ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

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(Approved at February 20, 2025 Meeting)

Minutes of January 16, 2025 Reorganization Meeting

The reorganization meeting of the Washington Township Environmental Commission was called to order by Secretary Dorothy Hunter. Present tonight were Vicky Binetti, Leon Lakritz, Shannon Hornibrook, Eric Feerst, Rick Eckert, Jodi Smith and Rich Bennett; attending remotely were Anne Hastings and Chet Nawoyski. The first order of business was to open nominations for Chair of the Environmental Commission for 2025. On a motion made by Chet Nawoyski, seconded by Eric Feerst, Vicky Binetti was nominated for the position of Chair. With no other nominations, the vote was unanimous to elect Vicky Binetti Chair of the Environmental Commission for 2025.

Chair Vicky Binetti then asked for nominations for Vice Chair. Anne Hastings and Chet Nawoyski were nominated for this position. There were no other nominations. A vote was taken, and Anne Hastings was unanimously voted to serve as Vice Chair for 2025. For the position of Treasurer, Shannon Hornibrook was nominated by Leon Lakritz. The nomination was seconded by Anne Hastings. No other nominations for Treasurer were presented, and Shannon Hornibrook was unanimously voted Treasurer. (Shannon noted that she is moving in the near future but will serve as Treasurer until that happens). With the concurrence of the Commissioners, Vicky Binetti appointed Dorothy Hunter to serve as Secretary of the Environmental Commission for 2025.

Leon Lakritz had a change to the minutes of the December 5, 2024 meeting. At our last meeting, it was noted that three Sugar Maple and three Red Maple trees would be planted around the perimeter of the Library. Subsequently, the number of Red Maples was reduced

from three to two that were actually planted. After making this change, the minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Shannon Hornibrook reported that the final balance in our budget for 2024 was $95.61 after payments were made for ANJEC dues, Oriental Trading Company for outreach giveaways, and 4th quarter secretarial services.

Old Business

Workshop Meeting

There was no workshop meeting in December, but one may be called in February to discuss events for Earth Day. Vicky Binetti indicated that she will not be present at our regular February meeting and asked Anne Hastings to preside in her absence.

Sustainable Jersey

The Green Team had a meeting on Monday, January 13, to begin planning for 2025. Mayor Anthony Dellapia was unable to attend but indicated that he would look forward to working on the Township energy audit, solar installations, and electric charging stations. Vicky mentioned that the Green Team, along with the Rotary, will sponsor another childhood lead screening event at Super Saturday; the screening will be administered by Virtua Pediatric Mobile Services. The Green Team will also continue to promote the Re-Leaf Campaign to plant trees and expand the tree canopy in Washington Township.

Leon Lakritz followed up on a concern raised by Chet Nawoyski that lights remain lit at night for long periods of time, specifically on the tennis courts. Upon speaking with a Township official, Leon ascertained that timers were previously used to control the lighting but were discontinued because the timers were unable to be reset once the programmed time expired.

ANJEC Grant/Poplar Trail

There was no new progress to report

Communications – Web Page, Facebook, etc.

Vicky Binetti reported that the incoming administration is anxious to enhance the Township's social media outlets and expand our ability to communicate to the public in 2025.

Anne Hastings had no report on our Facebook page. Vicky Binetti asked Anne to add the Library's Poetry Walk event to our Facebook page as they are currently soliciting poems for display near the Ranger's Station in Washington Lake Park.

Pollinator Garden

There was no new report this month.

Blue Bird Buddies, Purple Martin Pals

The Margaret E. Heggan Library has agreed to have a Blue Bird nesting box installed on their property.

Under the guidance of Eric Feerst, the new Purple Martin houses will be installed in a suitable location in time for their nesting season. This project was adopted last year to help the survival of the Purple Martin species.

Library Collaboration

Vicky Binetti and Shannon Hornibrook met with Library representatives to discuss activities for Earth Month. The Library will again partner with the Environmental Commission to have the Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge conduct a show entitled "Fur, Feathers, and Scales" on April 6, 2025. The Library also agreed to have a community book read and tentatively have selected a book in line with this year's bird theme, "The Backyard Bird Chronicles" by Amy Tan. On April 23rd, a beekeeper will give a talk and a demonstration on the life of bees and their importance in the environment.

Earth Month Planning

Vicky Binetti distributed copies of a preliminary calendar of activities for Earth Month. In addition to those events mentioned above, we will continue to have our tree giveaway, as well as the milkweed and marigold giveaway. Vicky also said we might consider something on Monarchs since the Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed to add them to the endangered species list. Shannon Hornibrook plans to present an educational talk at the Library on recycling with a special focus on reducing waste.

Washington Township Re-Leaf

To date, eight mature trees have been planted in the Township to kick off our Re-Leaf campaign. A large planting, to be supported by the Washington Township Rotary Club, is on the horizon for the Thorn tract, pending development of a landscape plan and location of the well on the property, to provide water needed for irrigation.

New Business

Autotech Collision Service (Block 15, Lot 14.01) site plan

Applicant is expanding storage and work space. There are no trees on site, and Vicky Binetti said they are not in a wellhead protection area.

Rt. 42 Citgo (Block 111,09, Lot 601) Site plan/environmental documents

Vicky Binetti gave a brief history of this project which was previously reviewed by this Commission. There was considerable ground water contamination in 2001. Applicant did some remediation. There were monitoring wells on and extending beyond the property. They have now submitted sampling data to the Township. They requested an extension from NJDEP to complete monitoring and a delineation of the current ground water contamination plume.

D.R. Horton, Inc., NJ (Block 16, Lots 4,6 and 7) – Major subdivision, major site plan

This project is composed of 294 townhouses located in the Delsea Drive Redevelopment Zone. The project will be developed on three lots with access from both Delsea Drive and Salina Road. Vicky mentioned that they have apparently allowed for electric vehicle charging stalls. They have not submitted any environmental documents. The project will be heard by the Planning Board in February. There are concerns with their tree plan.

Committee Reports

Open Space Advisory Committee

Leon Lakritz informed the Commission that the new inclusive playground planned for Washington Lake Park will be built where the community garden is now situated. The Township offered three alternate locations to consider, but Leon indicated that none of the suggestions were ideal for the garden. Leon is currently looking for other sites that would be more suitable. He also informed us that the beavers are still felling trees in the area of Cedar Pond.

Council Report

There was no new report.

Correspondence/Announcements

There were no correspondence or announcements.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Submitted by:

/s/Dorothy Hunter

Dorothy Hunter, Secretary
Washington Township Environmental Commission