



Towamencin Township Environmental Advisory Council

Minutes from the June 9th, 2026 Meeting

Council members present: Brett MacKay, Joe Meehan, David McCreary, Corina Fiore, Dr. Rich Costlow (Assoc.), Anthony Long (Assoc.), Casey Hannings (Assoc.)

Council members absent: Donna Hegge, Wendy Zoll Fillgrove

Public present: Bruce Bailey

Board of Supervisors (BOS) present: Vanessa Gaynor (Liason), Kofi Ossei

1. Call to Order 7:02

2. Opening Comments - none

3. Public Comments - none

4. Approval of Minutes from 3/10/2026, 4/14/2026, and 5/12/2026 Meetings - motion passes with a vote of four. Joe motioned for the vote with Dave seconding.

5. Bird Town PA Subcommittee Report

- Bruce Bailey shared updates about bird town.
- The subcommittee met last week.
- The bird town group has started feeding data to "Bird City" which is an online platform that unites birding organizations from across the globe. The group is also looking to upload pictures with descriptions of birds from the township. The platform essentially operates similar to an Amazon catalog. Bruce encouraged the council to check it out.
- Bruce also shared that there was a good turn out at Towamencin day. Andrew had put together a presentation of all the birds he's photographed at Fischer's park and shared the display during the event, but it was too windy for crafts. The table did hand out bird kits as well.
- Stacy from the Veteran's Committee asked Bruce if Bird Town could help install bird houses at a local cemetery in the township. Bruce shared with the EAC that some residents may believe the request to be appropriate, but some may not. Andrew has researched some old colonial style bird houses that could potentially be considered. There is some concern about bird droppings potentially impacting the headstones. Bruce shared that he believes almost everyone enjoys birds. Bruce also shared that the colonials didn't have bird houses; but, instead they had bottles made out of clay and pottery jugs that would be mounted under roofs horizontally for natural pest control and crop protection. These designs were influenced by Native American/Indigenous communities and discouraged the birds from burrowing into structures. The bottle homes

were not a “mini house”, but a simple crafted design. If this idea is pursued it may require some small amount of money from different committees. Bruce believes that supporting as many species as we can is a good idea even in cemeteries that are traditionally landscaped at least with something for sight appeal. Stacy is looking for support.

a. Towamencin Day recap

- The event went well. There was a table for both Bird Town and the EAC. David Brothers offered native plants during the event. ENACT talked about birds, shared the benefits of native plants, and offered a kid’s project. Most people were very interested and engaged although there was one person who stated that he “didn’t like birds.” David Brothers is more interested in networking rather than selling a product and is more than willing to return each year.

b. Birdhouse and bird feeder projects

- The new Purple Martin houses at Fischer’s Park may be occupied, but the exact species will need to be confirmed. The houses will need to be taken down in August for winter storage and maintenance.

6. Old Business

a. 2025 projects

i. Annual Report for approval

The report has been distributed to the board, approved, and is now active on the website.

ii. Proposed Grasslands Ordinance

- The proposed ordinance with its changes will need to be sent over to the new solicitor for general review rather than final red lining. Dave motioned for a vote and Brett seconded. All 4 members voted in favor of sharing the proposed ordinance to the solicitor and it passed. Vanessa will share the draft with the solicitor and engineer for review and feedback.

b. 2026 projects

i. Troxel Meadow

- Dave shared that the new signs for the meadow have been received and showed the finished product to the group. The group collectively felt that they looked great!
- Dave also shared that Troxel Meadow was just mowed after a quick back and forth with Steve Masters. More spot treatment for remaining thistle will occur in summer. By the end of this year there should be a good show for the public.
- A storyboard would be a good push for a project like this per Rich.
- Native grasses have been established and birdhouses have been installed.
- The council will look to plant trees and install benches later on.

ii. Bustard Rd. No Mow

- Spot treatment will be conducted to protect native plants already existing on the site.
- The next meadow restoration location is next to the water treatment facility on Kriebel Road ultimately working towards restoration of Kibler Meadow.
- OPSAC has a general idea for where they will plant trees this calendar year, and could potentially look at adding trees to the restoration sites.
- Joe recommends exploring grant opportunities for Kibler Meadow sooner rather than later, but don't let that slow down the project. Joe stressed that the group should work to accomplish the goals regardless. The Township has avenues to perform grant writing as do Donna and Corina of the EAC.

iii. OSPAC/EAC collaboration on subdivision review

- Things have been slow per Joe. Nothing new from the developers has been released or shared. OSPAC presented their ideas at their last meeting, and received a complaint last night about a proposed playground being too close to a backyard.

iv. Towmencin Day recap

v. Workshops - Potentially Weeds Inc. in the fall and PWC - Donna H. to contact PWC

- Dave has spoken with a contact from Weeds Inc, but is still waiting on a date for once they are ready.
- Donna was going to reach out to PWC, but she is not present at this meeting to address.
- Dave and Corina tossed around the idea of adding some new workshops. Dave mentioned an educational session on "tick tubes" to trap ticks on a property. Tick tubes may help alleviate the fear of ticks on one's property. The tubes can be purchased for \$50 for a pack of 24. They contain concentrated permethrin on cotton balls that kill ticks upon contact. They are to be left around areas with mice which are a primary vector of Lyme Disease. The substance is not toxic to any larger animals, but is effective against ticks. There could be some public backlash due to the use of a chemical, but permethrin has a short half-life when sprayed. The group could potentially print an article and gauge feedback for maybe setting up an event next year. Dave could write up a draft newsletter.
- Japanese barberry, wineberry, Japanese pachysandra are all invasives that help promote tick abundance.

7. New Business

- The EAC received an email complaint about Canada thistle on private property, but the Township has little authority to control this on private property.
- The Planning commission is making minor revisions to the landscape ordinance based on some county recommendations. They are limited in what they can alter due to the ordinance being advertised and up for a vote tomorrow. Some of the changes are just looking to increase the reinforcement ability.

a. Township resident Michael Ricci tree planting initiative

- Michael shared a presentation of his background and ideas for the township
- Michael is an interested resident with a background in technology and music who moved here in 2008 and lives up against the creek with some woods. He has planted 100 trees and bushes on his property that attracts lots of wildlife. He has created quite a habitat

which has been fun to observe. He started a document in 2017 that outlines his idea for better landscaping across the community. He shared that climate change has caused more trees to fall down due to overly saturated soils and noted that many new homeowners also choose to cut down healthy trees. He has observed that there are more neighbors taking down trees without planting any new ones. He has approached this council with ideas to get more community families involved in planting trees and flowers than what is already in progress. He had historically not been thinking more about the differences in native versus ornamental plantings. He suggested that he is not here to make a proposal, but more so to encourage his plan as a strong possibility. Would like to gauge feedback from the council about what aspects seem most promising, what may already align with existing programs, and can continue to workshop until actionable items are identified. The council found that much of Michael's ideas aligned with a lot of EAC initiatives. Michael is looking to put a larger focus on how more private property and business owners could get involved. He believes that Troxel Road is nice because it's tree-lined - a belief often shared by residents. The shared plan document goes into much more detail such as describing the benefits for stormwater, shade, and habitat. Michael was wondering if the ideas could be incorporated into an existing plan, or if it can kickstart a new one? He envisioned there would be certain dates that push the initiative forward, but this would be more of a 365 days of the year initiative.

- Rich shared praise for Michael calling his ideas "fabulous work", and also encouraged Michael to join the Horticultural Society's tree tender program that provides training for tree plantings with a whole course. The Township has a few certified tree tenders but needs a few more to form an organized group through the society. Could Michael Headstart this group and share ideas with the horticulture society? Rich recommended that Micheal take the course, and make the connection. Joe mentioned OSPAC gets an allotment of about 25 trees or so a year to plant. Hatfield has a shade tree commission program led by the residents. Finding volunteers is always a challenge to get these groups started.
- Members of the council asked if the goal is to encourage tree plantings on private or public property and how would the model run? Michael stated that the economic impact is well understood from his publishing background and that if initiated, the group will need to heavily utilize a newsletter both virtually and paper based to spread the word making an emphasis on the beautification and shade benefits to motivate homeowners.
- Would we be giving families the tools or the physical trees?
- Dave believes the ideas tie into everything the council does and encouraged Michael to apply for the open EAC position.
- There is an embryonic plan at OSPAC to tree-line all of Forty Foot Road.
- Michael's property has become a big production and a sanctuary for wildlife.
- These efforts are more important as millions of trees - red oaks, ash, beech, etc. are all at risk from various diseases.
- 3 species of woodpeckers that feed on ash trees and the emerald ash borers - good to promote them and keep them around to mitigate impacts.

b. Single-use plastic ban

- Donna invited the concerned residents to a future meeting. There is no expectation about whether or not they may join. Bruce believes it's worth pursuing and could add a revenue stream through paper bags. A single-use plastic ban is not just for bags and is something to consider. Lansdale is doing a survey with residents and businesses to determine viewpoints on a similar issue. Vanessa wants to ensure all viewpoints are

taken in and finer details are fleshed out. The township is not looking to encourage the distribution of thicker plastic bags.

- Dave has unknowingly taken on the plastic bags recycling gig from North Penn Schools. He met with the assistant manager at Weis for support to bail and return bags for credit towards park benches. He can take the bags to Weis throughout summer, but will need a process for pick up and transfer by fall. Rich will contact the Mennonite group to see if they can support this effort. Michele will start emailing the liaison to let us know before it starts overflowing at the schools. This is still a more efficient recycling process, but will just require finding the right procedure.
- Develop a survey for residents to speak on plastic ban
- Montgomery County also has a model ordinance to review.

8. Treasurer's Report - David M.

- Nothing has changed since the last report. 62\$ for birdtown. The signs are to be marked down once the final costs are accounted for.

9. Township Supervisor/Manager Report - Vanessa G.

- The Landscaping Ordinance is on the agenda for discussion and adoption at tomorrow night's BOS meeting.
- Budget season is coming up and all capital expenses over 5k need to be in by July 24th. The budget approval for Weeds INC would total \$5,500 anticipated for the end of this year. The deadline is for next year's projects. Dave will estimate the cost breakdown after reaching out to Drew as soon as possible for the two projects set for next year. Dave and Donna would need to fill out the budget form. The Courts at Valley View may be a good OSPAC budget model to review. The regular budget is due in September. October 7th is the budget presentation.

10. Other Items:

- "Bustard Meadow" as a name is not fitting for the amount of trees on the site — maybe consider naming it "grove" or "habitat" instead? Dave motioned for a vote with Brett seconding that the former "Bustard No-Mow" site be renamed to "Bustard Grove" - all four voting members present voted in favor.

Kofi read and really enjoyed the annual report.

Adjourned 8:25