

**WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP
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 September 3, 2020 Meeting)

Minutes of August 6, 2020 Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Vicky Binetti. Attending in person were Vicky Binetti, Jodi Smith and Leon Lakritz; joining via Zoom were Anne Hastings, Chet Nawoyski, and Ann Culkin. The minutes for our July 2, 2020 meeting were approved as amended.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Ann Culkin had no report.

Old Business

Workshop

We did not have a workshop meeting in July. Vicky Binetti indicated we will probably not hold one in August.

Sustainable Jersey

There is a possibility that Washington Township will attain a silver certification before year's end. Vicky Binetti noted that there are items that need some work; specifically we have to document that produce from the community garden was donated to Mother's s Cupboard, the Township food bank. There are also some modifications needed on the Township website. The Community Forestry Management Plan is an essential part of our application for a Silver certification this year.

Vicky Binetti shared with the Commission a preview of the pictures and photos that will be part of the art gallery in the Park. The Creative Team, a subcommittee of the Green Team, has been working on this project, "Painting the Town", in order to enhance awareness and appreciation of the arts in Washington Township. Artists were invited to submit entries that illustrate some aspect of the natural world, to mark the 50th anniversary of the first Earth Day. The opening of the exhibit is scheduled for August 16th (rain date August 23).

Bluebird Project

Vicky Binetti announced that 55 to 60 Bluebirds were fledged this year, noting that 33 were from Washington Lake Park alone. The New Jersey Bluebird Society did not band as many birds in the Township as previously. There was a significant growth in the Bluebird population this year, and the persons who perform the banding have been extremely busy.

Proposed Ordinance – Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate and Release (TNV&R)

Anne Hastings continues her work on this project. She currently is collecting data and information on adoption, euthanasia and other means of disposition of cats at the County shelter so we can present a factually supported position to Council on the importance and value of developing a TNV&R program in the Township.

ANJEC Grant

Plaques embossed with QR (Quick Response) codes containing information about trees and plants of interest are in the process of being installed by park rangers along the Poplar Trail. The plaques are screwed on to a Trex board and then secured onto 4 x 4 posts.

Recycle & Reuse Bag Campaign

After discussion the Environmental Commission opted to delay this activity until next year because of the pandemic. Leon Lakritz shared information that many major corporations have made a commitment that, by 2025, plastic packaging should be recyclable or reusable.

Atlantic City Electric (ACE) Substation

The applicant was before the Zoning Board on July 13th. The length of the agenda that night, as well as the lengthy presentations by Atlantic City Electric and their experts, however, made it necessary for the Board to continue the hearing until their next meeting on August 10th. They also did not reach the public comment stage before adjournment. Vicky Binetti mentioned that nearby residents have retained an attorney.

WTEC Activities for 2020

Vicky Binetti reviewed the list of activities we had planned for 2020 and discussed the feasibility of going forward in view of the pandemic restrictions. Vicky noted that the Margaret E. Heggan Library is still closed to the public, and that would eliminate any plans to hold a film or lecture series at that location. The consensus of the Environmental Commission is to postpone activities for the foreseeable

future. Ann Culkin mentioned that Duffield's may be sponsoring an event in the fall subject to pandemic restrictions, and if they do, Duffield's would like the Environmental Commission to participate.

Clean Up Day

Members discussed the feasibility of holding the annual Clean Up Day this year, in the face of restrictions on team size and requirements for social distancing. Although we may reconsider if circumstances change significantly, members agreed that it would be prudent to skip the community-wide effort (and barbecue for volunteers) this year. Leon Lakritz will contact the Gloucester County Improvement Authority to determine whether they will be offering Clean Communities grants this year. If so, Leon suggested we consider a scaled down-version, with groups limited to a maximum of 10 volunteers to take advantage of the \$500 grant.

Annual Report

Vicky Binetti is still collecting information and pictures to include in the report which she hopes to finalize shortly.

New Business

Planning & Zoning Boards

Zoning Board: Vicky Binetti advised that there is a new application, presented by Y & A Realty of NJ, LLC, proposed for 120 & 124 Chapel Heights Road. Applicant is seeking a use variance to build a bank and a pharmacy, in addition to 80 residential units. The variance request was scheduled to be heard before the Zoning Board last Monday, August 3, but was postponed because of the lengthy meeting agenda. If the variance is granted, the Environmental Commission will review the site plan.

She also indicated that there is a second project involving a substantial residential development, proposed by M & T (who previously built Children of America and several other commercial properties). The project is in the planning process.

Committee Reports

Open Space

Leon Lakritz recently spoke to Council Liaison, Sean Longfellow, to discuss possible future purchases of properties under the Township Open Space Program. The Open Space Committee is currently awaiting the review of the Community Forestry Management Plan which was submitted in April to the State Forest Service.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Submitted by:

/s/Dorothy Hunter

Dorothy Hunter, Secretary
Washington Township Environmental Commission

