ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

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(Approved at January 8, 2026 Meeting)

Minutes of December 4, 2025 Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Chair Vicky Binetti. Also attending in person were Leon Lakritz and Eric Feerst; attending remotely were Chet Nawoyski and Anne Hastings. The minutes of November 6, 2025 meeting were approved as corrected.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Chet Nawoyski reported that as of November 2, 2025 there is a balance of $2,907.32 in our budget; final expenditures for November were not yet available.

Old Business

Workshop Meeting

There was no workshop meeting in November; Vicky Binetti does not anticipate calling a meeting in December unless an issue arises requiring input from the Commission.

Sustainable Jersey

A brief Green Team meeting was held on December 1. There were several updates, including that the statewide Sustainable Jersey program will not be doing certification application reviews in 2026 but will instead devote the year to refrershing the program. The Township is awaiting the draft Community Energy Plan being prepared by Blue Sky Power. Frank Altamura and his staff have been compiling the Township's energy bills and use data for the Local Government Energy Audit

ANJEC Grant/Poplar Trail

There was no new report.

Communications – Web Page, Facebook, Other

Last month Leon Lakritz expressed a need for an aerial photo of the proposed new location of the community garden which he felt would be helpful in planning and preparing the site. A request posted on our Facebook page asked if anyone with a drone would volunteer to take the photo. We received several responses to our inquiry.

Monarch Rescue

Vicky Binetti had no update on the Monarch migration since last month's report. However, she shared an article from the New York Times which reported on a new tiny sensor that scientists are using to follow the Monarchs on their journey of thousands of miles to their winter colonies in Mexico. Cellular Tracking Technologies located in Cape May, New Jersey fabricates the transmitters.

Pollinator Garden

There was no new report.

Blue Bird Buddies, Purple Martin Pals

There is no new activity this time of the year with Bluebirds or Purple Martins. Eric Feerst checked out the new Purple Martin houses in Washington Lake Park, and everything is still intact and ready for their nesting season which begins in late March 2026.

Washington Township Releaf

An estimated 14 trees in Rotary Woods did not survive following their Spring 2025 planting and will be replaced, hopefully next week Replacement trees will also be planted at the pollinator garden and the library.

Tree Protection Ordinance Revision

The new ordinance was passed by Council in September and is now in effect

CarMax Auto Superstores, Inc. (Block 115.02, Lot 9.01, 16, and 16.01)

This project is not yet on the Planning Board's agenda. The application as submitted

did not include several environmental documents or an acceptable tree plan.

New Business

Activity Proposals for 2026

Vicky Binetti is asking members to recommend events and activities to add to our plans for 2026. Suggestions included participation in the 4th of July parade; a scavenger hunt in Washington Lake Park; and an educational program on solar energy. Vicky suggested a "citizen science" project called New Jersey Salt Watch. It was conceived by the Watershed Institute to monitor the effects of winter road salting on freshwater lakes and ponds. Leon Lakritz and Anne Hastings agreed to co-lead the project and consult with our Public Works Department to identify monitoring locations. Vicky Binetti said she will order the test kits to get started.

Nexus Watson Drive (Block 115, Lot 7; 301 Watson Drive – Preliminary Subdivision and Site Plan)

This proposed project was discussed briefly by Vicky Binetti. The large development would be located on Watson Drive and include 288 townhomes and 80 multi-family units. The applicant proposes to remove 4600 trees. No environmental documents have been submitted to date.

Committee Reports

Open Space Advisory Committee

There was no new report.

Council Report

There was no Council report.

Correspondence/Announcements

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 8, 2026. This is our reorganization meeting for the new year.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Submitted by:

Dorothy Hunter

Dorothy Hunter, Secretary
Washington Township Environmental Commission