

Environmental Advisory Council
2024 Year End Review
Lower Makefield Township



November 9, 2024 - Lower Makefield Township's
1st Arbor Day Celebration

This annual report includes the accomplishments of the Lower Makefield Township Environmental Council for the Year 2024 as well as timely projects the EAC intends to pursue in 2025.

To: The Board of Supervisors and Township Manager

March 26, 2025

From: LMT Environmental Advisory Council

Subject: 2024 Year End Review

The Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) in LMT plays an important role in enhancing the quality of life for all the citizens of our township. Accordingly, it is deemed important for us to prepare a Year End Review for the citizens and leaders of our community so that they may more properly assess the value we add to the quality of life in LMT. At the end of the document is a list of the projects we intend to pursue in 2025.

The EAC's 2024 activities include the following:

1. **Recycling Events** – The EAC hosted three very successful recycling events at the Township Building's parking lot on January 20th, April 20th and October 26th. In addition to Styrofoam, wine corks, household batteries, and prescription pill containers were collected. Typical amounts collected at these events: eighty-one 55 gal. bags of Styrofoam, 150 lbs. of batteries, 4 boxes of pill containers and 2 boxes of corks. After the events, the EAC transports the Styrofoam to Ray-Bob Packaging in Tullytown, PA for reuse in packaging and the manufacture of picture frames and other household items. The collected prescription pill bottles are cleaned then mailed to an organization for re-use as medical supplies in Central and South America. The corks are reused in construction or as artwork. The batteries are taken to a local battery recycler where the metals are recovered.
2. **Single-Use Plastics Ban Ordinance** – The LMT EAC has long been on record opposing the use of single use plastic bags and other single-use plastic items in our Township. Accordingly, in 2024 we have done some preliminary work in analyzing the issue and have discussed the issue with neighboring municipalities who have enacted single use plastics bans. It is our intention, with the approval of the BOS, to move forward with this project in 2025.
3. **Single Trash Hauler Analysis** – In 2008 the EAC requested that the LMT BOS, because of the significant environmental and cost benefits, look into the possibility of having a Single Trash Hauler contract in LMT. At a BOS 2008 meeting on the topic the discussion was sabotaged by an outside party that had a financial interest in keeping things like they were.

In 2024, the LMT BOS asked the LMT EAC to evaluate various trash hauling options available to the Township. Based on that review a report is being drafted with recommendations to the BOS. The EAC will be presenting a summary of this report at a BOS meeting in 2025.

4. **EAC Publicity List** – The EAC undertook a project in 2024 to update its publicity list. This revised and more comprehensive list will better enable us to “get the word out” when we hold one of our many public events throughout the year.

5. **Model Energy Ordinance** – At the request of the LMT Bos and Planning Commission, the EAC undertook an analysis of the Bucks County Planning Commission’s Model Sustainable and Renewable Energy Ordinance. An EAC letter with comments on this model ordinance was sent to the Township on August 13, 2024.
6. **Park and Rec Noise Abatement and Invasive Bamboo Remediation Report** – At the request of LMT’s Park and Rec. Dept., the EAC investigated possibilities of noise remediation at the Memorial Park pickle ball courts. Also, what techniques were available to control/eliminate a large bamboo infestation at the Schuyler Drive Tennis Courts. After reviewing research, discussing the issue with experts and other municipal officials the EAC submitted a written report outlining recommendations to resolve these issues.
7. **Big Trees of PA** – The EAC. is working with the Bucks-Lehigh State Forester to evaluate a large Hackberry Tree and possibly adding it to the PA Big Tree List. The tree was brought to the attention of the EAC by a property owner in the North end of the Twp. Some approximate measurements by the EAC indicated the tree was indeed large enough to satisfy the “Big Tree” criteria.
8. **Tree City USA** - Tree City USA is an Arbor day program that started in 1976 to celebrate communities committed to growing and enhancing their urban canopy. The LMT EAC is well aware of the significant environmental and aesthetic benefits of planting trees and, accordingly, recommended that the BOS take the necessary steps to become a Tree City. At a BOS mtg. on 8-21-24 the EAC made a presentation outlining the benefits of membership and the Board agreed to prepare the required application for membership. We are now awaiting formal approval which should take place in March 2025.
9. **Arbor Day Celebration** – On November 9, 2024 LMT held its first Arbor Day Celebration. To commemorate the event a Red Maple Tree was planted next to the Admin. Bldg. to honor all the Lower Makefield employees and volunteers whose dedication and hard work have made LMT a great place to live. State Senator Steve Santarsiero, State House Member Perry Warren, BOS Chairman John Lewis and other Township officials spoke at the event and praised LMT for its Native Plant Ordinance and Long Range Master Tree Plans that have resulted in the planting of thousands of trees throughout the Twp. The Arbor day celebration was the last requirement LMT had to fulfill in order to become a Tree City USA.
10. **Tree Planting in the Township** – The 2016 Long Rang Master Tree Plan was essentially finished in 2023. This very successful venture resulted in the planting of over 1000 trees and several hundred shrubs in over 30 locations throughout the Township. Also, with the assistance of LMT Park and Rec.the LMT community was involved in the planting of hundreds of some of the smaller trees and shrubs In 2024, Lower Makefield Township and the EAC worked with Tom Comitta and Assoc. to create a new 2024 Long Range Master Tree Plan. This comprehensive

plan calls for the planting of 1545 trees, 1319 shrubs and 1555 perennials over approximately a 6 year period. The plan was approved by the EAC on July, 11, 2024 and by the BOS on August 7, 2024.

The EAC is currently working with the Township to record all these plantings by date, species and location to ensure an accurate historical record. As part of its responsibilities, the EAC monitors developer's contributions to the Tree Bank (created by the EAC that requires developers to fund the account, not taxpayers). At the end of 2024 the Tree Bank Account had a balance of **\$323,968**.

11. **Township Ordinances** – The EAC has historically participated and commented on environmentally related revisions to the existing LMT ordinances. This year was no different.

A. **Required Open Space for Residential Development** - (Chapters 178 and 200) – A proposed revision to the SALDO and Zoning Ordinances would require at least 25 percent of residential development land in the R-RP, R-1, R-2 and R-3 zoning districts be designated as open space. The EAC strongly supports the concept of this ordinance and submitted an October 12th comment letter and a December 20th email with suggestions to improve and clarify the ordinance.

B. **Stormwater Management Ordinance Improvements** – Due to Global Warming and the resulting 2023 flash flood in Upper Makefield and in the Maplevale neighborhood in LMT, the LMT BOS hired the HRG consulting firm to evaluate and make recommendations to improve LMT's stormwater ordinances. The EAC had a member on the important Township's Stormwater Review Committee. The EAC participated in meetings and submitted comments on both Phase I, approved the summer of 2024 and Phase 2, which will be considered for approval in 2025. Comments were submitted in documents dated March 15, Nov. 20, and Dec. 11, 2024.

12. **Land Use Reviews** – The EAC is a designated a land use review board for the Township. In 2024, the EAC reviewed and provided comments on the following proposed developments:

- a. Wright Farm 47 House Subdivision – May 24, 2024 and August 10, 2024 comment letters.
- b. Fieldstone-Harris Track – 29 House Subdivision – March 29, 2024 comment letter.
- c. Cleary-Timko Subdivision – On April 29, 2024 an e-mail was sent to theTwp. concerning the project's tree replacement requirements

13. **Open Space** – On April 12,2024 the EAC sent the BOS an e-mail pointing out various properties in LMT that would be excellent Open Space candidates. Encouraging the Township to preserve and protect LMT's remaining Open Space is one of the EAC's primary efforts. To that end, the EAC asked the BOS to place a referendum for Open Space and Farmland Preservation on the November election

ballot. Such a referendum would authorize the Township to borrow up to \$15 million for the proposes of purchasing or placing easements on Open Space land. On July 17, 2024 the LMT BOS approved placing a 15 Million Bond Referendum on the Nov. 5, 2024 ballot. The referendum easily passed: **15,112 Yes, 6,911 No (69% yes, 31% no)**. The EAC will continue to work with the Twp. staff and the BOS to evaluate prime candidates for inclusion in the Open Space Program.

14. **Bird Town PA on the LMT Web** – With the assistance of LMT employees LMT Bird Town PA is now on the official LMT website. In addition to information about the program a new feature called “Bird of the Month” has been added to the platform. In the short time it has been on line this feature has generated a lot of positive comments.

15. **LMT EAC/Bird Town PA Lectures and Events** – The LMT EAC and the newly re-activated EAC affiliate, LMT Bird Town PA, had a busy year as shown by the following event schedule:

- a. **LMT Bird Town PA Welcome** – On March 6, 2024 Heidi Shiver , President of Bird Town PA graciously welcomed LMT Bird Town as a member of the PA Bird Town network. Heidi also gifted LMT with 2 large, beautifully colored Bird Town Road Signs that will be highly visible as people enter our community.
- b. **Winged Migration** – On April 2, 2024, in collaboration with the Newtown Theatre and Washington Crossing Park, LMT Bird Town PA hosted over 70 people to view a documentary entitled “Winged Migration”. The photography and content of the film were amazing and the audience response was very positive.
- c. **Falconry Exhibition** – On April 20, 2024 LMT Bird Town in collaboration with the EAC hosted a live Falconry Exhibition at Memorial Park with over 110 people of all ages in attendance. Master Falconer Gregory Martel allowed the falcons to fly freely and to even land on the arms of some volunteers. Comments from attendees after the event were unanimously positive.
- d. **Newtown Welcome Day** – On June 9, 2024 LMT Bird town was invited to share a table at the Newtown Welcome Day celebration. The large crowd gave LMT Bird Town a great opportunity to “get the word out” about our upcoming programs.
- e. **Residential Stormwater Mgt, Structures** – At the August 8, 2024 EAC Mtg. “Princeton Hydro” gave a presentation on the benefits of various types of residential stormwater management structures such as rain gardens, infiltration basins, vegetated filter strips and the planting of trees.
- f. **Yardley Harvest Day Festival** - On September 21, 2024, LMT Bird Town was invited to set up a table at the Harvest Day celebration. This gave LMT Bird Town another great opportunity to let people know “what we are about” and to hand out information about upcoming programs.

- g. Humming Bird Lecture – On September 28, 2024 Grace Carter, a young Hummingbird enthusiast, gave a well attended lecture on Hummingbirds at the LMT Community Center. The narrative and photos were excellent and a highlight was a video of a Hummer eating out of Grace’s hand.
- h. 2nd Falconry Exhibition – By popular demand, on October 5, 2024 at Memorial Park, a 2nd Falconry Exhibition was given by Master Falconer Gregory Martel. People just were amazed at the soaring birds and how Gregory guided them to land on the arms of volunteers. Again, the crowd response was very positive.

16. **Community Outreach** - Reaching out to LMT residents is an important EAC goal. This goal is achieved in several different ways.

Environmental Lecture Series and Outreach – For almost the last 20 years the EAC has had an active Lecture Series where, 3-4 times/year we have held lectures by various experts in their field discussing the importance of being good environmental stewards. Some lectures were humorous and some were dead serious and some, like some of the bird lectures piqued our aesthetic sensitivities. But, the common theme was that we are all in this together and if we are to survive as a species we must take care of our magnificent gift.

Virtual and Live Meetings – Throughout the year the LMT EAC has met many times with other municipal officials and environmental organizations to freely exchange ideas to keep current about the latest environmental concerns.

Newsletter – The EAC Newsletter is published many times throughout the year to publicize EAC events such as Recycling, EAC and Bird Town lectures and exhibitions and to provide timely information on various environmental topics.

17. **The 2024 Environmental Stewardship Award** – The Environmental Stewardship Award Program is an EAC initiative that started in 2008. It has not only recognized the commitment of the award winners but has also resulted in very favorable publicity for LMT as well. If the award winner(s) are a non-profit, as is the case here, they will receive a \$1000 stipend. The 2024 Award winners were the Pennsbury High School Key Club, Environmental Club and the UNICEF Club. The members of these clubs collected thousands of used pill box containers, cleaned them and then sent them to developing nations around the world where they were desperately needed. It should be noted that Naima Doraiswamy, a senior and Key Club member, was the catalyst for this project and brought all these clubs together for this common purpose. The award ceremony will be held at a BOS Meeting on March 19, 2025 at the LMT Administration Bldg.

18. **OmThe 2023 Environmental Stewardship Award** - On March 6, 2024 the LMT BOS presented the Master Gardener Native Plant Garden Committee with the annual Environmental Stewardship Award. This talented group has worked diligently to maintain and upgrade the Native Plant Garden on the Edgewood Rd. side of the LMT Admin. Bldg. They have added plants and created garden pathways that allow

the garden's beauty to be more easily observed. The award comes with a \$1000 stipend that will be used to maintain and upgrade the garden.

19. **EAC Elections** – At the January 11, 2025 EAC Mtg., for the year 2025, by unanimous vote, Jim Bray was elected EAC Chair and Alan Dresser was elected as Co-Chair.
20. **Welcome New Members** - The EAC was pleased to add 2 new members, Cheryl Coffee and Dominique Mitchell, to the Council in 2024. Both members are avid environmentalists and have already started to work on various projects. We anticipate Cheryl and Dominique will strengthen our team and become significant contributors. Thanks for joining us.
21. **Jim Bray Achievement Recognition** – At a BOS Mtg. on March 6, 2024 current Chairman Jim Bray was presented with several awards that recognized his achievements over a 20 year period serving on the LMT EAC. The awards were given by State Senator Steve Santarsiero, Congressman Perry Warren and BOS Chair John Lewis. A real bonus for Jim was the inclusion of family, friends and present and past EAC Members in the audience. Jim was emotionally touched with the outpouring of affection and thanked everyone for their role in the ceremony. To Jim, recognition from one's peers is the highest type of honor one could hope to achieve. After the ceremony Steve and Ronni Santarsiero graciously opened their house for a reception for Jim, his family and friends.

The following is a list of projects the EAC intends to pursue in 2025:

- 1) **Bird Town PA** – Help assemble a Bird Town committee, identify possible Bird Town projects and assist in their implementation.
- 2) **The 2024 Long Range Master Tree Plan** –The EAC will continue to assist Twp. Mgt in selecting locations and tree, shrub and perennial species for Spring and Fall plantings in 2025. In addition, the EAC will also monitor the plantings and keep an ongoing record of the plantings by location and species.
- 3) **Tree Bank Payments and Expenditures** - The EAC will continue to ensure money owed to the Township's Tree Bank is paid on a timely basis and spent in an appropriate way.
- 4) **Single Use Plastics Ban** – We have already started to explore this incredibly important project. We feel that this is an idea whose time has come. Newtown Township, as well as many other States and local municipalities, have enacted bans on single use plastics. Successful ordinances in other municipalities will be reviewed and an ordinance for LMT will be drafted. The goal is to have an ordinance in place in 2025.
- 5) **LMT Trash/Recycling Hauler Options** – At the request of the BOS, the EAC in 2024 prepared a study on the trash/recycling hauler options for LMT. As part of

the study the EAC also presented a list of possible ways the various systems could work in LMT and the pros and cons. The study will be presented to the BOS in a March 2025 Mtg.

- 6) Strengthen the township's Basin Naturalization Program-
- 7) Solar System for LMT – The EAC and the Twp. Mgr. will explore the possibility of bringing solar power to LMT. One of the main avenues that will be explored is the availability of state and federal grants.
- 8) Open Space and Farmland Preservation – The EAC will continue to advocate for procuring Open Space in LMT. As we have done in the past the EAC will continue to select prime Open Space candidates and bring them to the attention of the BOS
- 9) EAC/Bird Town Environmental Lecture Series – So far 4 lectures have been scheduled for Winter and Spring 2025.
 - a. Naughty by Nature – Our Valentine's Day offering on Feb. 15 is all about love in the animal kingdom and will be hosted by author and Naturalist. Mike Weilbacher.
 - b. Rain Gardens – Geoff Goll, president of the highly regarded environmental engineering firm "Princeton Hydro," will explain the "How To's and the Benefits" of placing rain gardens on your property.
 - c. Aark in the Park – On May 3, 2025 Memorial Park will be the scene of a hands on exhibition of Birds and Hawks given by the experts of the highly respected Aark Wildlife Rehabilitation Ctr.
 - d. Microplastics – This lecture will not have you jumping for joy but sure to be an eye opener. On May 31, 2025 Scientist and Educator Mike Weilbacher returns to discuss "What's this Microplastic Thing all About"
- 10) Recycling Collection Events – As in the past, the EAC intends to have three Styrofoam/battery/ prescription bottle/cork collection events in 2024. The first is scheduled for Jan. 20, 2025. This is one of the most popular EAC programs and we always have a great turnout
- 11) Tree City USA – We should be receiving our certification from the Arbor Day Foundation in early March 2025.
- 12) Arbor Day Celebration – LMT's 2nd Arbor Day Celebration will take place on April 26, 2025. This celebration involves the planting of a native tree on public property and selecting a person/group to whom the tree will be dedicated. The EAC will make these recommendations to the BOS early in 2025.

It is our steadfast opinion that the EAC's projects translate not only to a better environment in the Township, but also, to economic savings for the citizens of LMT. As always, it is both a privilege and a pleasure to serve the people of Lower Makefield Township.

Sincerely,

The LMT EAC: Jim Bray Chair, Alan Dresser Vice-Chair, and Members Kevin Gallen, Paul Roden, Soumya Dharmavaram, Dominique Mitchell and Cheryl Coffee.