T
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

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(Approved at April 2,2026 Meeting)

Minutes of March 5, 2026 Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Chair Vicky Binetti. Attending in person were Leon Lakritz, Jodi Smith, Rick Eckert, Eric Feerst, Lisa Bertolini and guest Valentina Moncayo Orbe; joining remotely were Anne Hastings and Chet Nawoyski. The minutes of the February 5, 2026 meeting were approved as presented.

Treasurer's Report

There was no report. The new budget for 2026 will not be finalized until June.

Old Business

Workshop Meeting

There was no workshop meeting in February. Vicky Binetti indicated that she does not plan to call one in March since there are no site plans coming before the Planning or Zoning Boards that would require our review.

Sustainable Jersey

A draft of the Community Energy Plan (CEP) was received recently by the Township and is under review. The purpose of the CEP is to identify a number of areas that would benefit the Township and its residents to save energy and money. An opportunity for public input will be scheduled.

ANJEC Grant/Poplar Trail

There was no progress report.

Communications – Web Page, Facebook, Other

To promote the many activities and programs sponsored by the Environmental Commission, the Township has offered to post information on the Township website to advertise and attract more interest. Vicky Binetti asked members to submit articles or any environmental videos they may have for this purpose.

Earth Month 2026 Planning

Vicky Binetti shared the current calendar of events planned for Earth Month, ranging from a live animal presentation by Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge, ~~a~~ tree seedling and plant giveaways, and a bird walk, etc.

Potential coordination with Margaret E. Heggan Library regarding Sustainability

The Commission will support the Library in developing any sustainability initiatives.

New Jersey Salt Watch

Leon Lakritz, Anne Hastings and Eric Feerst will begin sampling in a pilot program to measure road salt in three locations (streams, lakes or ponds) in Washington Township. Using test kits, provided by the Watershed Institute, the chloride content will be measured in each body of water. The testing must be completed by the end of April.

Monarch Rescue

Lisa Bertolini is the new chair of our Monarch Rescue program. We are growing milkweed, the main source of nutrition for Monarchs, in the Township greenhouse which will be distributed on April 26 to those residents wishing to participate in this activity.

Pollinator Garden

There was no report until after spring arrives when the garden will be cleaned up and ready for the new season.

Blue Bird Buddies, Purple Martin Pals

We are anxiously awaiting the return of Blue Birds and Purple Martins to begin their nesting season at the end of March/beginning of April. Vicky Binetti announced that we have a few new volunteers to monitor the Blue Bird nesting boxes this year, at the Library (Kevin Basile) and at the Thorn Tract (David and Patti Laws). Vicky Binetti and Marie

Hageman met with the new monitors last Sunday, March 1st, for instruction on how to care for the boxes.

Washington Re-Leaf

To promote our Re-Leaf program, the Commission will be hosting a tree seedling giveaway on May 2, 2026 in Washington Lake Park. Residents wishing to participate in the program can pick up tree seedings in Parking Lot J on that date. The Commission agreed that Vicky and Leon will select the species and numbers of trees to purchase from the NJ Forest Service.

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

The project, which will include construction of 368 residential units, was approved by the Planning Board.

Data Centers

Vicky Binetti and Rick Eckert will meet with Township officials on March 31 to discuss concerns related to the Data Centers that are coming to neighboring communities in South Jersey and throughout the country. Rick ~~Eckert~~ introduced the topic to the Environmental Commission last month and gave an overview of the impact of large data centers on communities in regards to energy and water consumption. He has obtained sample ordinances from other municipalities that could be used to model one for Washington Township so we could address these projects through the Zoning code.

New Business

Two new development applications were briefly discussed: Smyle, LLC (site plan for dental offices at Block 51.01, Lot 1.02,Parke Place Boulevard at Delsea Drive) and Toxaway Automotive Turnersville, LLC (site plan for national oil change business franchise at Block 196.01, Lot 2.02; 5500 Route 42). There are no significant environmental concerns with either of the site plans.

Committee Reports

Open Space Advisory Committee

The Community Garden will be opening soon for the season. The location has been moved to a site behind the greenhouse near Greentree Road.

Council Report

There was no Council report.

Correspondence

There was no correspondence

Announcements

Vicky Binetti announced that The Gloucester County Nature Club will be hosting their annual Bird Quest event on May 2, 2026.

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

Submitted by:

/s/*Dorothy Hunter*

Dorothy Hunter, Secretary
Washington Township Environmental Commission