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# West Reading Environmental Advisory Council

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## MEETING MINUTES

April 27, 2026

### Members Present

Chairperson Patrick Kaag, Nicole Weik, Samantha Kaag, Jim Keller

### Visitors

Judge Arther E. Grim

Louise Grim

### Call to Order

Mr. Kaag called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

### Approval of Minutes

Moved by Ms. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Keller to approve the minutes of March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026. Motion Carried.

### Single Use Plastics Reduction Update

Mr. Grim and Ms. Grim from What's Up Berks explained that why doing a plastics ban in West Reading would be beneficial for the community's health. Ms. Grim talked about how micro-plastics in our bodies can cause health problems. She shared how micro-plastics have been found in every waterway. Mr. Kaag shared how the borough would like to start working on a plastics ban. He mentioned that the borough would like to find out more information about how to go about constructing an ordinance against single use plastics. Mr. And Ms. Grim shared a packet which listed all the ordinances that have been passed in Pennsylvania against using single use plastics. Mr. Kaag shared that there are no current ordinances that ban plastic in Berks County. Mr. Kaag asked what the range of the fines have been for boroughs and counties that have put bans in place. Mr. Grim stated that it varies significantly as each county or borough writes their own ordinance. Mr. Grim stated that from what he has seen with each offense the fine would raise.

Mr. Grim shared that if West Reading would go about passing a plastic ban ordinance that What's Up Berks would be there to help facilitate and assist if needed. Mr. Kaag asked if their organization would be willing to go up and down Penn Ave. to speak with the businesses. Ms. Grim mentioned that they have already being doing this type of activity in West Reading along with Penn State students. Ms. Kaag shared that she believes most of the business do utilize paper bags over plastic bags. Ms. Grim shared that students from Governor Mifflin wrote a proposal along with a bill and took it to Senator Schwank. This inspired the Senator to write her own bill which is currently working its way through the House. Mr. Grim mentioned that Johanna Cepeda-Freytiz has also showed her support for a plastics ban in Pennsylvania.

Mr. Kaag shared that 40 municipalities in PA, 12 states, and Puerto Rico have passed legislation to ban the use of single use plastic items. Ms. Kaag volunteered to look up the ordinances that are already passed in Pennsylvania so that she can work with the West Reading Borough solicitor to see what can be done in West Reading. Mr. Kaag stated that at the next meeting the EAC can make a motion to formally recommend to the Borough Council to move forward with this type of ordinance. Ms. Grim suggested that we talk to the Reading EAC as well to see what they are also trying to pass. Ms. Kaag suggested that they come with a group to give a

presentation to the Borough Council at the June meeting.

### **M.O.R.E. Grant Update**

Mr. Kaag shared that he received an email from the borough engineer, Pamela Stevens, with an update on the solar panel project. This project will take place at the fire company and bicentennial house. The email stated that the design and engineering for this project should be completed by August. Mr. Kaag stated that he will send a follow up email to confirm the completion of the project by August as the grant expires then.

### **Memorial Garden Education**

Mr. Kaag stated that he will follow up with Ms. Bower to see if the Master Gardeners would be willing to come give some education on how to take care of the memorial gardens.

### **Spring Borough Cleanup & Free Market Results**

Mr. Kaag shared that it was rainy and cold and so not many people volunteered to do the cleanup. He also shared that the Free Market was well attended. He mentioned that event went almost 2 hours after it was supposed to end. Mr. Kaag asked that if we have any thoughts on how to improve these events going forward to share them with him. Ms. Kaag stated that she would like to see these events advertised on social media sooner. Ms. Weik suggested advertising these events in the West Reading Quarterly Newsletter. Ms. Kaag stated that she will put the Fall Cleanup and Free Market event in the newsletter.

### **Shredding Event**

Mr. Kaag shared that the event took place on April 11<sup>th</sup> and that he is still waiting for the final results from the event. He mentioned that the event was well attended.

### **Buy Nothing Group – Holiday Free Market**

Mr. Kaag shared that the Buy Nothing Group would like to host a Holiday Free Market in November at the pavilion. Ms. Kaag asked if they would be pairing with the EAC. Mr. Kaag stated that at this point they would still like to partner with the EAC. Ms. Kaag mentioned that she would like the EAC to either be more involved with this partnership or have them start doing these events on their own.

### **RiverFront Federal Credit Union – Piggy Derby**

Ms. Kaag shared that the event will be taking place at the creek on the other side of the pool. She stated that the Events Committee already approved the event but she wanted to make sure EAC didn't have any concerns. Ms. Kaag also mentioned that the curve in the creek might need to be cleaned up by Public Works. Mr. Kaag stated that he will reach out to Public Works about having the trees cut back. Ms. Weik asked what is the Piggy Derby event. Ms. Kaag shared that this year it will be raising funds for Dementia Friendly Berks and Berks Cat's Community. You donate \$10 and you get a rubber pig which then races down the creek. The person's pig that crosses the finish line first gets half the donated money. The two donation groups will split the other half of the money with the winner between those two groups getting a little more money.

### **Trout Mural**

Ms. Kaag shared that Mike M with Tulpehocken Chapter Trout Unlimited reached out last August wanting to do a mural in West Reading. She stated that he would like to go a mural underneath the walking bridge next to the Fire Company. Ms. Kaag shared a mockup of what the mural would look like and it will feature trout since he is with Tulpehocken Chapter Trout Unlimited. The mural will cost about three thousand dollars and he is looking for a way to help offset the cost that the organization will have to pay. Ms. Kaag stated that the borough will not help fund this project but she suggested an event for the parks system that could help raise donations. Ms. Kaag asks for EAC approval on the design. Ms. Kaag suggested we make a motion to approve the concept design along with another motion for the approval to discuss fundraising opportunities to help offset some of the cost. Motion made by Mr. Keller to accept the concept design and seconded by Ms. Weik. Motion Carried. Mr. Kaag shared that we don't need a motion to approve fundraising discussions and that it will be put on the agenda for the next meeting. Mr. Kaag also

stated that he will bring the design to the Borough Council meeting for their approval. Ms. Kaag suggested having Mike from Tulpehocken Chapter Trout Unlimited come to the council meeting for any questions or concerns.

**Adjournment**

Moved by Ms. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Keller to adjourn the meeting at 7:02p.m. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Weik

EAC Member