

Sierra Club of Pennsylvania, Southeastern PA Group Executive Committee Meeting

February 6, 2019 Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/7825257851>

929 436 2866 Meeting ID: 782 525 7851

ExCom Members Attending: Pratima Agrawal, John Butler, Sue Edwards, Ken Hemphill, Jim Kaff, Kevin Little, Dave Moscatello, Prasad Ramnath, JimWylie

ExCom Members Absent: Ann DiCampello, Dennis Winters

Other Members Attending: Emily Davis, Karen Melton, Abby Wisor, Zakia Elliott

The Meeting was called to order by Dave [Agenda](#)

Secretary: (Emily Davis) The minutes were approved as emailed.

Treasurer: (Dennis Winters)

C4: Beginning Balance:	\$ 17,602
Income:	\$ 2,295
	\$ 19,897
Expenditure:	\$ 100
Ending Balance:	\$ 19,897
C3: Beginning Balance:	\$ 8,396

Funding requests:

John moved that we give \$100 to support the Solar Car Derby. The motion passed

Sue moved that we support 350 Philadelphia's legal defense against the Nicetown Gas Plant fund with a donation of \$500. The motion passed.

Standing Committee Reports

Nomination Committee: no report

Conservation Committee: (Jim Wylie, Dave)

Plans for areas posted on the google drive

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/0B28yV9yCsnvMXzdDWmJKNzFFTDA>

Transit Equity Day (Zakia Elliott)

The team is planning a month of activities starting with the screening of film shorts at Scribe Video and ending with a "birthday Party" for Octavius Cato. All month they will be asking transit users how they think public transportation can be made more equitable. [Detailed report](#)

SEPTA Sign-On letter

It was moved and passed that we sign on to the attached letter to SEPTA.

Plastics Campaign

The Plastics team is hosting a launch event on February 18th at the Church of the Advocate in Philadelphia. They are working on a region-wide prohibition of plastic grocery bags. They are also working to end single-use plastic bottles, cups straws and take-out containers.

Ready for 100 (Sue, Pratima)

There will be a screening of the film, Paris to Pittsburgh, in Delaware County. Pratima is looking for a location in Philadelphia. Public Access TV in Radnor was suggested as another venue for the film.

Political Committee: (Robin Mann, Jim Wylie)

Some organizations (ReclaimPhiladelphia) have already endorsed candidate for the May primary. The common questionnaire is still in development. Organizations that might participate include Clean

Water Action, League of Conservation Voters and Food and Water Watch. It might be possible to have common interviews as well. There was a question as to whether completed questionnaires could be posted on the web. John suggested that a question be added that asked the candidate what personal actions he or she has taken. To increase the impact of endorsements, it was suggested that we consider making the announcement jointly with over environmental organizations.

Newsletter/Communications:

Ken reported the Sondra is collecting articles. Check the blog schedule to see when you are schedules

Education Committee: (Karen Melton / Kevin Little, Pratima Agrawal)

There are several members who will be planning/organizing education for SE PA Sierra Club members in 2019. None of these as yet has an associated cost, if any. Expenditure requests will be presented at monthly meetings as events/activities are formulated. Look for the following:

- Karen plans to organize education on plastics and transit
- Kevin plans to organize educational events for young people
- Pratima plans to organize one or more film screenings
- Ann plans to develop materials for use by RF100 teams

New Member Engagement: no report

Outings: (Jim Kaff, Amy Kwasnicki)

Amy has an outing scheduled in Pottstown including the Slyfox Brewery. She will be doing some tabling to look for new outings leaders. She has a training for leaders scheduled for February 23

Old Business

Nuclear Bailout

There will be a state-level call on this issue.

New Business

City Nature Challenge: Amy

In 2019 Philadelphia will take part for the first time in the City Nature Challenge (CNC), an iNaturalist-based urban bioblitz competition taking part in two phases, with observations April 26-29 and identifications in iNaturalist April 30 - May 5. We are already planning how to tie the bioblitz into some Local Outings. Our logo will be on their sponsor page at <https://cncphilly.org/>

Jim moved that we co-sponsor this event. The motion passed

State-wide Equity Team

The team with staff leader Eva Resnick is looking for a member from SPG. They are specifically looking at the issue of volunteer retention. Jim and Sue will send out a call to the county lists regarding this.

Announcements:

Next month will be a “Zoom” meeting

Meeting Call-in Number:

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

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Agenda

Tentative agenda items:

- Officers & Chairs – what roles are missing? Any new volunteers?
- **Approve:** 2019 Budget – see proposed below
- Conservation plans for 2019 – see links below
- Endorsement planning for 2019 – Phila council & county commissioners
- **Approve:** [Fossil Free SEPTA -on letter](#) from 350/Philly
- **Approve:** Do we want to co-sponsor the City Nature Challenge (CNC), an [iNaturalist-based](#) urban bioblitz competition – see details below?
- Anything else?

2019 SPG Budget Proposal – see full details [HERE](#)

\$700	Fixed – rent & bank charges, Zoom
\$690	Outreach – tabling, printing
\$1,150	Member Support – social events, boosting
\$1,150	Community Support – helping local projects
\$1,150	Political Expenses – buttons, pizza, venues, meet & greets
\$1,840	Outings – equip, promotions, sponsorships, leader training
\$1,840	Education – venues, speakers
\$5,750	New Conservation Work (see details at link above)
\$9,614	Conservation Rollover from 2018 (see details at link above)
\$23,884	Total Budget for 2019 (we have about \$26,000 in the bank (c3 + c4) Expect \$6,000 allocation in Aug from chapter
\$8,000	expected grant requests from chapter (on top of SPG conservation numbers above)

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Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority
Chairman Pasquale T. Deon Sr. and General Manager Jeffrey Knueppel
1234 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107

January __, 2019

Dear Chairman Deon and General Manager Knueppel,

We are writing to express our support for SEPTA's renewable energy and electric bus initiatives in 2018, and to call on SEPTA to commit to transitioning to 100% renewable energy and a zero-emission bus fleet by no later than 2032.

Our organizations are committed to protecting the health and well-being of people across Southeastern Pennsylvania and around the world. We are strong supporters of public transportation. This February, we are happy to be participating in Transit Equity Day, a nationwide project that is calling for expanded, improved, more affordable public transit, powered by 100% renewable energy.

We are excited that SEPTA took several steps toward replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy in 2018. In the last year, SEPTA:

Received and began testing 25 zero-emission electric buses that will soon transport riders on two routes in South Philadelphia

Committed to purchasing 10 additional electric buses that will operate out of the Midvale bus depot in Nicetown

Began construction of rooftop solar arrays at four SEPTA facilities

Issued a Request for Proposals to purchase 10% to 20% of SEPTA's electricity from renewable sources through the grid.

These initiatives will reduce the amount of air pollution that harms our communities and the amount of climate-damaging greenhouse gases that are emitted into the atmosphere. But the rapidly accelerating climate crisis and the asthma crisis in Philadelphia mean that we need more ambitious action.

It is time for SEPTA to commit to leaving fossil fuels behind. SEPTA should plan to power our transit system entirely with renewable energy by 2032.

We call on SEPTA to:

Set a goal of operating an all-electric bus fleet by no later than 2032, and plan to begin purchasing only electric buses after 2020.

Publish a detailed report by this summer that lays out options for deploying 400 more electric buses during the 2021-2026 timeframe, as suggested in SEPTA's most recent Energy Action Plan. The report should enable SEPTA to inform the bus industry about technical requirements that potential vendors will have to meet, explore a range of financing options, and examine the operational and infrastructure challenges that SEPTA will have to address. In addition, it should lay out options for prioritizing deployment of electric buses in the communities that are most burdened by air pollution and related illnesses.

Commit to obtaining 100% of the electricity used to power SEPTA's buses, trains, trolleys, subways, and buildings from renewable sources by 2030. The Authority should set ambitious year-by-year targets for

installing solar panels on additional SEPTA buildings and properties and buying electricity from solar arrays and wind turbines elsewhere in the region. SEPTA's renewable energy contracts should include local hiring provisions so that residents of the region who face barriers to living wage employment have the opportunity to participate in building these projects.

Commit to using SEPTA's polluting gas-fired power plant in Nicetown only for emergency backup power, and cancel plans to build any additional gas-fired power plants.

Other transit agencies are setting ambitious goals and implementing ambitious programs like those we are proposing. For example:

The Delaware River Port Authority has just committed to installing more than 22 MW of solar panels on its bridges, stations, and rail yards over the next 18 months—enough to provide 50% of the electricity used to power the PATCO High Speed Line as well as four bridges. Those solar arrays will generate more than six times the amount of electricity as SEPTA's rooftop solar panels.

In California, Bay Area Rapid Transit has signed a contract to buy 90% of the electricity used to power its trains and facilities from newly constructed solar arrays and wind turbines sources by 2021.

Several other large North American transit agencies—in Seattle, Los Angeles, and Edmonton—have set goals to purchase only electric buses beginning in the year 2020 or shortly thereafter.

In addition, here in Philadelphia, the City government has committed to purchase 100% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030. Last month, City Council and Mayor Kenney authorized a 20-year contract to buy 22% of the City's electricity from a soon-to-be-constructed 70 MW solar array near Gettysburg.

We urge SEPTA to follow a similar path and to become a leader in the transition to renewable energy.

Sincerely,

Sign-ons as of 2/6/19:

350 Bucks County
Bucks County Environmental Alliance
Bucks County Sierra Club
Clean Water Action
Delaware Riverkeeper Network
Environmental Justice Center at Chestnut Hill United Church
Food and Water Watch
Fossil Free Drexel
Moms Clean Air Force -- Pennsylvania
Montgomery County Ready for 100
Neighborhood Networks
PennFuture
Philly Thrive
Physicians for Social Responsibility Philadelphia/Pennsylvania
POWER
Sierra Club, Southeastern PA Group
Sunrise Movement Philadelphia

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Report from Zakia

Feb. 4th marked Transit Equity Day, which honors Rosa Parks' birthday and pushes the message that public transit is a civil right, and a key strategy to combat climate change. PCW has teamed up with several organizations to form the Philadelphia Transit Equity Day Coalition, and we will elevate this message through Black History Month, and honor the histories of other key local transit and civil rights advocates, like Octavius Catto, an educator, abolitionist, and civil rights advocate whose activism successfully desegregated Philadelphia's horse drawn trolleys in the 1860s.

The Philadelphia Transit Equity Day Coalition has planned a series of events with community partners to: 1) raise awareness of Transit Equity Day and its core values, 2) solicit information from public transit riders on their experiences and needs for a fairer transit system, and 3) develop a shared transit equity platform to support and hold our regional transit agency, SEPTA, accountable to the communities it serves.

Get involved in Transit Equity Activities:

THURSDAY, FEB. 7th: Transit Equity Day Screening

We are partnering with Scribe Video Center to kickoff Transit Equity **Month** with a screening of five short films about public transit, created by participants of Scribe Video Center's Documentary History Project for Youth. Join us this Thursday, February 7th from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm for a reception and film screening at Scribe Video Center, 3908 Lancaster Avenue. Facebook event link [here](#).

TUESDAY, FEB. 11th - 28th: Birthday Card Pop-Up Surveying

Throughout February, we plan to survey SEPTA riders at key transit center using the Transit Equity Day birthday card on their experience and ideas for making the transit system more fair. If you are available to help us survey, we are planning to pop up at major transit centers to collect one-question survey answers via a giant birthday card for Rosa Parks and Octavius Catto. I am looking for volunteers to help us collect survey answers: **please reply to this email if you are willing to pair up with another coalition partner or myself to help collect survey responses.**

Time slots are available on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4-6 pm at major transit centers beginning February 11th and ending on February 28th. Selected transit centers include: Wissahickon Transfer Center; Broad and Erie; Bridge and Pratt; 30th Street Station- SEPTA; 30th Street Amtrak; Dilworth Plaza; Frankford Station; 69th Street Station (other suggested locations welcome). I will follow up with more details to interested folks.

SATURDAY, FEB. 23rd: Transit Equity Birthday Party

This February 22nd is Octavius Catto's 180th birthday. Known for his work desegregating Philly's trolley system, Octavius Catto's actions affirmed that everyone has a right to equal access of public transit. On Saturday February 23rd we will celebrate Catto and others who have dedicated their work to transit equity. More details will be sent soon, hold the date!

Join us to:

- Sign our birthday card for Octavius Catto
- Hear from local transit advocates
- Eat cake
- Play family friendly party games
- Learn about Philly transit history
- And more!

Other Transit Equity Activities

Stay tuned for details of our other Transit Equity partner events!

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