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 March 6, 2025 Meeting)

Minutes of February 20, 2025 Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Chair Vicky Binetti. Also attending were Rich Bennett, Jodi Smith, Eric Feerst, Leon Lakritz and Shannon Hornibrook; attending remotely were Chet Nawoyski and Anne Hastings. The minutes of the January 20, 2025 reorganization meeting were approved as corrected.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Shannon Hornibrook reported a balance of $1,316.25 in our budget as of 2/20/25. Shannon informed the Commission that she will be resigning as Treasurer effective after our next meeting on March 6, 2025 because she is relocating to another area of New Jersey. Vicky Binetti asked for nominations to fill her Treasurer position, and Chet Nawoyski nominated himself to fill the vacancy. There were no other nominations, and Chet Nawoyski was unanimously elected to be the new Treasurer effective upon Shannon's departure in March. Vicky Binetti mentioned that Shannon Hornibrook's vacated Commissioner's position will need to be filled, and this will be determined by the Mayor and Council. Vicky asked if any member has a suggestion for a possible candidate, please let her know and she will pass it along.

Old Business

Workshop Meeting

We did not hold a workshop meeting in February. Vicky Binetti indicated that she may schedule one for March depending on need.

ANJEC Grant/Poplar Trail

There was no new report.

Communications – Web Page, Facebook, Other

Anne Hastings had no new report.

Pollinator Garden

There was no new report. No activity is planned until start up of the garden in April.

Bluebird Buddies, Purple Martin Pals

In March we plan to set up two new Bluebird nesting boxes on the Margaret E. Heggan Library property. Vicky Binetti mentioned that we need additional volunteers to monitor the boxes, specifically at Grenloch Lake, Winchester Farms, and at the Library.

Eric Feerst, who is in charge of the new Purple Martin project, will select the location and erect the Purple Martin birdhouse in Washington Lake Park in March before the beginning of their nesting season.

Earth Month Planning

Some of the activities planned for Earth Month include a Poetry Walk sponsored by the Library; a presentation by the New Jersey Audubon Society; and a bird walk in Washington Lake Park on Saturday, April 26th , led by Marie Hageman from the Gloucester County Nature Club. The Environmental Commission will have an environmental display during the month of April in the Library and will also sponsor our traditional milkweed and marigold and tree seedling giveaway. Also at the Library, Shannon Hornibrook will provide the "3 R's," an educational lesson on Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle appropriate for grades K through 5. Several other activities are under consideration.

Arbor Day will be celebrated on April 25th this year. Columbia Bank informed Vicky Binetti that they will help commemorate the date by donating and planting a tree.

Super Saturday

The Commission will be participating in Super Saturday on May 10, 2025. We will have a table with information on various environmental issues and themed giveaways for children.

Washington Township Re-Leaf

A representative of Bartlett Tree Services contacted Vicky Binetti to discuss their interest to sponsor a tree giveaway on Super Saturday. Vicky ~~Binetti~~ also discussed the Re-Leaf campaign we are conducting, and Bartlett may provide assistance in designing a tree plan for the Thorn property, a site where the Washington Township Rotary Club anticipates doing a large planting. They may also be able to help with watering trees on this site.

Tree Protection Ordinance Revision

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is requiring every municipality to have a tree protection and removal and replacement ordinance as part of their storm water permit. Our current tree ordinance does not fully meet the DEP criteria. The State mandates that all properties, both commercial and residential, are subject to the tree removal and replacement requirements.

D.R. Horton, Inc., NJ (Block 16, Lots 4,6,7)

On behalf of the Commission, Vicky Binetti sent a letter to the Planning Board which covered the concerns discussed at our January meeting: the Applicant did not provide required environmental documents, Applicant's obligation for tree compensation is underestimated, and their assessment of open space is overstated. Reference was made to EV parking spaces, but they were not shown on the plans.

New Business

SUP II Mill Pond Village (Block 194.12, Lot 7)

This is a major site plan for a Chase Bank with a drive-thru lane. Vicky Binetti reviewed the plans and stated that their tree plan is not well documented.

Tower Commons Associates, L (Block 8, Lot 105)

This project is a major site plan and proposes a new self-storage facility on Egg Harbor Road. There are no trees on the property. They will be increasing their impervious surface so applicant will need to revise their storm water management plan.

Committee Reports

Open Space Advisory Committee

Leon Lakritz informed the Commission that the tree inventory, which was completed last year by Davey Resource Group, can be found on the Township website, under Open Space Advisory Committee. The report presents its key findings regarding total inventory, condition of the trees, the most common species, maintenance recommendations, pest susceptibility, and environmental impact.

Leon Lakritz said letters will be going out to potential gardeners next week informing them that the Community Garden may be relocated this year. The new inclusive playground may be constructed at the Garden's current location.

Council Report

Rich Bennett mentioned that Restaurant Week in Washington Township is being planned again this year; the date has not been announced. A suggestion was made to encourage diners to bring their own doggie bags to transport leftovers home instead of using styrofoam or other similar containers which contribute to waste.

Announcements

Chet Nawoyski announced that ANJEC is sponsoring a free Zoom seminar on February 27, 2025 from noon to 1:00 p.m. which will focus on how you can take action to eliminate toxic plastic waste.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:19 p.m.

Submitted by:

/s/Dorothy Hunter

Dorothy Hunter, Secretary
Washington Township Environmental Commission