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## Environmental Advisory Council Charter Planning Template

Name: **Environmental Advisory Council** --- \_\_\_\_\_  
(List Municipality)

**Purpose & Description** (Describe the purpose of this committee.) *An Environmental Advisory Council is a group of 3-7 community residents, appointed by local elected officials, that advises the local planning commission, park and recreation board and elected officials on the protection, conservation, management, promotion and use of natural resources within its territorial limits. Municipalities are authorized to establish EACs through Act 177 of 1996, originally Act 148 of 1973.*

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### Scope:

Describe the boundaries of the work of the committee. Specifically describe what the committee IS doing, and the work that the committee is NOT doing.

In accordance with Act 177, EACs are authorized to:

- Identify environmental problems and recommend plans and programs to protect and improve the quality of the environment;
- Make recommendations about the use of open land;
- Promote a community environmental program;
- Keep an index of all open space areas to determine the proper use of such areas;
- Review plans, conduct site visits, and prepare reports for municipal officials; and
- Advise local government agencies about the acquisition of property.

EACs do NOT:

*Do not regulate; they are advisory only.*

- EACs do not take the place of or compete with planning commissions or park and recreation boards; they augment and work closely with them.
- EACs are not activist or extremist environmental groups- they are part of the local government and accomplish the most when they work well with local officials.
- EACs do not compete with local grass-roots organizations, such as watershed associations.  
*They are contact points and local government liaisons for these groups.*
- EACs do not add bureaucracy to the local government- they have an organized procedure for participating in land use decisions.

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**This EAC is responsible for:**

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**This EAC is NOT responsible for:**

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**Desired Outcome:**

List all of the desired outcomes for the committee in both tangible and intangible results. Include any goals, milestones, achievements etc that the group is responsible to accomplish.

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**Members:** *Members are appointed by the local governing body. In the case of multi-municipal EACs, each participating municipality appoints an equal number of members to serve on the council. Act 148, as amended, states that "**whenever possible, one member shall also be a member of the municipal planning board.**" This cross-representation can be an important factor in the effectiveness of an EAC.*

If the committee is defined by the by-laws, then its membership may be previously determined. List members here. List anticipated committee chair if known at time of charter. Document how members are nominated and come to serve on the committee.

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**Reports to:**

List specifically who the committee reports to.

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**Reporting method and frequency:**

Typically, most committees submit a written report for each board meeting. Please define specifically for this committee.

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**Resources required: Budget**

*Act 148, as amended, enables local governments to appropriate funds for the operation of EACs to cover administrative, clerical, printing and legal service costs. The amount of the appropriation is to be determined by the local governing body. All or part of any funds appropriated in a year may be expended, placed in a conservation fund or allowed to accumulate from year to year. Act 148 as amended, does not mandate that EACs have designated funding; therefore, EACs in Pennsylvania operate on budgets ranging from nothing to thousands of dollars. A governing body may want to consider a minimum budget of \$500 to cover the basic operating expenses that will enable a council to function effectively. Once the governing body has established budget parameters, it is advisable for an EAC to prepare an annual budget report for submission to the municipality. The chair and treasurer of the EAC can work together to prepare and submit the annual budget to the local governing body. The treasurer may also want to submit an expense and income report with the budget. To keep the EAC informed regarding the budget, the treasurer can report on the status of funds at each meeting.*

Are there budget impacts? If so, how much? Cash flow impacts? Are the funds budgeted?

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Is there any staff support required? Volunteer support? Physical assets or support needed?

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Other?

How will the EAC and the Governing Body communicate in the future?

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**\*\* Items listed in italics are descriptions taken directly from the EAC Handbook - <http://www.eacnetwork.org/pdf/EACHB.pdf>**

**\*\*Thank you to Jim Drager, CEO; The Drager Group for providing this charter planning template to assist with communications conversations between EAC's and their governing body.**