

## January 25, 2021 Environmental Commission Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: Doherty, M. Duerr, McCarthy, Stippick  
MEMBERS ABSENT: Brandt, Mounier  
RESIGNED MEMBER: Cucunato  
ALTERNATES PRESENT: Cavone  
ALTERNATES ABSENT: Marsh  
ASSOCIATES PRESENT: R. Duerr  
LIAISONS ABSENT: Doyle, Flaim  
GUESTS: E. Duerr, B. Halpern, Al Wheeler

The January 25, 2021 meeting of the Township of Franklin Environmental Commission was called to order by Ms. McCarthy at 7:32 pm for a virtual meeting on ZOOM.

### **I. Introductions, New members. Associate members.**

Those present introduced themselves. Although absent this evening, Ms. Crystal Marsh has been appointed as an Alternate. There was a discussion of the honorary position of “Associate Members” and “Consulting Members” of the Environmental Commission. Upon a motion by Ms. McCarthy, seconded by Ms. Duerr, Al Wheeler, and Evan Duerr were proposed as Associate Members and Barbara Halpern was proposed as a Consulting Member. The motion was approved upon a vote of three, with one abstention.

A 7<sup>th</sup> Commissioner needs to be appointed in place of Melanie Cucunato who has resigned. Upon a motion by Ms. McCarthy, seconded by Mr. Stippick, it was recommended that Evan Duerr be appointed as a Commissioner of the EC. The motion was approved upon a vote of three, with one abstention. Mr. Stippick will send a memo to Township Committee with this recommendation.

### **II. Elections**

Upon a motion by Ms. McCarthy, seconded by Ms. Duerr, Mr. Jon Stippick was nominated to be the Chairman of the Environmental Commission for 2021. The motion was approved upon a vote of three with one abstention. Mr. Stippick then chaired the meeting.

Upon a motion by Mr. Stippick, seconded by Ms. Duerr, Ms. Suzanne McCarthy was nominated to be the Vice-Chair of the EC for 2021. The motion was approved upon a vote of three with one abstention.

### **III. Minutes**

Although there was a quorum present for the meeting, it was not clear that the December 28, 2020 minutes could be approved because only two members were present who were also present at the December meeting. Approval was postponed until the February meeting to allow time to investigate this.

### **IV. Emergency Response and Management Report**

There was no Emergency Management report.

### **V. Guests:** There were no guest comments.

### **VI. Zoning and Planning Board Applications:**

There were no applications to review.

### **VII. Old Business**

**A. Piney Hollow:** Ms. Halpern reported that she spoke to the CME engineer about the project. He is still working on doing an alternative plan for a trail bypass and has not yet submitted that to the Pinelands Commission for approval. She also reported that the township intends for the required cleanups to be

done by the contractor for the project. A discussion ensued and Commissioners agreed that it would be much less costly if Public Works did the cleanups and that this should be recommended.

There was a further discussion of the cleanup site adjacent to the farm property on the southwest end of Piney Hollow. Mr. Cavone stated that he did not see the trash that had been there and thought it may have been cleaned up. Mr. Stippick said he would check on this as it may be obscured by vegetation.

**B. Malaga Lake Park:**

1. A cleanup at the Park was conducted on Martin Luther King Day by the Franklin Township Unity Advisory group. Ms. Halpern reported that it was one of the best cleanups she has seen. Even broken glass that had migrated onto the end of the trail was raked off.
2. It was agreed that signs are needed that say “Broken Glass Ahead” in two spots near the end of the trail so that walkers don’t go beyond that point. It’s especially a problem for dogs that are with walkers. The amount of broken glass beyond the trail is massive and would be very difficult to clean up.
3. There are now six broken posts along the nature trail due to rotting wood. It was agreed that the wooden posts should be replaced with metal ones. Mr. Stippick will ask Phil Russo if he would help with replacing those. Mr. Russo has volunteered to do some improvements to the trail in the early spring.
4. It was proposed that a trail map be installed at the start of the trail that could be used with a phone. Although a map itself won’t include all the information that is on the paper Trail Guide, which has more detail at each post about what is in front of the walker, it is possible that a QR code could be added that would link to a website with that information. Ms. McCarthy will check on this, which has been done for the trail at the Tall Pines Nature Reserve in Mantua/Deptford. She will contact Rich Dilks, head of the Friends of Tall Pines, and FTP member Don Evans, who has created the Tall Pines website trail map and guide.

**C. Other:** Ms. McCarthy reported that she has asked the South Jersey Land & Water Trust (on whose board she sits) to investigate the possibility of preserving the large, wooded Schipani property and they are quite willing to do so. The Environmental Commission had approved pursuit of this land preservation project back in 2020. Mr. Schipani was interested in preservation a few years ago but had a very high price in mind. He may be willing to consider a more realistic evaluation at this time.

**VIII. New Business:**

**A. ANJEC (Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions) membership: T**

The Franklin Township Environmental Commission has belonged to ANJEC for over 20 years. ANJEC provides EC trainings, newsletters and quarterly reports, an annual conference, a resource library, sample articles, ordinances, and plans, and speakers when needed. It also has excellent publications that are the best explanations of issues and laws about environmental matters.

It was agreed that the membership should be renewed with coverage for the seven Commissioners, two Alternates, and two Township liaisons. The cost is \$375. plus \$25 for each additional person beyond seven. Ms. Halpern has the ANJEC invoice and will forward it to Ms. McCarthy.

**B. 2020 EC Annual Report:**

Ms. McCarthy reported that she has drafted a report for 2020 and will send it to 2020 EC members for review/additions. It will then be submitted to Township Committee and to the Planning and Zoning Boards.

**C. 2021 Projects:**

1. Various projects were discussed. The bioblitz at Piney Hollow has started. A bioblitz is a competition in which participants catalogue the natural resources of an area (plants and animals) using the iNaturalist app on their phones. The Gloucester County Nature Club is organizing this and will be doing 6 sites altogether. The other 5 sites are Tall Pines, RiverWinds, Elephant Swamp trail, Ceres park, and Scotland Run. Mr. Stippick is the organizer for Piney Hollow. As much participation in the bioblitz as can be obtained is desired. The bioblitz will run for all of 2021 – from January 1 to December 31, 2021.
2. Each year a Watershed Ambassador is appointed by NJDEP who covers our area. Those individuals have been very helpful in previous years. Our rain barrel workshop was organized by the Watershed Ambassador, for example. Ms. McCarthy advised that Marcelo Garcia is the Watershed Ambassador for Watershed Management Area 17, which includes the Maurice River watershed, and is on the mailing list for EC notices. We will invite him to attend an EC meeting.

**IX. Mail Review/Announcements/Conferences:**

**A. Mail:**

There was no mail.

**B. Announcements:**

1. There is an ANJEC webinar, “2021 Goals and Actions for ECs,” on Weds., 1/27 at 7 pm. Email ANJEC ([info@anjec.org](mailto:info@anjec.org)) to register. There will also be virtual training sessions for new Commissioners in the next few weeks and everyone on Franklin’s EC will be notified about them.
2. The new stormwater regulations are available online. Ms. McCarthy will forward the “Courtesy Copy” of the regs to Mr. Cavone and Ms. Halpern as they requested.
3. Ms. McCarthy advised that she will be sending an EC Membership list with contact information to everyone as soon as she receives the details from Mr. Brandt and Ms. Marsh. Ms. Doherty and Mr. Wheeler will send her their contact info.

**X. Adjournment**

Upon a motion by Ms. Duerr, seconded by Ms. McCarthy, and unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned at 9:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne McCarthy  
EC Vice-Chair  
Acting as Secretary for the Environmental Commission