ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

P. O. Box 1106 523 Egg Harbor Road
Turnersville, NJ 08012

(856) 589-0520, Ext. 232

wtec@twp.washington.nj.us

(Approved at May 1, 2025 Meeting)

Minutes of April 3, 2025 Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Chair Vicky Binetti. Also attending in person were Leon Lakritz, Rich Bennett, Rick Eckert, Mark Phillips, Jodi Smith and guest Denise Brush; joining via Zoom were Anne Hastings and Chet Nawoyski. The minutes of our March 6, 2025 meeting were approved as presented.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Chet Nawoyski reported a balance of $1,156.25 in our temporary budget. Rich Bennett indicated that the final budget will be adopted by Township Council in May. Vicky Binetti discussed Earth Day-related expenses which include the balance due to Woodford Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge, incidental supplies for our tree seedling and milkweed and marigold giveaways, and for Super Saturday outreach in Washington Lake Park.

Old Business

Workshop Meeting

There was no workshop in March.

Sustainable Jersey

The Creative Team is planning their next art exhibit for the Park. The new theme is Heroes and Heroines. Submissions of artwork are due in April. The 5th annual Plein Air art

event will be held on May 31st at the Olde Stone House Village. The Township is waiting for notification of a grant award from the Board of Public Utilities to fund a community energy plan.

The Green Team was hoping to reschedule the childhood lead screening initiative for Super Saturday, but Vicky Binetti learned recently that Virtua is not able to provide a nurse on that day. Vicky said she will call the Gloucester County Health Department to see if they can provide the same service with their mobile unit.

ANJEC Grant/Poplar Trail

There was no new report.

Communications – Web Page, Facebook, Other

There was no new report.

Monarch Rescue

Vicky Binetti mentioned that the Monarch population in Mexico, where these butterflies normally migrate in the winter, has declined to 10 to 20% of what it was in the 1990's. The Fish & Wildlife Service proposed that Monarchs be listed as an endangered species; a final determination won't be made until at least December. The Environmental Commission is continuing their rescue efforts by growing and distributing milkweed plants to local residents to plant in their gardens. Adult Monarchs deposit their eggs only on milkweed plants.

Pollinator Garden

A spring clean up and weeding of the pollinator garden will take place by the end of March. The McGuigan's will be adding new plants to fill the empty spaces and to add color to the garden.

Blue Bird Buddies, Purple Martin Pals

The Margaret E. Heggan Library has agreed to have one or two Blue Bird nesting boxes installed on their property and participate in our program to help increase the Blue Bird population. We will also be refurbishing two nesting boxes in Grenloch Lake Park and in Winchester Farms.

Leon Lakritz reported that concrete was poured by Township Public Works staff to secure the base of the new Purple Martin house. Leon and Eric Feerst expect to finish the installation by end of March in time for the nesting season to begin. The Purple Martin house will be located next to the pollinator garden opposite the dog park. These birds are social so the location is ideal for these people-friendly birds.

Earth Month Activities

Vicky Binetti reviewed the activities that the Environmental Commission has scheduled for Earth Month. Among these, the Woodford Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge will hold their "Fur, Feathers, and Scales" event at the Library this year (rather than the Municipal Building). Shannon Hornibrook will present a lesson on the 3 R's (Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle) at the Library on April 22nd. Emily Reed from New Jersey Audubon will give a presentation on birding basics on April 7th , and Marie Hageman will lead a bird walk in Washington Lake Park on Saturday, April 26th. Our Milkweed and Marigold Giveaway is set for April 27th, and our Tree Seedling Giveaway will be on May 3rd. A complete agenda of events can be found on our Facebook page and on the Township's website. Vicky Binetti recognized Jim McCann for doing a great job growing milkweed and marigolds in the greenhouse.

Super Saturday Planning

Super Saturday is scheduled for May 10th, and the Environmental Commission will participate again this year. Vicky Binetti asked members to give some thought for new ideas for our display and messaging. She also said we have an inventory of environmental- themed giveaways for distribution to attendees at the event.

Washington Township Re-Leaf

. To celebrate Arbor Day and contribute to our Re-Leaf campaign, Columbia Bank has donated a flowering cherry tree which will be planted in Veteran's Park on April 24th at 11:00 a.m.

Tree Protection Ordinance Revision

Vicky Binetti did not have an update on the status of the Tree Protection Ordinance Revision. She believes it is being reviewed by the Township solicitor

New Business

Proposed Resolution for Township Council Re: Climate Superfund Act

Denise Brush came tonight to discuss the New Jersey Climate Superfund Act (A4696), a top priority for the State's environmental movement, which would empower the State to collect on damages caused by climate change from large fossil fuel corporations that do business in New Jersey. Denise and other advocates for the Climate Superfund Act are visiting local municipalities to raise awareness and encourage support to make this bill into law.

Committee Reports

Open Space Advisory Committee

Construction of the planned inclusive children's playground, to be built on the current site of the Community Garden, has been postponed. This delay will allow the Community Garden to remain in its location at least for one more season.

Council Report

There was no Council report.

Correspondence/Announcements

There were no new correspondence or announcements.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Submitted by:

Dorothy Hunter

Dorothy Hunter, Secretary
Washington Township Environmental Commission