

August 22, 2016

West Vincent Township Sustainability Committee (WVTSC) Meeting Minutes

Date: July 19, 2016
Time: 7:30 pm
Location: West Vincent Township Building

Committee Members in Attendance: Penny Fulton (PF), Tom Kalusky (TK) Kip Archinal (KA), Sam Cantrell (SC), Bernie Couris (BC), Nicole Keegan (NK), Ben James (BJ)

1. Ben James reviewed status of Initiatives. The Sustainability Committee has broken up into teams. Each team has been reviewing a portion of the initiatives independently of the Committee. Each team is supposed to complete 5 initiatives for review by the entire Committee. Ben stated that the teams should continue to work towards completing initiatives.
2. Ben James is waiting to receive meeting minutes from Sam Cantrell and from Kip Archinal.
3. Ben James introduced guest speaker Ken Miller. Ken Miller is a Township resident, farmer and former Township Supervisor. Ben James requested that since several of the Township initiatives include farming and farming practices that Ken speak about farming in the Township and provide guidance to the Committee as they review the Township Sustainability Plan.
 - a. Ken owns a family dairy farm on Fellowship Road. The farm makes cheese using Kimberton Camphill Village facilities.
 - b. Ken stated an important factor to consider is that the Township remains flexible towards farmers and farming as it relates to zoning codes and legislature. Farming is dictated by the economy and farmers have to adapt to the economy. The Township should allow this flexibility so that farmers are able to adapt to the economy and new trends. This will allow farmers to keep their land and continue farming as a viable livelihood.

- c. Ken noted that he sees a trend that farmers will have to focus on niche markets to remain viable and compete in the current market. His niche market is artisan cheese. The smaller farms cannot compete with the big farms so niche farming is a more practical for small farms to make a living. Ken said that West Vincent is a perfect place for niche farming markets because of our proximity to Philadelphia and surrounding suburbs.
- d. The Township zoning currently requires that 50% of sales generated by farming have to be produced on the land farmed in Township.
- e. The zoning needs to accommodate farmers so that farming is a financial viable option. This would also insure that farmland stays in West Vincent. Some issues to consider for example are: setbacks for farm fields, number of cars/trucks allowed going in and out of farm per day. Ken said that farmers want the Township to support their needs in order for farming to be sustainable.
- f. An important component for the Township to consider while reviewing the Sustainability Plan is that many farmers rely on land owners to lease land to farmers. Ken mentioned there should be a Township education plan to teach property owners that they can lease land to farmers and of the benefits gained. Ken mentioned that it is in the land owners' best interest to have long-term relationships with farmers so that the farmers properly maintain the land and its soil conditions.
- g. Ken stated that it is difficult to farm completely organically in West Vincent due to the vast amount of erosion and rocks in the soil. He mentioned that to the extent possible he tries not to use pesticides / herbicides. He said farmers are very practical and the decision whether or not to use pesticides / herbicides is cost and market driven.
- h. The Township owns farmland due to the development of housing subdivisions within the Township. The Township owns approximately 110 acres of farmland. Ken stated that there are 7-8 farmers that farm in West Vincent. Ken thought it might be a good idea to at least give West Vincent farmers first dibs on leasing farmland from West Vincent Township.
- i. Ken stated that there are federal laws for the use of fertilizer, herbicides and pesticides.
- j. The Township should support sustainable business practices and opportunities for farming. Ken stated that with regards to Township Sustainability Plan it would be beneficial for farmers to be updated on sustainability efforts and practices by the Township as it relates to farming. More importantly it is important for the Township to understand farming practices, needs and trends in order to allow farming to be a sustainable livelihood for farmers.

- k. Ken stated that waste water generated from farms is abundant.

- 4. Green Drinks:
Sam Cantrell stated that the Green Drinks event needs additional media attention besides the Township email and posting on West Vincent Voices.

- 5. Movie Night:
No new progress was made with movie night.

- 6. Initiative Review: the team reviewing initiatives 41-61 shared a few initiatives that they have finalized and the initiatives are ready to be reviewed by the entire Committee for final approval.

- 7. Kip Archinal mentioned that as we review the Sustainability Plan she felt that the Ludwig's Corner commercial master plan should be revisited and reviewed as it relates the Township sustainability efforts. Hankin then the developer of commercial section of Weatherstone / Ludwig's corner received final approval of the commercial development at Ludwig's corner and was adopted by the Township in 2002.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.