

**WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

**P. O. Box 1106 523 Egg Harbor Road
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(Approved at March 7, 2019 Meeting)

Minutes of February 7, 2019 Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Chair Vicky Binetti. Also attending tonight's meeting were Anne Hastings, Ann Culkin, Sean Longfellow, Leon Lakritz, Peter Garbowski, Chet Nawoyski, Jodi Smith, Lola Pellegrino, George Gerber, and guest Jonathan Fernandez, New Jersey Watershed Ambassador. The January 10, 2019 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Ann Culkin reported a balance of \$841.31 in our temporary budget. Vicky Binetti noted that a budget meeting will be held in the Municipal Building on April 4. The Environmental Commission has requested additional funds for 2019 so that the work on the trails can continue and to provide for signage.

Old Business

Workshop Meeting

There was no workshop meeting in January.

Sustainable Jersey

The Green Team Advisory Committee (GTAC) continues to work towards a silver certification in the Sustainable Jersey program. They are considering new tasks to undertake to achieve their goal. A suggestion to install electric charging stations in the Township is being investigated. Public Works is sponsoring a program to collect single-use plastic bags from residents to help keep them out of landfills and the recycling stream. The Township has enrolled in a program sponsored by Trex; if 500 pounds of bags are collected, the Township will be given a park bench made from recycled plastic bags. An outreach program is planned to re-educate residents on recycling. Vicky Binetti mentioned that the GTAC meets the first Monday of the month in the Mayor's office at 6:00 p.m. and all are invited to attend.

Earth Day/Arbor Day

A calendar prepared by Vicky Binetti showing our planned Earth Day/Arbor Day activities was distributed to members. She reviewed the events and lectures that the Commission and the Margaret E. Heggan Library will be hosting. Ann Culkin, Devin Walker and Leon Lakritz agreed to serve on the planning committee, and Leon Lakritz, along with Chet Nawoyski and Devin Walker, will coordinate stream sampling. Leon Lakritz announced that the community garden will officially open on April 14th. Vicky Binetti proposed other activities and asked members to consider including them on the agenda.

Clean Up Day

There was no report.

Bluebird and Monarch Butterfly Projects

Jim McCann will be growing the milkweed plants from seeds in the Township greenhouse. The goal of the Monarch Rescue project is to expand the Monarch butterfly population; the bulk of the milkweed plants will be distributed at Super Saturday to residents who wish to participate in the program. A portion of the plants will be transplanted to the community garden to improve pollination in the garden and improve the proliferation of the Monarchs.

Vicky Binetti announced that the bluebird houses ordered last year will be strategically placed in appropriate habitat on Township property this spring, with assistance from the New Jersey Bluebird Society. Chet Nawoyski suggested we expand the project by installing bat boxes at retention basins in the Township. Chet remarked that bats are beneficial to control the mosquito population.

Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate, and Release (TNVR) (Feral cats)

Sean Longfellow, Vice President of Council, reported that the first reading of the TNVR ordinance relating to feral cats will take place at an upcoming Council meeting, possibly February 27th.

Off Fossil Fuels (OFF) Act

Chet Nawoyski and Ann Culkin are coordinating efforts to have the Township Council support State legislation to replace fossil fuels by renewable energy sources by 2035. Vicky Binetti suggested drafting a resolution, modelled after one developed by Food & Water Watch, as a first step.

Atlantic City Electric

The Environmental Commission received and reviewed the application submitted by Atlantic City Electric to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to confirm a floodplain determination. The floodplain determination is a preliminary part of the utility's proposal to upgrade their substation on Hurffville-Grenloch Road. Vicky Binetti, on behalf of the Environmental Commission, submitted our comments in a letter to the DEP. She outlined our concerns relative to open space, endangered species, wetlands, etc. in the vicinity of the substation. She noted in that letter that the Environmental Commission does not object to the project itself but wishes to highlight and bring attention to the environmental and ecological sensitivity of nearby lands, waterways, and biological species.

Annual Report

The report is still a work in progress. Anne Hastings and Chet Nawoyski have photos of Clean Up Day and Stream Sampling, and they will share with Vicky Binetti to be included in the final submission.

New Business

Planning & Zoning

- Greentree Road/Shoppers Lane – Storage Capital Partners

Vicky Binetti reviewed this application and the potential for impact on wetlands. The project was approved in 2008, and the approval was extended several times in the intervening years. The application is now back before the Planning Board and is considered an amended major site plan. With the support of the Environmental Commission, Vicky Binetti will recommend that the applicant prepare an updated Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report since the current one is ten years old. She will also recommend a review of the storm water management system to assure it is still appropriate for the new site design. We will also recommend that the tree inventory and tree compensation plan be updated, and that the installation of sidewalks along No Name Street and Shoppers Lane be considered.

- Ganttown Equities

Vicky Binetti mentioned that the applicant plans to erect a second building on the site, and she has asked for copies of the plans. The matter will be coming before the Planning Board on February 19th.

Committee Reports

Open Space

Leon Lakritz reported that the Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) is looking to hire a state-approved forester to assist in the development of a community forestry plan. The Township was awarded a \$3000 Green Communities matching grant to fund the plan.

The OSAC will be sending letters this week to last year's participants in the Community Garden to determine whether they intend to return to gardening in the 2019 season. Applicants who apply before April 1 will be charged \$15; the fee increases to \$25 after April 1. There are 25 plots available for the public. The Committee decided not to expand the garden this year.

Council Report

Council Liaison Sean Longfellow had no further comments or topics to discuss other than those covered earlier in the meeting.

Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Submitted by:

/s/Dorothy Hunter

Dorothy Hunter, Secretary
Washington Township Environmental Commission