. The report notes:

"Higher sea levels will increase the depth and extent of flooding in and around the city from storm surges, such as those occurring during hurricanes and other tropical storms. Low-lying areas already experience localized flooding during heavy storm events, and both municipal infrastructure and private development exist along the two rivers." [p.12]

And an "early implementation opportunity" outlined for the Planning Commission in building stronger is "Preserving open space in flood hazard areas and channel migration zones. The Wissahickon Valley Park is an outstanding local example of an appropriately preserved floodplain that helps to protect neighboring communities from flooding." [p. 51]

It is very troubling that the recommended approach to Site 1 seems to ignore the potential increase in flood risk imposed on the immediately surrounding neighborhood. As EFNC has also noted, there are more suitable locations for the proposed industrial and residential uses elsewhere in Eastwick. We support consideration of the alternative opportunity to preserve and convey the 128 acres to the Refuge. As EFNC has communicated, the Conservation Fund has indicated its readiness to fund the purchase; the community would have the opportunity to contribute to shaping the use of the land; and the opportunity for evaluating and pursuing the flood mitigation potential of the acreage would be retained.

Regarding the concept for Site 2, the wooded acreage at the corner of Lindbergh Blvd. and 84th St. adjacent to the Heinz Refuge, we share EFNC's questioning if it represents an appropriate location for senior housing. The site is significantly removed from community services. We also note the considerable support expressed within the community for enhancing the area as a gateway to the refuge, an alternative which would allow for retaining the woodlands.

Regarding Site 3, the parcels owned by PRA and the School District including the closed Pepper School and the Wolf/Comm Tech facility, we align ourselves with EFNC's general support for the overall approach, preserving the historically significant Wolf School structure and repurposing it to meet community needs, while calling for demolition of the Pepper School. We want to underscore that the status quo with the seriously deteriorated Pepper School, as a result of lying vacant and vandalized, is unacceptable. Many in the community opposed the school's closure and loss of a hub for its residents; having it now serve as a magnet for short dumping and vandalism is further insult. Given that the Pepper

site actually lies below sea-level, serious consideration should be given to the flood mitigation potential of the area.

For the reasons stated above, we strongly urge PRA to substantially rework the plan to be much more responsive to the issues and challenges and community goals that should inform this major turning point for Eastwick.

[Jim Wylie](#)

[Sierra Club, Southeastern PA Group, executive committee chair](#)

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