

**MINUTES FOR ROSE VALLEY ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEETING OF AUGUST 25, 2020**

Note: This public meeting was conducted on-line with “Zoom” due to Covid-19.

ATTENDANCE:

EAC members: Leonard Busby (Acting Chair); Jim Audley; Roger Latham; Katherine Rubin; Ron Ploeg; Monica Gagliardi (by phone only)

EAC Associate members: Mario Bacchia; Byron Sherwood

Borough Council Representative to the EAC: Dave Firn

Community Members: Debra De Masi (Borough Council Member); John Baycich; Marya Bradley; Andrew Freeburn; Cindy Holson; David Shaw

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm by Leonard Busby

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Approval of the minutes from the meeting of July 28, 2020 was deferred until the next meeting.

MOMENT OF SILENCE:

Leonard requested a moment of silence in memory of Chris Bourke’s father who passed away on August 23, 2020

**POSSIBLE RIDLEY CREEK CROSSING/JIM AUDLEY’S MEMORANDUM OF
AUGUST 25:**

After brief discussion this idea was indefinitely deferred based on Jim’s recommendation as set forth in his memorandum of August 25 that addressed this topic among others. Leonard expressed great appreciation on behalf of the entire EAC for Jim’s excellent memorandum of August 25. A copy of Jim’s memorandum is attached to these minutes for informational purposes and for future reference.

NEW SIGNAGE FOR BOROUGH PRESERVES:

Jim Audley reviewed his recommendations on this subject as set forth in his August 25 memorandum. Jim suggested that there be some form of welcome bulletin board/kiosk at the

entrances to the Saul and Chadwick Preserves; Jim suggested that each bulletin board include a trail map for that preserve along with a place to post announcements with topical information.

Katie recommended that, instead of using permanent metal signs to display current trails, trail maps be made available on line on both the EAC Facebook page and on the Borough's website thereby making it easy and inexpensive to provide updated trail maps whenever any trails were changed or re-named.

It was also suggested that a color print out of the online trail maps be on display at the welcome bulletin board/kiosk.

Jim proposed a Zoom call for 2:00 p.m. on September 1 to include at least Ron, Roger, Jim and the sign designer previously used for signs in the Saul Preserve.

The "Sign Sub-committee" comprised of Jim, Ron, and Roger will report further at the next meeting.

The EAC expressed support for all planned efforts.

DEER CENSUS AND DEER HUNT:

Jim led the discussion as regards the deer census and began by inviting comments from Roger. Roger explained his view that the only available method for conducting a deer census was through use of an infra-red drone survey conducted on a cold winter night after deciduous leaves had fallen. Roger then recommended against such a survey for multiple reasons, including the following: it would only be a snapshot of one moment in time; the expense; privacy concerns of residents because of drone over-flights; and that available data suggests that any result will be an undercount, and perhaps materially so.

Roger recommended measuring "deer impact" by assessing tree regeneration, understory shrub prosperity, and native diversity. Roger further recommended 20-50 plantings, each done in identical pairs with one plant caged and the other not.

Extensive discussion ensued with no decision made as yet.

Roger noted his view that the AVID protocol is not helpful because the plant community in our three Preserves is already degraded.

Roger stated his view that there was no method now available other than predation (hunting) to control deer.

There was extensive discussion regarding the issue of whether the EAC should recommend any public hunt to Borough Council for the coming deer hunting season. Leonard noted that the EAC and Borough Council had already agreed that there would be no public hunting permitted in the Chadwick Preserve for the upcoming deer hunting season. Leonard also noted that a cull permit would only be issued, if at all, on Borough property where public hunting had already

been allowed for that hunting season. Dave Shaw expressed his view that a “public hunt” in “Swarthmore” only lasted for one week (perhaps two) and that this short duration had been sufficient for issuance of a cull permit. [Update as of October 19, 2020: Roger Latham reports having been told by Jeff Jabco, Director of Grounds for Swarthmore College, that Swarthmore College allowed 25 days of public deer hunting last season.] [Question: Is public hunting on private property – namely property owned by Swarthmore College – a pre-requisite for a cull permit to be issued to that private property owner? Answer: Yes.]

The subject of any hunting on Borough property will be discussed further at our next meeting on September 23.

GAME CAMERAS:

Jim expressed his interest in using game cameras in order to ascertain whether deer behavior was being influenced by increased trail usage by people and their dogs.

Dave Firm said that installation of a game camera could be useful for informational purposes.

The subject of the possible installation of one or more game cameras will be discussed further as our next meeting on September 23.

TRAIL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS:

Jim’s August 25 memorandum (copy attached) includes as “Topic G” Jim’s recommendations for trail improvements in the Chadwick and Saul Preserves. Jim’s recommendations include a proposed budget of \$1,150 for the proposed new trail in the Chadwick Preserve and a budget proposal of \$1,300 for trail improvements to existing trails in the Saul Preserve. The combined budget proposals were then rounded up to a total of \$2,500 in Jim’s attached memorandum.

Jim’s motion to request Borough Council to approve the expenditure of \$2,500 for trail creation and improvements in the Chadwick and Saul Preserves was seconded and then unanimously approved by all EAC members present.

Jim’s proposed volunteer work schedule for these projects (four hours per day for every weekend day from October 17 through and including November 6) was noted by Leonard to be ambitious. [Note: The foregoing work dates were changed after this meeting. The correct dates are now October 24, 25, and 31 and November 1, 7, and 8. The first two weekends are for the Chadwick Preserve; the second two weekends are for the Saul Preserve.] Jim expressed his optimism that volunteers would be found. Multiple members of the EAC expressed their own support and enthusiasm for these ambitious projects and their thanks to Jim for his leadership, planning, and organization.

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBER:

Ron recommended approval of Byron Sherwood as a new Associate Member of the EAC. Ron’s motion in favor of this was seconded and unanimously approved by all EAC members present.

EAC COLLABORATION WITH GARDENERS OF ROSE VALLEY:

Leonard referenced Jim's status report on this topic as to set forth in Jim's attached memorandum (Topic E). Leonard thanked Jim for his reaching out to the Gardeners of Rose Valley. Jim will report further on this outreach at our next meeting on September 23.

EAC FACEBOOK PAGE AND INCLUSION OF THE EAC ON THE BOROUGH'S WEBSITE:

Leonard thanked Katie for creating the EAC's new Facebook page – and doing so in such a prompt manner.

It was agreed that Katie, Roger, and Monica would work with Vippy's daughter Noa as regards development of the EAC portion of the Borough's website. A meeting to this end was planned for August 27.

INTERNET PLATFORM ALTERNATIVES FOR DISCUSSION SUB-GROUPS OF THE EAC:

Leonard reported that his law firm's IT person suggested the use of Trello based on the specific circumstances present. There will need to be future follow up on this issue.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Leonard Busby, Acting Secretary

Attachment: Jim Audley Memorandum of August 25, 2020