



# THE COUNTY OF CHESTER



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Environmental and Energy Advisory Board  
Government Services Center Suite 351E/Zoom

January 24, 2024  
Hybrid meeting

## MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Paul Spiegel, Chair; Carol DeWolf, Vice-Chair; Brian O'Leary, Secretary; Kelsey Boyd; Seung Ah Byun; Madhu Gurthy; Steve Krug; George Martynick; Sarah Sharp; David Stauffer; Jim Wylie.

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Mark Connolly; Karena DiLeo; Joseph DiRocco; Britnee Sanseverino; Chris Strohmaier; Wyatt Williams

OTHERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Jess Cadorette, Rachael Griffith, Gene Huller, Sally Warren.

OTHERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: None

### CALL TO ORDER:

The Environmental and Energy Advisory Board meeting, held in the Government Services Center Suite 351E and via Zoom video/audio on Wednesday, January 24, 2024, was called to order at 2:30 P.M. by Secretary Brian O'Leary.

Two new board members were welcomed and introduced themselves: 1) Citizen Representative, Madhu Gurthy, and 2) Conservancy Representative, Kelsey Boyd. Mr. O'Leary recognized and thanked EEAB past Chair, Jess Cadorette, for her great work and leadership on this board.

Mr. Krug began discussion on the appointment of 2024 Officers, who spoke on behalf of the nominating committee. Paul Spiegel was nominated for Chair and Carol DeWolf as Vice Chair. No other persons were nominated. There is one vacancy on the board for a Utility Representative. Recommendations may be addressed to Ms. Griffith.

### ACTION ITEMS:

#### Appointment of 2024 Officers:

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE NOMINATIONS OF PAUL SPIEGEL FOR CHAIR AND CAROL DEWOLF AS VICE CHAIR AND BRIAN O'LEARY AS SECRETARY WAS MADE BY MR. KRUG, SECONDED BY MS. BYUN, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD. MOTION CARRIED.

#### Approval of October 25, 2023 Minutes:

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 25, 2023 MEETING WAS MADE BY MR. O'LEARY, SECONDED BY MR. WYLIE AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD. MOTION CARRIED.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:  
Subcommittee Reports.

Environmental Subcommittee:

Ms. Byun reported that the county-wide Watersheds 2045 plan was adopted by the Commissioners today. Public presentations will take place throughout the county. She provided an update on the Brandywine Flood Study and shared information about an upcoming public meeting. Other members of the committee shared updates from their organizations including:

Natural Lands' land preservation accomplishments in Chester County in 2023; Natural Lands' updates to their stewardship handbook, which should be finished in May 2024.

Ms. Griffith provided an update on municipal open space outreach efforts.

Ms. DeWolf shared the topics for the CCATO (Chester County Association of Township Officials) spring conference on the morning of March 21, 2024: 1) Open Space; 2) Act 12; 3) Historic Preservation and Heritage Tourism; 4) Combining the Going Greener re-vamp and Ms. Boyd's work on Climate Resiliency. She welcomed other ideas.

Mr. Connolly raised a discussion on how best to provide outreach to municipal Environmental Advisory Councils (EACs). Mr. O'Leary offered that the board make suggestions for better targeted communications to EACs and Ms. Griffith will make a proposal.

Clean Energy Subcommittee:

Mr. Wylie reported on a successful Solar Adopters Conference, held on Thursday, January 18, 2024. Fifty people attended online and fifty attended in-person.

Ms. DeWolf asked about the follow up to this successful conference. Mr. Wylie responded that Ms. Griffith sent the conference slides to all registrants.

Mr. Krug reported that the Governor of Pennsylvania is expected to raise the goal for the state's solar alternative energy portfolio standards in February.

Regional Initiatives Updates

Ms. Griffith provided an update on the Sustainable Energy Partnership of Southeast PA. The newly formed Energy Board held its first organizing meeting in November 2023. This Energy Board will develop the renewable energy strategy for the group, including the determination of what percentage of renewable energy to purchase and criteria for approving new members. The next meeting of the Energy Board will be online on February 28, 2024. Mr. Martynick added that two proposals for electricity suppliers were received.

Sustainable Practices for HOAs

Ms. Griffith stated there is an ongoing project with local partners to determine how the county can help advance sustainability practices for Homeowners Associations (HOAs). She shared the Planning Commission's [HOA website](#), including the HOA resource library.

Mr. Connolly noted that HOA open space is a great opportunity for community supported agriculture (CSA) initiatives, which can be accomplished on just a few acres.

Ms. Gurthy stated she lives in an HOA and sits on the EAC of her township, but often these boards move slowly. She recommended the County offer a checklist of options for the HOAs, to help these

volunteer boards support HOAs with implementing sustainability initiatives, like solar. Ms. DeWolf noted that EACs are doing some of this work now, including applying for mini grants on behalf of the municipalities. Discussion ensued on how to train the township EACs and encourage the EACs to educate the HOAs. Mr. O’Leary suggested that while the list of sustainable options is long, it would be better to focus on the one or two things that will be most impactful to jumpstart this process. Mr. Connolly suggested that we find a willing HOA and start with them. Mr. Stauffer added that the property management companies are an important target audience, as many homeowners are not engaged in this topic.

## UPDATES AND COMMENTS:

### Updates from the Board

Ms. Sanseverino of PECO presented PECO’s [Roadmap to Drive - Vehicle Electrification](#), which provides comprehensive information needed to transition to electric vehicles. She noted PECO is investing \$6 billion in its “Path to Clean” infrastructure plan to make it’s own operations more energy efficient and climate resilient.

### Planning Commission Director’s Report

Mr. O’Leary mentioned two transportation successes that happened in December 2023: 1) the federal government approved the Schuylkill River Passenger Authority’s request for inclusion in the Corridor ID Program to plan new passenger rail service connecting Phoenixville, Pottstown and Reading to Philadelphia; and 2) DVRPC agreed to allocate \$30 million of the region’s transportation funds into extending the Chester Valley Trail into Downingtown.

### Sustainability Director’s Report

Ms. Griffith reported a new intern will be starting next week and she is a senior at West Chester University studying environmental health, which brings a different perspective than our typical intern who usually is studying geography and planning. She is also conducting outreach by presenting on the county’s Climate Action Plan at various universities and environmental groups.

### Facilities Director’s Report

Mr. Martynick reported that budget approval was received to create a new position of an energy manager and he hopes to fill that position in 2025. ChescoConnect, the transportation program with the Department of Human Services, is planning to build a new bus depot, and they hope to integrate solar in this building. The first EV car in the county’s fleet, a Nissan Leaf, has arrived and will be used by the library.

### Board Updates

Mr. Krug reported that lawmakers at the state are discussing a change to the Municipal Planning Code to encourage smaller, denser housing to reduce housing costs.

Mr. Spiegel reported that Philadelphia Energy Authority will apply for a US EPA climate reduction grant for \$200 million on behalf of southeastern PA. PEA is seeking committed projects within the region through an RFI.

Mr. Spiegel thanked Jess Cadorette for her work as past Chair of this committee.

### Public Comments

Jess Cadorette reminded the board that two non-profits: 1) We Conserve PA and 2) the Chester County Environment Alliance have members and databases that could help in this board’s efforts. She also asked if a framework could be made for other locations in the state to replicate the Solar Adopter’s Conference. She thanked the Planning Commission for all of the support of this board.

The next quarterly meeting will be on April 24, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, A MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 4:15 PM. WAS MADE BY MR. KRUG SECONDED BY MS. BYUN AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian N. O'Leary". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter 'y'.

Brian N. O'Leary, AICP  
Secretary

BNO/CJS/RG/saw