

**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP  
PUBLIC SERVICES COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
February 1, 2023**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The Public Services Commission regular monthly meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. The meeting was open to the public, and a link to join the meeting via Zoom was listed on the agenda posted on the Township's website.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Brian Dakin  
Kevin Moore  
Janice Gottesfeld  
Rob Hall (via zoom)  
Virginia Kerslake  
John Ceschan, Jr.

**TOWNSHIP STAFF**

Pam Gural-Bear, Assistant Township Manager  
Ed Culp, Assistant Director of Public Works  
Wyatt Williams, Sustainability Coordinator  
  
Brian Dunn, Member, Board of Supervisors

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None.

**MINUTES:**

Ms. Gottesfeld made a motion, seconded by Ms. Kerslake, to approve the January 4, 2023, minutes. The motion was unanimously approved.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Ms. Gural-Bear announced that Brannon Tupper has begun work as the new Township Engineer. He is from Farragut, Tennessee, where he worked for a community of similar size and demographics as West Whiteland.

Mr. Culp said the zipline at Exton Park is back up and running.

**OPEN DISCUSSION:**

**1. Sustainability Initiatives**

Wyatt Williams, the Township's Sustainability Coordinator, gave a presentation on Sustainability and the Township's Sustainability Initiatives. Sustainable Pennsylvania is a state-wide program that supports local governments with sustainability efforts and provides a certification level to municipalities that can play an important role in obtaining grants. Staff is in the process of completing a rigorous application to obtain a certification level and provide a foundation for future initiatives.

Mr. Williams provided an overview of the Township's initiatives which include a Plastic Ordinance, Solar, and EV Charging Stations.

**Plastic Ordinance:** Mr. Williams noted that typical ordinances are a ban/fee hybrid, charging 10-15 cents for plastic bags. Inclusions often include straws and Styrofoam take-out

trays. However, straws facilitate many people with disabilities. Exemptions typically include produce bags and drycleaning bags. The ban is generally more focused on bags used for retail and take-out. Neighboring municipalities have found that designating the Code Enforcement Officer to keep track of violations seems to have worked best. Staff is currently working on a draft plastic ordinance.

**Solar:** Quotes have been received to provide solar to the Township Building and Boot Road House. It is estimated that a solar array would produce 100% of the energy consumption for Boot Road House and 35-40% of energy consumption for the Township building. The Township's new Public Works facility will have availability for a solar array.

Mr. Williams discussed various incentives for solar and noted that new information is coming out almost every day.

**EV Charging Stations:** The two charging stations currently located at the Township building have reduced 26,252 pounds of greenhouse gas emissions from the air. This is the equivalent to the growth of 305 trees for 10 years. There was an issue with idle charging (vehicle owners leaving their cars parked at the station after being fully charged), but this has since been resolved with the Township increasing the hourly rate. A third station is planned to be installed in May of this year.

Ms. Kerslake asked about establishing a requirement that developers include EV charging stations into their development plans. Mr. Williams said Staff is currently exploring the details for an EV Ordinance. Mr. Hall asked if the Township currently owns any EV's. Ms. Gural-Bear said there is a hybrid in the fleet, but a lot is determined by availability, and there is currently a significant bottleneck as the auto industry transitions its efforts from gas-powered vehicles to electric. Staff is exploring new funding opportunities from the State for Class 4-9 vehicles that would include money towards both purchase and charging. Class 4-9 includes medium to heavy-weight diesel trucks and smaller dump trucks.

Other future initiatives the Township is considering include heat island mitigation and turf to meadow conversion. Mr. Williams hopes to have more information on sustainability on the Township's website in the coming months. Until then, the West Chester Area Clean Energy Future website ([www.wccleanenergy.org](http://www.wccleanenergy.org)) has a wealth of information.

Ms. Gottesfeld asked where a solar array would be located for the Boot Road House. Mr. Williams said that won't be determined until the installer has an opportunity to walk the area. Mr. Dakin asked what locations are being considered for turf to meadow conversion. Mr. Williams said parts of the disc golf course are currently being considered and will act as a "test run" to see if it can be done at other park locations. Ms. Kerslake suggested that resident Michael Dunn may be able to provide information and support on meadow programs, as he has been involved with West Chester Borough helping with small meadow education programs.

Mr. Hall asked about if solar for the Township building would replace both electric and gas. Mr. Culp said the baseboard heaters along the windows are gas and would not be included.

Ms. Gottesfeld asked the status of a draft plastic ordinance. Mr. Williams said Staff has begun the process and is currently seeking stakeholders' feedback, working with the Chamber of Commerce, and will be scheduling a business forum. Mr. Hall expressed concern for the smaller

business owners who may have large quantities of plastic bags and could caught with a financial loss. Mr. Wyatt said this is part of the stakeholder engagement that Staff is conducting, and a phase-in timeline will be proposed.

Ms. Gottesfeld asked if the Inflation Reduction Act contained any clean energy incentives for individual homeowners that that Township could share on its website. Mr. Wyatt said the West Chester Clean Energy Future website has information on this.

Ms. Kerslake suggested possible incentives/ordinance that all new construction have electric vs. gas. Mr. Wyatt believed the authority for that would need to come from the State or higher level, as the Township must meet certain building codes, but he did promote encouraging developers to provide "make-ready options" or install the infrastructure that will make conversions easier at a later time. Mr. Williams said it is still very early in the ordinance drafting process and Staff is still investigating what the Township can and can't do.

Ms. Gottesfeld expressed concern that the power grids are being kept up to date and will be able to handle the volume of conversions and security needed, citing recent attacks on power stations. Mr. Williams believes the funding made available will cover upgrades for infrastructure simultaneously as conversions are made.

The March meeting agenda will focus on parks to include 2023 projects, timelines, priority listing, phasing, etc.

Mr. Dakin asked how the recent court ruling (West Chester University of Pennsylvania vs. West Chester Borough) will affect West Whiteland. The Borough levied a stormwater service fee to address the State's unfunded mandates pertaining to stormwater. The University maintained the fee was a tax, and the University is therefore exempt. The Court ruled in favor of the University, and the Borough is appealing the decision. Ms. Gural-Bear said the case could affect the Township and will be following the matter to see how it unfolds.

Mr. Hall asked if the Township has any bridges/tunnels that would qualify for Federal funding under the Infrastructure Law. Ms. Gural-Bear will check.

Mr. Culp asked if the members wised to continue posting the recordings of the PSC meetings on the Township's website. After brief discussion, there was a general consensus to continue posting the recordings on the website.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Ms. Gottesfeld made a motion, seconded by Mr. Moore, to adjourn the meeting; the meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kevin Moore  
Recording Secretary