

## LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

### A. Members of the Lower Merion Environmental Advisory Council

**BRUCE BAYNE, Secretary**, (EAC Member from 01/2009 to Present) is a principal scientist with AECOM in their Conshohocken office. As Deputy Department Lead and manager for the Wetland Resources group his work involves conducting or directing environmental permitting and compliance efforts, natural resource damage assessments and ecological function evaluations, and stream and wetland restoration design and monitoring activities. Originally from Strafford, Mr. Bayne relocated back to the Main Line area after graduating from the University of Massachusetts – Amherst with a B.S. in Natural Resources Conservation and a M.S. in Watershed Science and Management, both with an emphasis on wetland ecology. Mr. Bayne lives in Ardmore, within the Darby-Cobbs Creek watershed.

**TOM DILSHEIMER**, (EAC member from 12/2011 to 12/2015) is a lifelong resident of Lower Merion Township. He has worked in the real estate field in various capacities including home building, real estate development, real estate sales and more. Tom recognizes the gravity of diminishing open space and natural resources, and the need for appropriate stewardship of these essential components of our community. He is a four year veteran of the Environmental Advisory Council and through his membership has enjoyed making a positive difference in the community.

**KATE GALER, Former Chair**, (EAC member from 01/2009 to 09/2015) works for the Lower Merion School District with students with autism. Kate has three children – one attending Penn State, one in Lower Merion High School and one at Welsh Valley Middle School. Kate has a special interest in coordinating community efforts surrounding environmental and open space issues. She has worked as a volunteer community organizer for the Sierra Club, in particular on the reduction of mercury emissions from coal fired power plants and on having municipalities adopt the US Mayor's Agreement on Climate Change. Currently, Kate has served as the President of the Friends of Linwood Park for the past 6 years where she has focused on sustainable plantings and sustaining volunteers.

**MICHAEL GROSS, ESQUIRE, Chair**, (EAC member from 01/2011 to 12/2015) is a principal with the Environmental Practice Group of the law firm of Post & Schell, P.C. in Philadelphia. His practice focuses on environmental regulatory and transactional environmental matters, and he regularly addresses environmental issues arising in complex real estate and corporate transactions, and in resolving related risks and liabilities. In 2015, Mr. Gross was appointed by Governor Tom Wolf as a member of the Pennsylvania Pipeline Infrastructure Task Force (PITF), tasked with recommending policies, guidelines and best practices to guide the build-out of pipeline infrastructure expected to take place across Pennsylvania. He also served on former Pennsylvania Governor Edward G. Rendell's transition team (environmental policy).

**MIKE HAYS**, (EAC Member from 11/2015 to Present) served a four-year term on Spring City's Borough Council ('10-'13), where he chaired the Surface and Stormwater Committee. He has written about environmental issues for over 10 years while working for several newspapers. Currently, Mr. Hays works as a produce manager for a natural and organic food store. A long-time member of the Sierra Club, his top environmental issues are climate change, renewable energy, water conservation and recycling.

**BRIAN HOPPY, CEP, Vice Chair**, (EAC Member from 01/2011 to Present) is a Senior Vice President of HDR, and serves as HDR's Director of Environmental Sciences & Planning. He has over 25 years of experience specializing in National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance, natural and cultural resources planning services, environmental policy, and public involvement and community relations. Mr.

Hoppy was appointed by the United States Department of Commerce to serve on the Environmental Technologies Trade Advisory Committee. Mr. Hoppy and his wife have two children and have lived in Lower Merion since 1993. He also serves as a Board Member of the Lower Merion Conservancy. He is also the Head Coach of the Lower Merion Bulldogs Elementary Ice Hockey Team.

**JOE RUDEK**, (EAC Member from 05/2014 to Present) is a Lead Senior Scientist with Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), a position he has held since 1996. He holds a Ph.D. (1992) in environmental biology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. Rudek also holds an adjunct Associate Professorship in the Department of Earth, Marine and Atmospheric Sciences at North Carolina State University. He works on issues related to water quality and aquatic ecology in coastal, intertidal, estuarine and freshwater ecosystems, as well as air quality issues related to agricultural emissions from livestock and rice production, and methane emissions from natural gas use. Dr. Rudek, his wife and twin girls moved to Lower Merion in 2010.

## B. EAC Major Activities During 2015

In an effort to raise environmental awareness throughout Lower Merion Township and to highlight environmental achievements, the Environmental Advisory Council established an awards program in 2008 and held the Eighth Annual “Go for the Green” awards program in May 2015. The “Go for the Green” awards recognize residents, businesses, organizations and schools located in the Township or who conduct business in the Township. Additionally, the Joe Manko Lifetime Achievement Award was created to recognize a person or group who has made a long-term significant beneficial impact on our environment. Award recipients for 2015 were:

- Joseph M. Manko Lifetime Achievement Award – Kenneth Davis
- Organization – The Botanical Society of Lower Merion
- Commercial Site Greening – CVS, Rock Hill Road
- Resident – Haas Family
- Education – buildOn
- Commercial – Main Line ReBuild, Craig and Mac Brand

The EAC is charged by its enabling ordinance to provide an annual accounting of the Township's open space areas, both publicly held lands and private open space areas. The last update was conducted in 2009. The Township's Open Space Inventory Update, includes an accounting of activity in both 2009 and 2015.

Open Space Tabulation in Acres		
	2009	2015
<b>Lower Merion Township</b>	669	704
<b>Land Owned</b>	669	704
<b>Lower Merion Conservancy</b>	101.36	141.16
<b>Land Owned</b>	80.36	1.6 *
<b>Easements</b>	21	139.56
<b>Natural Lands Trust</b>	122.14	183.2
<b>Land Owned</b>	50.70	51.03
<b>Easements</b>	71.44	132.17
<b>Total</b>	892.50	1,028.36
<b>Increase</b>		15.22%

\* The 2009 Lower Merion Conservancy Land Owned total was reported incorrectly. The 2015 total is accurate and will be used as the baseline going forward.

The EAC continues to collaborate with the Lower Merion Conservancy, Township Staff and Commissioners to recommend education and enforcement possibilities to ensure homeowners comply with their preservation area obligations.

During the last year, the EAC reviewed plans for and provided comments on a number of proposed projects in the Township.

As part of our participation in the land development process in the Township, the EAC regularly has representatives attend the bi-monthly meetings of the Township Land Development Committee to provide observations and input, as appropriate, on proposed subdivision and land development plans. We also have a presence at Building and Planning Committee meetings, Planning Commission meetings and Board of Commissioners' meetings, as necessary.

The EAC maintained a high level of involvement with the development of the Lower Merion Township Comprehensive Plan. EAC members were involved in several volunteer committees assigned with the development of issues and goals for the Elements of the Comprehensive Plan. EAC members also participated in the public meetings for the Comprehensive Plan.

An EAC member served on the Township's Stormwater Task Force.

EAC members were involved in various Park Master Plan subcommittees.

The EAC continued to collaborate with the Lower Merion Conservancy on a number of measures including maintenance and care of preservation areas and other environmental education opportunities throughout the Township.

The EAC co-sponsored, with the Lower Merion Conservancy, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Stormwater Runoff 5K Trail Run. 118 runners registered for this year's race with 104 finishers, an increase over last year's race. The event generated \$4,750 in sponsorship dollars with 22 total in-kind and cash sponsors for the Lower Merion Conservancy.

The EAC met with Tumelow, Township staff, and Commissioner Rogan regarding the Township's possible use of solar power.

The EAC, with the support and guidance of the EIC, worked on revisions to Chapter 59 of the Township Code, Brush, Grass, and Weeds, to add running bamboo grass to Section 59-1 of the ordinance.

The EAC, with the support and guidance of the EIC, began work on an amendment to the Natural Features Code to require a maintenance guaranty for plant material.

The EAC, with the support and guidance of the EIC, and with the assistance of Township staff advanced a modified version of the Green Parking Lot ordinance to the Board of Commissioners. The ordinance was adopted on March 11, 2015.

The EAC, with the support and guidance of the EIC, and with the assistance of Township staff advanced an ordinance amending the definition of Preservation Area to the Board of Commissioners. The ordinance was adopted on July 29, 2015

The EAC reviewed the Township's 2015 recycling brochure and prepared comments for the 2016 brochure.

The EAC worked on the Clean Water Act Resolution for consideration by the Board of Commissioners.

The EAC prepared PSAs for the Stormwater Runoff 5K Trail Race, salt usage, and the Go for the Green Awards.

The EAC heard a presentation on the possibility of banning plastic bag use in the Township

Kate Galer attended the Film Screening of the Into the Gyre at the Bryn Mawr Film Institute on September 6, 2015 where she spoke to attendees about stormwater management.

Finally, in January, we selected our officers for 2015. Kate Galer, Chairperson, Michael Gross, Vice Chairperson and Bruce Bayne, Secretary. In October, after Kate Galer's resignation from the EAC, we selected Michael Gross, Chairperson, Brian Hoppy, Vice Chairperson and Bruce Bayne, Secretary.

### **C. Future Activities.**

- The EAC will continue to host the Go for the Green Awards.
- The EAC will continue to co-sponsor with the Lower Merion Conservancy the annual Stormwater Runoff 5K Trail Run.
- The EAC will work to continue the home composting, rain barrel, and recycling education programs.
- The EAC will record additional PSAs and undertake other multimedia efforts to promote natural resources conversation and address environmental matters of concern as requested by the Board of Commissioners and Township residents.
- The EAC will host an MS4 Stormwater Permit update session in 2016 to explain how stormwater runoff can negatively affect water quality if sound management practices are not in place. It will also describe the activities, programs, and management practices that the Township is required to do under our Phase II stormwater permit to ensure that stormwater runoff from our community does not negatively impact water quality. Finally, this presentation will provide examples of how managing stormwater runoff can benefit our community and will also tell residents how they can get involved in protecting our water quality through better stormwater management.
- The EAC will host presentations on areas germane to our environment and the residents of Lower Merion Township.
- The EAC will continue to work on projects with Township staff that further the goals outlined in the current Environmental Action Plan, and will begin drafting the next 5-year Environmental Action Plan.
- The EAC will continue to work with Township Staff and the Board of Commissioners to advance the Comprehensive Plan.
- The EAC will seek ways to promote stormwater management issues, the implementation of stormwater best management practices, the implementation of new Department of Environmental Protection Guidance on stormwater management, and stream bank restoration, as well as play a role in educating residents about these matters. The EAC will continue to be involved in stormwater inlet tagging projects with local community groups.
- The EAC will endeavor to be more involved in the Township's open space initiatives.
- The EAC will continue to participate in the land development process in the Township, and will provide input on environmental sustainability and the implementation of environmental best management practices where appropriate.
- As part of its public education and outreach mission, the EAC will seek to hold more routine communications with the individual civic associations and the Federation of Civic Associations to increase public input, understanding and support regarding the Township's environmental initiatives. The EAC will coordinate opportunities to meet with the civic associations to facilitate an

understanding of civic environmental concerns and offer information about environmental practices or programs.

- The EAC will continue to explore opportunities to collaborate and partner with area educational and environmental institutions on public education programs.
- The EAC stands ready to fulfill any other roles the Board of Commissioners deems appropriate.

**D. EAC Recommendations to the Board of Commissioners.**

- The EAC recommends that the Board of Commissioners continue to investigate the most energy efficient and economically feasible mechanisms for reducing the Township's greenhouse gas emissions and overall energy usage.
- The EAC recommends that the Township continue to give high priority to the conservation and preservation of open spaces.
- The EAC recommends that the Township continue in its efforts to make the Township more pedestrian and bicycle friendly by supporting projects such as adding bike racks to public spaces, improving pedestrian street crossings, and implementing mechanisms to improve bicycle safety on Township roads.
- The EAC recommends that the Board of Commissioners adopt the Township's Comprehensive Plan and move forward with its implementation.

Respectfully Submitted,

**LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Bruce Bayne  
Tom Dilsheimer  
Michael Gross, Esq.  
Michael Hays  
Brian Hoppy, CEP  
Joe Rudek