

**WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

**P. O. Box 1106 523 Egg Harbor Road
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(Approved at November 5, 2020 Meeting)

Minutes of October 1, 2020 Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Chair Vicky Binetti. Also attending in person was Ann Culkin. Attending via Zoom were Chet Nawoyski, Leon Lakritz, and Peter Garbowski. The minutes of the September 3, 2020 meeting were approved as presented.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Ann Culkin reported a balance of \$3,092.15. Vicky Binetti mentioned that a check for \$100 was sent to ANJEC to cover registration for all members to attend the annual ANJEC Environmental Congress in October. The Congress will be a virtual event this year and will be presented as a series of on-line webinars on Thursdays and Fridays throughout the month. ANJEC will provide links to join the sessions remotely for those wishing to attend.

Old Business

Workshop Meeting

There was no workshop meeting in September.

Sustainable Jersey

The paperwork to apply for a silver certification was submitted to the Sustainable Jersey program in September, and we are waiting to hear if we qualify for the next level. Vicky Binetti said we have until November 22nd if we need to make any changes or additions to the application. The Green

Team Advisory Committee has not taken on any new projects to date. Their next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 5th, and the committee will discuss future project plans. Vicky also mentioned the Tri County Sustainability Alliance and the work they do to encourage collaboration among green teams and environmental commissions in their communities. The group is made up of Environmental Commission Green Team members from Gloucester, Camden and Burlington Counties. The group has received a few small grants to provide programs for the three-county area.

Bluebird Project

Vicky Binetti reported the final count of 62 bluebirds fledged as part of our project to increase their population. Forty-three of the bluebirds were from the five nesting boxes in Washington Lake Park. She mentioned that on the whole it was a very productive year for the bluebirds, although there were problems at some boxes with predation and competition with other bird species. The cold spring weather also seemed to have limited early brood success.

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

There was no report in Anne Hastings' absence. Vicky Binetti mentioned that Anne is in the process of gathering more information and statistics to present to Washington Township Council members.

Recycling/Reusable Bag Campaign

The Environmental Commission will continue to encourage recycling in the community, but Vicky Binetti said our plans to distribute reusable shopping totes will remain on hold for now, as stores and many shoppers prefer use of plastic bags during the pandemic.

ANJEC Grant

Work is continuing on selecting locations for plant markers on the Poplar Trail, and on developing the content of educational signage.

Atlantic City Electric Substation Upgrade

The Zoning Board hearing on the Atlantic City Electric (ACE) substation expansion project variance request was held on September 14. The Board granted the use variance requested by ACE, conditioned upon the construction of a façade around the perimeter of the substation which will enhance its appearance and blend into the existing landscape and community. A hearing on the revised site plan has not yet been scheduled.

Earth Day

A grant from the American Library Association was awarded to the Margaret E. Heggan Library in the amount of \$500, for a project on climate change, to be undertaken in partnership with the Environmental Commission. Additionally, the Library Association will make additional educational resources available, such as films. As part of the project, Leon Lakritz suggested we establish a weather station outside of the library for the purpose of recording weather data. The data can then be compared with historic records for factors such as temperature and precipitation. It would not be capable of weather forecasting. Chet Nawoyski suggested we purchase additional consoles so that the

information could be viewed remotely as well on site at the library. Vicky Binetti will approach the Rotary Club to see if they may be interested in participating in this project.

Annual Report

Vicky Binetti is still working on our annual report which will be sent to Mayor and Council and highlight the activities of the Environmental Commission during 2019.

New Business

Planning & Zoning Boards

Vicky Binetti brought the Commission up to date on the following projects:

Zoning Board –

Ingerman Development Company (Birchwood) (Block 113, Lots 23-25). This project proposed construction of affordable senior housing. The Zoning Board voted not to grant a variance to allow a residential use in a highway commercial zone.

M & T at Blackwood (located across from Knob Hill Apts.) (Block 5, Lots 1 and 1.01) This is a large residential and retail project. A hearing has not yet been scheduled.

2020 WTEC Budget

Vicky Binetti noted that we would not be utilizing all of our budgeted funds since we had expected Earth Day expenses (because of canceled activities owing to the pandemic). Vicky suggested that we could use some of our funds to purchase a weather station as part of our joint project with the Library on climate change. Ann Culkin made a motion, seconded by Chet Nawoyski, to purchase a weather station for \$300 to \$600, including monitoring capabilities and any necessary ancillary equipment. The motion was unanimously approved. Vicky suggested we also consider purchasing an outdoor hydration station (to fill water bottles) in the Park. She will check with Parks and Recreation managers to see if they would consider cost-sharing on the hydration station.

Committee Reports

Open Space Advisory Committee

Leon Lakritz announced that the revised Community Forestry Management Plan was signed by Mayor Gattinelli in September and submitted to the New Jersey Forestry Program for review.

Leon also mentioned that negotiations are continuing on the purchase of the Stoyko property.

Correspondence

There was no correspondence to discuss.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Submitted by:

/s/Dorothy Hunter

Dorothy Hunter, Secretary
Washington Township Environmental Commission