

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (EAC)

South Whitehall Township
Lehigh County, Pennsylvania
January 26, 2026 – 7:00pm

AGENDA ITEM # 1 - CALL TO ORDER

AGENDA ITEM # 2 – ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

- A. December 15, 2025, Meeting Minutes

AGENDA ITEM # 3 – ELECTION OF OFFICERS

AGENDA ITEM # 4 – 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

- A. Motion to Accept

AGENDA ITEM # 5 – LAND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

- A. Procedure Review (5 Minutes)

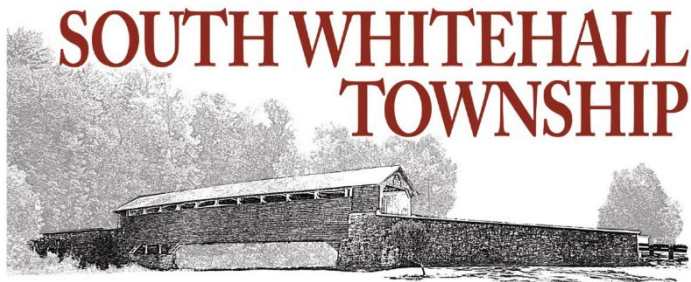
AGENDA ITEM # 6 – 2026-2027 EAC WORKPLAN

- A. Workplan Development

AGENDA ITEM # 7 – COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

AGENDA ITEM # 8 – ADJOURNMENT

(Next Meeting – February 23, 2026 @ 7:00 PM)



Environmental Advisory Council

South Whitehall Township
Lehigh County, Pennsylvania
December 15, 2025

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Frank Petrocelli, Derek Pinkham, Marie North, Emily Lenneville, Sara Seipel, Marc Basist

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Chris Stroehler – Long-Range Planner, Ali Long – Public Works

PUBLIC:

None

Minutes – December 15, 2025

AGENDA ITEM #1 - CALL TO ORDER

Frank Petrocelli called the meeting to order at 7:01 P.M. Marc requested the Council take a moment of silence for all the victims of recent tragedies at Brown University and Bondi Beach.

AGENDA ITEM #2 – ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Approval of the November 24, 2025 meeting minutes were accepted as submitted.

AGENDA ITEM #3 – TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY - DEBRIEF

The group took a few minutes to recap their involvement and experience at the recent Tree Lighting Ceremony at Covered Bridge Park. Despite the cold, the group had a good time and were able to engage with several attendees to talk about recycling and stormwater during the snowball craft. Members made a few comments to consider for next year:

- The EAC table was in a good location, but still about 20 feet away from the path, requiring attendees to intentionally stray from the path to visit the table.
- The members would be interested in more engagement from Santa throughout the event, from their vantage point it was hard to know where he was.
- More food trucks would be appreciated.
- A few more light towers near the parking areas and paths from parking areas might be helpful along the darker walk from the eastern parking area.

AGENDA ITEM #4 – 2026 WORKPLAN

Chris reminded the members that it was time to update the EAC Workplan, which was last created in early 2024. The group discussed a number of topics to consider for the updated workplan:

School District and Youth Engagement

The group decided to prioritize building stronger ties with the Parkland School District to involve students in environmental activities

- Engagement aims include supporting the high school's environmental club, organizing field trips to recycling centers like Total Recycle, and sponsoring student participation in events such as a 2026 Time Capsule project.

- Past attempts to connect with the school faced challenges reaching the right contacts, so starting with the Superintendent was suggested.
- Short-term goals would include gathering input from educators before developing specific programs to ensure alignment with student interests and school need
- Emily volunteered to lead outreach efforts, starting with contacting Mark Madson, the Superintendent, to identify educators interested in collaboration.

Official Map and Open Space Priorities

Advancing the official map emerged as a top goal to guide open space preservation and land use decisions in the township.

- The map will include landscape preservation priorities and transportation priorities derived from the *South Whitehall Landscapes* plan and South Whitehall Transportation PLAN, respectively.
- The map will highlight priority resource areas and undeveloped parcels, estimated at around 10-20 parcels, to focus acquisition and protection efforts strategically.
- Integration of transportation and safety data from the finalized transportation plan will enhance the map's utility, supporting connections to parks and open spaces.
- The group agreed to defer further development on a separate open space map until after reviewing the official map outcomes to avoid spreading efforts thin.
- The official map is expected to support plan implementation phases, shifting from planning to active use in upcoming township land development reviews and funding decisions.

Transportation and Accessibility Enhancements

Improving active transportation options and access to parks and open spaces was positioned as a key environmental and community goal.

- The recently completed transportation plan includes safety audits of major corridors like Hamilton Boulevard and identifies a preferred network of bike and pedestrian paths connecting community spaces.
- The township will codify road classifications and infrastructure requirements, including sidewalks and bike lanes, to better support pedestrian and cyclist safety and connectivity.
- The Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) will review the transportation plan with an emphasis on enhancing walkability, bikeability, and environmentally friendly infrastructure.
- Challenges remain in addressing older neighborhoods lacking sidewalks, where residents currently bear responsibility for installation since the developers are long gone.

Ordinance and Policy Updates

Updating key environmental ordinances and policies was identified as a necessary step to support open space protection, lighting controls, and natural landscaping practices.

- Chris outlined plans to advance updates focused on open space provisions, resource protection, and lighting ordinances, with input from external lighting consultants to address issues like excessive commercial lighting.
- A new goal was added to review and potentially revise no-mow and natural landscaping ordinances, drawing on model ordinances from organizations like WeConservePA to promote habitat-friendly practices while avoiding enforcement difficulties.
- The group agreed to keep ordinance updates broad initially, allowing flexibility to adjust priorities as new needs emerge, while connecting efforts to prior plans to provide context for commissioners.
- Addressing light pollution with zoning-based "lighting zones" was discussed as a promising approach to balance safety and environmental impact

Wildlife Corridors and Habitat Connectivity

The need to identify and protect wildlife corridors to reduce roadkill and maintain ecosystem health was raised as an urgent environmental concern.

- The group acknowledged challenges with fragmented habitats caused by roads and cloverleaf interchanges, which isolate animals and increase mortality.
- Examples from other regions, including wildlife bridges and tunnels used in Philadelphia and New Jersey, were cited as effective mitigation strategies.
- The EAC discussed incorporating wildlife corridor considerations into their work plans and official mapping efforts to better protect local fauna.
- Education about how these corridors link to broader environmental goals and transportation infrastructure was recommended to build awareness among commissioners and the community.

Chris agreed to summarize several of these topics for next meeting to facilitate preparation of the workplan with the Council members. Frank suggested considering the idea of forming small sub-committees to help move forward some action items between meetings. Potential sub-committees discussed were around the topics of Transportation, Recycling, and Events.

AGENDA ITEM #5 – 2026 MEETING SCHEDULE

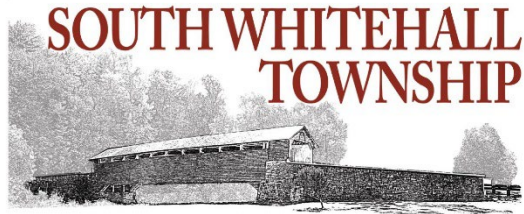
Chris ran through the 2026 meeting schedule and how meetings are related to other Boards/Commissions/Councils.

AGENDA ITEM #6 – COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Marie followed up on the ReImagine Appalachia project with Penn State architectural students. Chris talked a bit about some of the work that occurred similarly in the Lehigh Valley with PennPraxis from the University of Pennsylvania.

AGENDA ITEM #7 – ADJOURNMENT

Sara made a motion to adjourn. Marc seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:36 PM.



2025 Environmental Advisory Council Annual Report

The South Whitehall Township Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) is pleased to present their 2025 Annual Report. This report has been prepared by the Township Long-Range Planner/Special Projects Coordinator in accordance with the requirements of §17-57 of the Township Code.

Environmental Advisory Council Members:

Frank Petrocelli, *Chair*

Sara E. Seipel, Vice Chair

Marc Basist

Marie North

Derek Pinkham

I. Environmental Advisory Council Composition

- A. The Environmental Advisory Council is a seven-member Council, comprised of Township residents appointed by the South Whitehall Township Board of Commissioners. Various departments and staff engage with the EAC including Township Administration, Community Development, and Public Works.
- B. The Commission typically meets on the fourth Monday of each month to conduct public business.
- C. In 2025, five members of the community served as Council members.

II. Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the South Whitehall Township EAC are outlined in six specific duties:

- 1. To identify environmental problems and recommend plans and programs for conservation of natural resources and protection and improvement of environmental quality.
- 2. In conjunction with the Park and Recreation Board, to make recommendations as to possible uses of open space areas.
- 3. To promote a community environmental program.
- 4. To keep an index of all open space areas, publicly or privately owned including, but not limited to, flood prone areas, swamps, and other unique natural areas for the purpose of obtaining information of the proper use of such areas.
- 5. To advise the appropriate Township governmental agency in the acquisition of property, both real and personal, by gift, purchase, grant, bequest, easement, devise, or lease in matters dealing with the purposes of this article.
- 6. The Environmental Advisory Council shall review subdivision and land development plans in accordance with the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, limited to matters pertaining to the foregoing subject matter. The findings of this review shall be prepared and sent to the Planning Commission as recommendations.

III. 2025 Activities & Milestone Accomplishments:

A. Administrative

- The Environmental Advisory Council met on the fourth Monday of each month and conducted ten regular public meetings in 2025, with two meetings canceled.

B. Speakers/Education

- The Environmental Advisory Council hosted three guest speakers at public meetings in 2025:

- Jason Smith and Kerry Rider, Bushkill Township Board of Supervisors and Environmental Advisory Council
- Fred Buse, resident, local author, and phenologist
- Paul Younger, Projects Director, Little Lehigh Watershed Stewards

C. Public Engagement

- Environmental Advisory Council members participated in three Township-sponsored community events:
 - Earth Day “Planting in the Park”
 - Members learned about native plants and landscaping tips from Township staff, planted flowers and shrubs, and assisted with mulching and flowerbed maintenance.
 - Sunset to Summer Festival
 - Members provided a community information table to engage residents, share information about Environmental Advisory Council activities, and promote the 2025 Open Space Referendum.
 - Tree & Bridge Lighting Holiday Event
 - Members provided two community information tables to share information about the Environmental Advisory Council, promote recycling best practices during the holiday season, and provide stormwater education, with a focus on residential winter salting practices.

D. Open Space

- Reviewed research findings and polling data associated with the Conservation Finance Feasibility Study.
- Participated in public outreach and education efforts in support of the Open Space Referendum.
- Unanimously supported the enactment and successful passage of the Open Space Referendum.

E. Waste Management/Recycling

- Met with the Township’s contracted waste hauler, J.P. Mascaro, to discuss opportunities for expanded collaboration on recycling education.
- Coordinated with J.P. Mascaro to develop additional recycling education materials, including holiday-specific recycling flyers.
- Discussed recycling operations and initiated planning for a future Environmental Advisory Council tour of the recycling facility.

F. Ordinances/Policies

- Reviewed and commented on proposed updates to Open Space definitions for incorporation into future Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) amendments
- Reviewed the Township Official Map and provided recommendations for updates consistent with the goals of the *South Whitehall Landscapes Plan*.
- Reviewed example resource protection ordinances and guidance documents to inform potential updates to resource protection provisions within the Township Code.
- Discussed the need for a future natural landscaping ordinance in conjunction with the Township's existing Brush, Grass, and Weeds Ordinance.
- Reviewed and discussed conceptual elements of the proposed Jordan Valley Preservation Overlay Zoning District.
- Reviewed, commented on, and provided recommendations regarding the Planned Innovation, Research, and Technology (PIRT) Overlay District.

G. Regional

- Participated in the development of the Lehigh Valley Regional Climate Action Plan prepared by the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission.
- Participated regularly in Lehigh Valley Environmental Advisory Council Network meetings and events.

IV. Environmental Advisory Council Goals for 2026:

A. Administrative

- Support the effective onboarding and integration of two new Environmental Advisory Council members whose terms begin in January, ensuring they are familiar with Council responsibilities, procedures, and ongoing initiatives.
- Leverage increased community interest and attendance at Council meetings by establishing clear opportunities for meaningful public engagement through events, educational efforts, and environmental initiatives, while maintaining appropriate meeting protocols and orderly conduct.

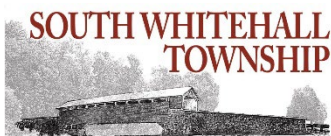
B. Duty-Specific

- Develop a new 2026-2027 EAC Workplan to outline duty-specific goals, actions, and measurements of success.

**SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

2024/2025 Workplan

4444 Walbert Avenue
Allentown, PA 18104



Overview

Environmental Advisory Councils

An Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) is an appointed arm of municipal government that focuses exclusively on environmental conservation and improvement. Authorized by Pennsylvania Act 148 of 1973 (amended by Act 177 of 1996), EACs make recommendations and advise the local authority on environmental-related matters. Each EAC must be established by municipal ordinance and may have a slightly different focus depending on the specific issues in that municipality.

South Whitehall EAC

The South Whitehall Township EAC was originally established in the 1970s, but was reestablished on January 17, 2024 through Ordinance Number 1082. This ordinance outlines six specific duties and responsibilities of the South Whitehall EAC:

1. To identify environmental problems and recommend plans and programs for conservation of natural resources and protection and improvement of environmental quality.
2. In conjunction with the Park and Recreation Board, to make recommendations as to possible uses of open space areas.
3. To promote a community environmental program.
4. To keep an index of all open space areas, publicly or privately owned including, but not limited to, flood prone areas, swamps, and other unique natural areas for the purpose of obtaining information of the proper use of such areas.
5. To advise the appropriate Township government agency in the acquisition of property, both real and personal, by gift, purchase, grant, bequest, easement, devise, or lease.
6. To review subdivision and land development plans in accordance with the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, limited to matters pertaining to the foregoing subject matter.

These six duties and responsibilities are permanent fixtures of the South Whitehall EAC and do not change. The purpose of the annual/biennial workplan is to provide direction and more clarity to the EAC membership, staff, Board of Commissioners, and public as to the activities of the planned to support the authorized duties and responsibilities of the EAC for that calendar year(s). This workplan is developed in collaboration with the EAC membership and Township staff assigned to support the EAC. The annual/biennial workplan is then presented for approval by the Township Board of Commissioners to ensure consistency with other initiatives of South Whitehall Township.

2024 EAC Membership

Marc Basist

Marie North

Frank Petrocelli

Derek Pinkham

Sara E. Seipel

Township Staff

Chris Stroehler, Long-Range Planner/Special Projects Coordinator

Mike Elias, Utilities/MS4 Program Coordinator

Herb Bender, Director of Township Operations/Public Works Manager

Tom Petrucci, Township Manager

Priority Goals & Actions (2024 – 2025)

The priority goals and actions for the remainder of 2024 and early 2025, primarily stem from priority actions in the recently adopted *South Whitehall Landscapes* Plan. This plan was adopted in September of 2024 and lays out strategies and priorities for the preservation of Open Space, Agricultural, Historic, and Natural Resources. This plan emphasizes the importance of the South Whitehall Township Environmental Advisory Council as a group to help implement the goals of the plan and recommends several actions to be carried out specifically by the EAC.

The following five goals have been developed by the members of the EAC and staff. These goals were specifically developed in a progression approach, with the results of the first goal influencing or guiding the development of the second goal. The actions associated with these goals are necessary steps that need to be taken in order to accomplish some of the larger priority goals identified in the *South Whitehall Landscapes* plan.

Each goal outlines specific actions to be taken, along with references to other Township plans/initiatives. Each page also identifies which specific duty of the EAC authorizes or encourages the actions proposed. A rough timeline is displayed at the end of this workplan for guidance as to how each step progresses.

2024/2024 Goal #1

Review and further define Open Space and Agriculture Place Types

Associated South Whitehall EAC Duty

EAC Duty #2: In conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Board, to make recommendations as to possible uses of open space areas.

2024/2025 Proposed Activities

- Review the Land Use Plan chapter of the South Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan
- Review the nine new Open Space classifications introduced in the *South Whitehall Landscapes* plan
- Work with staff to further develop and define uses for the Open Space Place Type and Agriculture Place Type to be incorporated into a proposed “Place Type Guide”
- Work with staff to incorporate use definitions into relevant ordinances (Zoning, SALDO, etc.)

Associated Township Plan/Initiative

- South Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan
 - Implementation Item O1: Open Space Preservation
 - Implementation Item S1: SALDO Updates
 - Implementation Item Z1: Zoning Updates
- *South Whitehall Landscapes* Plan
 - Action B.8: Update SALDO with new open space classifications and requirements

2024/2024 Goal #2

Develop a South Whitehall Township Open Space Map

Associated South Whitehall EAC Duty

EAC Duty #4: To keep an index of all open space areas, publicly or privately owned including, but not limited to, flood prone areas, swamps, and other unique natural areas for the purpose of obtaining information of the proper use of such areas.

2024/2025 Proposed Activities

- Map all public and private “open spaces” in the Township
- Classify open spaces based on the nine classifications introduced in the *South Whitehall Landscapes* plan
- Distinguish public and private open spaces

Associated Township Plan/Initiative

- *South Whitehall Landscapes* Plan
 - Action A.1: Inventory and categorize public and private Open Spaces
 - Action A.3: Develop an Open Space Preservation Program

2024/2024 Goal #3

Identify and map Priority Resource Protection Areas

Associated South Whitehall EAC Duty

EAC Duty #4: To keep an index of all open space areas, publicly or privately owned including, but not limited to, flood prone areas, swamps, and other unique natural areas for the purpose of obtaining information of the proper use of such areas.

2024/2025 Proposed Activities

- Review and prioritize data layers important to Agricultural Resources
- Review and prioritize data layers important to Natural Resources
- Identify layer overlaps and appropriate buffering
- Recommend Resource Protection Areas to be updated on the Township Official Map

Associated Township Plan/Initiative

- South Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan
 - Implementation Item O2: Official Map Updates
- *South Whitehall Landscapes* Plan
 - Action A.3: Develop an Open Space Preservation Program

2024/2024 Goal #4

Review/Recommend Resource Protection Ordinances

Associated South Whitehall EAC Duty

EAC Duty #1: To identify environmental problems and recommend plans and programs for conservation of natural resources and protection and improvement of environmental quality.

2024/2025 Proposed Activities

- Review and comment on existing resource protection ordinances:
 - Floodplain Ordinance
 - Stormwater Ordinance
 - Trees Ordinance
- Identify additional resource protection ordinances and research model ordinance documents
- Make recommendations to update or develop new resource protection ordinances

Associated Township Plan/Initiative

- South Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan
 - Implementation Item R3: Resource Protection Ordinances
- *South Whitehall Landscapes Plan*
 - Action B.2: Create natural resource preservation ordinances
 - Action B.3: Update and enforce existing natural resource ordinances

2024/2024 Goal #5

Develop and promote a Township Open Space Program

Associated South Whitehall EAC Duty

EAC Duty #4: To keep an index of all open space areas, publicly or privately owned including, but not limited to, flood prone areas, swamps, and other unique natural areas for the purpose of obtaining information of the proper use of such areas.

EAC Duty #5: To advise the appropriate Township government agency in the acquisition of property, both real and personal, by gift, purchase, grant, bequest, easement, devise, or lease.

2024/2025 Proposed Activities

- Work with staff to identify a Township Open Space Needs Assessment
- Work with staff to develop a process to review applications and properties of interest for protection
- Review and approve Open Space Evaluation Checklist
- Review relevant reports, documents, and case studies on successful municipal open space referendums
- Review financial impact data, cost/benefit analysis, and other municipal open space programs to develop a Community Education Campaign
- Host public outreach events, presentations, and other relevant events in support of the Community Education Campaign

Associated Township Plan/Initiative

- South Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan
 - Implementation Item O1: Open Space Preservation
- *South Whitehall Landscapes* Plan
 - Action A.3: Develop an Open Space Preservation Program
 - Action A.4: Finance an Open Space Preservation Program

Additional Considerations

While the EAC wanted to prioritize actions and goals that support the time-sensitive priorities of the *South Whitehall Landscapes Plan*, several other topics were discussed that should be considered over the next 6-8 months that will help guide future EAC goals and actions. These topics fall under several of the authorized duties of the EAC but will require additional thought and discussion to accomplish.

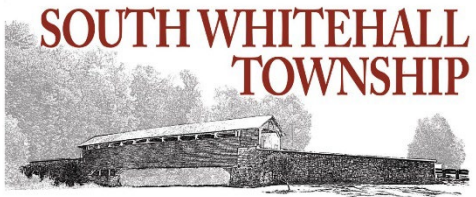
Develop a 2024/2025 Environmental Issues List

Develop a SWT EAC Community Outreach Package

Identify EAC Land Development Review Procedures

Below is a proposed timeline displaying how each goal will be addressed by the EAC in the coming months.

South Whitehall Township EAC 2024/2025 Workplan		Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Goal #1	Place Type Refinement						
Goal #2	Open Space Map						
Goal #3	Priority Protection Areas						
Goal #4	Resource Protection Ordinances						
Goal #5	Open Space Preservation Program						



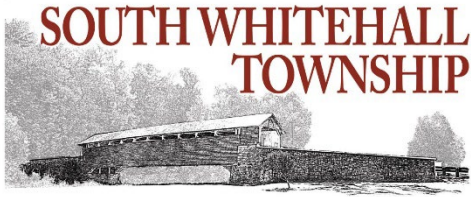
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TOPIC #1 – Parkland School District and Youth Engagement

EAC Duty #3 To promote a community environmental program

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND	GOAL/OBJECTIVE
ACTION ITEMS	MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS
RELEVANT INITIATIVES	OTHER NEEDS



ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (EAC)

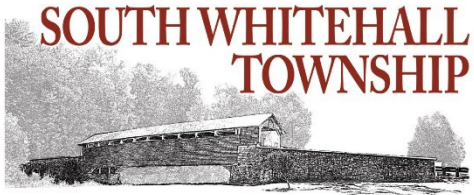
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TOPIC #2 – Mapping

EAC Duty #4 To keep an index of all open space areas, publicly or privately owned including, but not limited to, flood prone areas, swamps, and other unique natural areas for the purpose of obtaining information of the proper use of such areas.

EAC Duty #5 To advise the appropriate Township government agency in the acquisition of property, both real and personal, by gift, purchase, grant, bequest, easement, devise, or lease.

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND	GOAL/OBJECTIVE
ACTION ITEMS	MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS
RELEVANT INITIATIVES	OTHER NEEDS



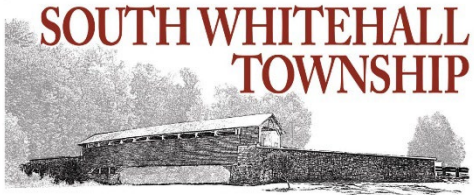
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TOPIC # 3 – Transportation

EAC Duty #1 To identify environmental problems and recommend plans and programs for conservation of natural resources and protection and improvement of environmental quality.

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND	GOAL/OBJECTIVE
ACTION ITEMS	MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS
RELEVANT INITIATIVES	OTHER NEEDS



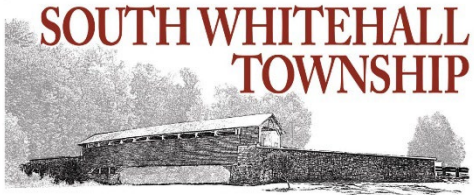
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TOPIC # 4 – Waste Management

EAC Duty #1 To identify environmental problems and recommend plans and programs for conservation of natural resources and protection and improvement of environmental quality.

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND	GOAL/OBJECTIVE
ACTION ITEMS	MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS
RELEVANT INITIATIVES	OTHER NEEDS



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TOPIC # 5 – Ordinances and Policies

EAC Duty #1 To identify environmental problems and recommend plans and programs for conservation of natural resources and protection and improvement of environmental quality.

EAC Duty #6 To review subdivision and land development plans in accordance with the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, limited to matters pertaining to the foregoing subject matter.

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND	GOAL/OBJECTIVE
ACTION ITEMS	MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS
RELEVANT INITIATIVES	OTHER NEEDS