

**Horsham Township  
Environmental Advisory Board  
Meeting Minutes  
January 25, 2022**

In attendance:

**BOARD:**

Marc Newell, Chairperson  
Steve Quigley, Vice Chairman  
Joanne Coniglio, Secretary  
Ashlee Biondo  
Sharon Diasio  
Robert Ehlenberger  
Arezo Siegfried

**STAFF:**

Larry Burns, Director of Community &  
Economic Development

**AUDIENCE:**

Mr. Ret Turner (arrived 7:35pm)

Mr. Newell called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

Mr. Newell welcomed the new members of the committee and invited all in turn to introduce themselves, and each attendee did.

Mr. Newell called for nominations and election of officers. Mr. Newell nominated Mr. Quigley for Vice Chair and Ms. Coniglio as Secretary. Mr. Quigley seconded the Secretary nomination and Ms. Coniglio seconded the Vice Chair nomination. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Newell asked for the will of the board regarding the 2022 meeting schedule. Mr. Burns made note that the 2022 meeting schedule was available and it did not include meeting dates in August, November and December. Mr. Quigley made a motion for approval. Ms. Coniglio seconded. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Newell asked for the will of the board regarding the minutes of the board meeting of September 28, 2021. Ms. Coniglio motioned for approval, second by Mr. Quigley. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Newell noted it had been sometime since the last meeting. Mr. Burns noted he had a presentation available for the board on Birdtown USA that he had borrowed from another township. With a full board in place, he was anxious to show it and did so. The presentation is attached to these minutes. A general discussion of the bird varieties around Horsham Township ensued.

Mr. Newell made note the board could look at projects and goals for the year and depending on board consensus, certainly could try to move priorities ahead. He noted the board however had no budget, and Mr. Burns interjected for small projects, he was hopeful the township might be supportive. He noted in past years, the EAB had gotten a DEP grant to work on bird blinds in one of the parks. The board talked about goals, and Mr. Newell noted some township EAB's have been involved in native species ordinances, though on occasion, we've considered and do not find that direction necessary. He invited Mr. Burns to elaborate. Mr. Burns noted our subdivision and land development codes do have a provision requiring a horticultural review of developing properties and can influence native species uses for any subdivision or construction in the township. Birdhouses in the township and in Talamore was specifically discuss and inquired with that could be expanded further through the township. Mr. Newell also made note regarding storm water management of open lands versus developed properties. He commented that with all the trees that had been taken down in the IDA event on September 1<sup>st</sup> whether programs were available to replenish them in any way. He knows other townships keep a historic tree registry. He noted that after the storm, some townships had programs with vendors for a limited number of saplings for replanting efforts. Mr. Burns noted he was aware, but the discounts and the number of trees available were pretty modest in numbers. Ms. Coniglio noted there was an Arbor Day Foundation that after a natural disaster donates trees to a community. She has been in contact and was curious if we could put together an event for Earth Day or Horsham Day. Mr. Newell discussed efforts to bring back the American Chestnut Tree in North America. Ms. Coniglio and Mr. Newell both agreed to do additional research and report back to the board.

Mr. Newell recapped efforts done in the past from cleaning up a park, to retrofitting basins, rain barrels, and past plant swaps at Horsham Day. One year on Earth Day we showed "Horton Hears a Who" which is an environmentally based Dr. Suess movie. He asked all board members to give thought for future meetings to projects and goals we should be addressing. Mr. Newell also noted that there's an annual gathering of EAB/EAC folks. Mr. Burns acknowledged that annually the Pennsylvania Environmental Council puts on an event each spring and that if members were interested in attending, he thought the township would cover registration costs. Mr. Newell also noted in the past, we also use to hold a program that toured the township's water treatment plant.

Ms. Coniglio inquired if Horsham Day is on this year and Mr. Burns responded that Yes it was, it would be the first Saturday in June. Mr. Newell talked briefly about Horsham Day activities in past years.

## **Updates and Events:**

Mr. Newell noted the next agenda item was an HLRA update. Mr. Burns commented that he'd recap briefly for the new board members. The base closed in 2011 and shortly thereafter the HLRA adopted a reuse plan calling for about 1.5 million square feet of commercial office, a town center with condos and apartments over first floor retail, and about 1,500 housing units. He confirmed there had been a delay in executing on the plan, though in retrospect, it may have been a good thing as extensive PFAS contamination became evident in 2016 and if we had owned the property, remedial actions would have been costly to the township and HLRA. Today, the Navy still owns the property and remedial efforts continue. In the interim, the parcel outside the fence line was given to the school district and the new Hallowell Elementary School was built. Also, the township received the transfer of 8 acres between Columbia and Girard, adjacent to a neighborhood park. That parcel was transferred through the National Parks Service and is by deed restriction, to remain a park property. In addition to that, the HLRA has discussed trying to get additional parcels outside the fence line transferred, and we await a response from the Navy regarding a draft EDC recently submitted. He noted that recent announcements suggest the EPA is going to add PFAS to its CERCLA list of contaminants, and doing so may help the transfer process further clarify in the years to come. Mr. Burns noted there were two pilot pump and treat systems on the base, one on the fence line with the Air Guard and the other near the radar structure on Horsham Road. They are pumping at 250 gallons a minute, running water through a GAC unit and discharging on the base. The long-term plan is to design a permanent GAC system at the Marine hanger building and will pump water at 500 gallons per minutes and discharge clean water on the base. Additionally, we expect standards to be developed for groundwater and soil. Once the permanent system is up and operating for 6 months, that could open the door for transfer of additional property within the fence line. Mr. Ehlenberger indicated that he didn't understand why PFAS was slowing down development as other properties with far more toxic issues have been redeveloped. Mr. Burns responded that the Navy, EPA and DEP have at this date failed to confirm what deed restriction might come with the property, like the ability to do basements or not, the need and cost of de-watering, there are a lot of different aspects that have not clarified themselves. A brief discussion of the board around PFAS contamination occurred and Mr. Burns made note of the substantial investments in remedial systems made by the Horsham Water & Sewer Authority, and also discussed the State funding and Clean Water Grants made by MIRIA in recent years. Mr. Ehlenberger indicated he'd be interested in learning more and Mr. Burns suggested the HLRA team would be open to some dialogue with him. Ms. Biondo asked if there was more wildlife on the base and is that a benefit? Mr. Burns responded that building out the 862 acres and adding rateables for the school district, for the township, the creation of jobs were important aspects in the base redevelopment plan.

Mr. Burns also noted that sometime in 2022, the board will be expected to attend a Council meeting and provide Horsham Council with an update of our activities.

Mr. Turner asked if not mowing at the base and allowing it to be natural meadow might provide some environmental benefits. General discussion around the topic occurred.

Mr. Newell made note that another function of the EAB was to review plans submitted to the township with an eye on environmental issues. Mr. Burns noted that Council and the Planning Commission have their own engineers to consult and review projects, while the EAB does not.

**Plan Reviews:**

JT Capital, LLC – 1216 Stongs Lane (21-12-S) was reviewed. Mr. Newell discussed issues like storm water and the number of waivers that need to be considered. Mr. Burns provided some context to our review and that any concerns or comments that we could provide to the township manager. The board had no comment.

**Open Discussion**

Mr. Newell asked if there was anything for open discussion, and there was none.

Mr. Newell asked for board members to think about projects and goals, and we could discuss again at the next meeting.

**Public Comment:**

Mr. Newell inquired if there was public comment. There was none. Mr. Newell reminded the board that the next meeting was to be on February 22nd at 7:00pm. With no further business, Mr. Newell adjourned the meeting at 7:58 pm.

**Minutes were approved February 22, 2022**

