

**WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

**P. O. Box 1106 523 Egg Harbor Road
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(Approved at July 11, 2019 Meeting)

Minutes of June 6, 2019 Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Chair Vicky Binetti. Also attending tonight's meeting were Ann Culkin, Leon Lakritz, Mark Phillips, Sean Longfellow, Lola Pellegrino, and Peter Garbowski.

Treasurer's Report

Ann Culkin, Treasurer, had no report.

Old Business

Workshop Meeting

There was no workshop meeting in May.

Sustainable Washington Township

Vicky Binetti announced that the Green Team Advisory Committee has begun the process of submitting documentation toward achieving the silver level certification by the Sustainable Jersey Program.

A program to recognize local "green" businesses has been initiated by the Township which will earn us qualifying points towards this next level of achievement. The Creative Team, a subcommittee of

the Green Team, is also working on developing and promoting the arts and creative culture. The Team has begun to implement a "Painting the Town" project. Since Washington Township does not have a town center, we will utilize our parks, public buildings, schools and businesses to showcase the works of local artists. A mobile art gallery is one of several concepts that will be explored. The Township was awarded a \$5,000 grant from the South Jersey Cultural Alliance towards our endeavors, and we will be featured in the League of Municipalities publication in October.

Earth Day/Arbor Day

A successful stream sampling as part of our Earth Day/Arbor Day activities was held in April. Leon Lakritz reported that 30 fifth grade students and 4 high school students participated in the annual event. The Environmental Commission also had a display at Duffield's Down to Earth Food Truck festival on April 27th. Ann Culkin reported that many people visited our tables and displays. The children were given environmentally-themed giveaways, and the painted rain barrels were also showcased.

Clean Up Day

Clean Up Day is scheduled for October 12. Anne Hastings and Ann Culkin will chair the event and will begin the outreach to the various organizations who participate annually. Leon Lakritz suggested we consider other activities on that day as the number of sites to clean is diminishing in recent years.

Monarch Butterfly/Bluebird Projects

Vicky Binetti reported that we have had a successful year to date with growing the Bluebird population in Washington Township with 20 fledglings found in the Bluebird boxes we placed in our open space parcels around town and in the Park. The Blue Bird Society will band the baby birds so we can identify them as being from Washington Township if found in the future.

Milkweed has been planted in the Community Garden, and a few of the butterflies have been sighted there.

Proposed Ordinance: Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate and Release (TNVR) (Feral Cats)

Vicky Binetti indicated that a resolution on Companion Animal Management should be done as a precursor to a TNVR ordinance; the resolution would also qualify for points in the Sustainable Jersey program.

Proposed Ordinance: Support OFF (Off Fossil Fuels) Act

Ann Culkin had no report. Vicky Binetti suggested we proceed with a draft resolution to get things started.

Annual Report

Vicky Binetti finished the draft annual report and sent electronic copies to Environmental Commission members. She asked that, if anyone has additional comments or information, to get them to her ASAP so it can be included before the document is forwarded to the Mayor and Council.

ANJEC Grant

Vicky Binetti announced that we received a \$1,500 grant from ANJEC. The funds will be used for signage on the Poplar Trail and for educational material. Leon Lakritz asked if the Poplar Trail information on plants and animals could be uploaded to the Township website, and Council Liaison Sean Longfellow said he will look into getting this done. Leon also mentioned that it would be nice to have one large sign at the entrance and several smaller signs to identify the location of the Poplar Trail.

Environmental Commissioner's Award

Discussions are still ongoing to decide upon a deserving recipient. It was suggested that the presentation of the award take place at the October Clean Up Day ceremonies in the Park.

New Business

Planning & Zoning Boards

- Zoning Board – Storage Capital Partners (storage facility), aka Greentree Self-Storage (Block 195, Lots 15 & 19.01)

Seven storage buildings (one including an office) will be erected on the site. Of concern to the Environmental Commission is the number of trees on this heavily wooded property that will be removed. This application is not a new one and was previously submitted many years ago and approved in 2008. The last tree removal and planting report submitted by the applicant is more than ten years old and will need to be updated. After further discussion, the Environmental Commission proposed sending a comment letter to the Zoning Board. Specifically, we will ask for an updated Environmental Assessment, a storm water management plan, and an updated tree removal and planting report. Vicky Binetti, on a motion made by Leon Lakritz and seconded by Ann Culkin, will compose the letter. The Commission also has questions regarding the underground storm water basins, and Vicky will use this opportunity to address those issues.

Environmental Resource Inventory

Vicky Binetti reminded the Commission that we have an obligation to review the Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI) periodically and update it, as appropriate, at least every ten years. She noted that we did develop an updated ERI two years ago, but if anyone can think of anything that needs to be reexamined or added, please let her know before our next meeting in July.

Humanities to Go

The Margaret E. Heggan Library asked if the Environmental Commission would be interested in sponsoring a Humanities to Go lecture (a program of the New Jersey Council for the Humanities). The cost to the Environmental Commission would be \$50, and the deadline to apply is July 1, 2019. The lecture would be open to the public. Vicky Binetti reviewed a list of potential topics we could select, and the Commission decided on one called "Cancer Alley or The Garden State." A motion was made by

Ann Culkin to spend \$50 to sponsor this lecture. Leon Lakritz seconded the motion, and with all in favor, the motion was approved.

Committee Reports

Open Space

Leon Lakritz said that the Open Space Committee has begun work on developing a Community Forestry Plan, with assistance from a Green Communities grant. In addition, the Committee is collaborating with the Environmental Commission on a project to improve the signage on the Poplar Trail under the recently awarded ANJEC grant.

Additionally, Leon mentioned that the Committee continues to seek the acquisition of several properties as open space.

The Community Garden plots have all been spoken for except one.

Council Report

There was no report.

Correspondence

There was no correspondence to be reviewed by the Commission.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Submitted by:

/s/Dorothy Hunter

Dorothy Hunter, Secretary
Washington Township Environmental Commission

