

## February 22, 2021 Environmental Commission Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: Doherty, M. Duerr, McCarthy, Stippick, Tinney  
MEMBERS ABSENT: Brandt, Mounier  
RESIGNED MEMBERS: Cucunato, Marsh  
ALTERNATES PRESENT: Cavone, Link  
LIAISONS PRESENT: Flaim  
LIAISONS ABSENT: Doyle  
GUESTS: R. Duerr, B. Freijomil, M. Garcia, B. Halpern, and Al Wheeler.

The February 22, 2021 meeting of the Township of Franklin Environmental Commission was called to order by Mr. Stippick at 7:34 pm for a virtual meeting on ZOOM.

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

Those present introduced themselves. This was the first meeting for Mr. Tinney who was just appointed as a Commissioner in place of Ms. Cucunato and for Mr. Link who is the Alternate in place of Ms. Marsh.

There was a discussion of the positions of “Associate Members” and “Consulting Members” of the Environmental Commission. Mr. Stippick advised that he had received a letter from the township solicitor that the ordinance establishing the Environmental Commission does not make any provision for Associate or Consulting members. Ms. McCarthy responded that the ordinance does not prohibit such positions and that they are common with Environmental Commissions elsewhere in the state. However, she also stated that since they are strictly honorary positions without any voting rights and since those who were elected to those positions don’t object to a change, we will in future refer to those who attend regularly and work on projects as “Guests.”

The question was raised of whether information going before the EC, such as site plans and applications, can be sent to “Guests.” Ms. McCarthy advised that this is public information and there’s no barrier to such distribution. Ms. Freijomil confirmed that opinion, stating that all such information is readily available to the public.

### II. Minutes

The December 28, 2020 minutes were not approved previously. Only three current members – Mr. Cavone, Ms. Duerr, and Ms. McCarthy – were present at the meeting. Therefore, upon a motion by Ms. Duerr, seconded by Mr. Cavone, the minutes of the December 28, 2020 meeting were approved by a vote of the three members at that meeting.

Upon a motion by Ms. Doherty, seconded by Ms. Duerr, the January 28, 2021 minutes were unanimously approved by the full EC.

### III. Emergency Response and Management Report

- A. There was no Emergency Management report but two incidents were discussed. They were:
1. A diesel fuel spill last Thursday (2/18/21) that resulted from a car accident. We will check with Lt. DiCesari, the Emergency Management Operations Officer to get more information about this.
  2. A “Suspected Hazardous Substance Discharge Notification” was received from the NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection about a 10-gallon motor oil spill on the property at 3585 Coles Mills Rd. on Jan. 21, 2021.

#### **IV. Guests:**

Mr. Marcello Garcia, the NJ DEP Watershed Ambassador for Area 17, described his position to the EC. This is a 10-month position with three components: 1) Assessing water quality; 2) Holding events such as cleanups. For example, he has done cleanups at Union Lake, Landis Utility Authority, and at a Dept of Defense pond in Salem County.; 3) Presentations to groups. Mr. Garcia offered to conduct an event in Franklin Township. It was suggested that perhaps he and those working with him would be interested in doing a Bioblitz assessment at Piney Hollow, possibly in conjunction with a cleanup. Mr. Garcia will contact Mr. Stippick about this.

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

- A.** There was one Zoning Board application: ZB 21-01: Joseph Genna, 5255 Lake Rd., for block 5601/lot 43, located at 5345 Lake Rd. Seeking a C variance for a waiver from the 50' agricultural buffer, required when adjacent to a farm, by putting solar panel mounts in the buffer. The panels would be within 5' of the property line. On the neighboring farm property, directly adjacent to the property line is a driveway and on the far side of the driveway is a small solar project and then a drainage swale. The neighboring farm property is owned by a cousin. The Environmental Commission response was No Comment.
  
- B.** Ms. Halpern advised that the Ocean Foods gas station application (ZB 20-10), reviewed at the EC meeting on December 28, 2020, was never heard by the Zoning Board because of the snowstorm on February 2. There was a problem with the design regarding the fuel loading infiltration. Ms. Halpern contacted NJ DEP to inquire about this and then forwarded their reply to the applicant's designer, engineer Steve Fillipone, who changed the design. The application will be heard on March 2, 2021.

#### **VII. Old Business**

##### **A. Piney Hollow:**

1. Ms. Halpern reported that she spoke to the CME engineer about the project and that the alternative plan for a trail bypass is now at the Pinelands Commission for approval. It is an addendum to the project plan. Although he is not sure of the process, our engineer thinks it looks good and will be approved soon.

In response to a question about the width of the boardwalks and the possibility of off-road vehicles using the boardwalks, Ms. Halpern replied that she thinks the width has remained the same but the stretch of boardwalk is now much shorter and doesn't start at the beginning of the trail. It is a total of 110' versus the original plan of 900' of boardwalk, so is less likely to be a draw for ATVs.

2. Ms. Halpern advised that CME is now the engineering firm for the Zoning Board as well as the Planning Board and the Township.
  
3. The Jersey barrier at one of the entrances is missing again. Mr. Stippick will contact Mr. Doyle about this. Mr. Stippick also advised that some no hunting signs have fallen off and need to be replaced. Ms. Halpern has more of the signs and Mr. Stippick will re-install them.
  
4. Mr. Stippick advised that he has been doing Bioblitz documentation at Piney Hollow and has identified a raven, which is an unusual sighting. There have also been river otters in the lakes.

##### **B. Malaga Lake Park:**

1. Mr. Stippick reported that he obtained and installed disk trail markers, to replace missing ones and add to the number still on the nature trail. He also made an inventory of the nature trail marker

posts. There are three needing replacement and two just needing to be reinforced.

2. The cleanup at the Park that was conducted on Martin Luther King Day by the Franklin Township Unity Advisory group did an excellent job cleaning up the broken glass that had migrated onto the end of the trail. The family that did that work, as part of the day, is in touch with Ms. Flaim.
3. At the last EC meeting it was proposed that a trail map be installed at the start of the trail that could be used with a phone. Ms. McCarthy checked on use of a QR code to access the existing trail map using a phone to link to the map that can be posted on the township website. She will pursue doing this.
4. Ms. Halpern has been investigating signs that could be installed at the start of the trail. Nancy Kennedy, who is now the Franklin Township Community Development Director, is planning to apply for a Community Development grant that could fund this sign. Ms. Halpern will get in touch with Ms. Kennedy.

**C. Other:** Ms. McCarthy reported that she sent the membership application to ANJEC and the invoice to the Township CFO. Membership provides those on the membership list with monthly reports by email and quarterly reports in print, plus free attendance at all trainings. Members include Commissioners, Alternates, and Township Committee liaisons but because two Commissioners hold individual memberships, their publications could be allocated to two of the EC's regular guests.

## **VIII. New Business:**

**A. 2021 Projects:** Ms. McCarthy advised that she put together a list of potential projects that the EC might want to undertake, in 2021 and later. Several of the project ideas were drawn from the ANJEC quarterly magazine that describes projects by other NJ Environmental Commissions. The list was sent to Mr. Stippick but needs to be sent to everyone, so that these ideas could be discussed at the next meeting. Ms. McCarthy will send that out.

One of the projects on the list was Mr. Stippick's idea for the Environmental Commission booth's focus at Community Day, which was of course not held in 2020. That idea was to promote replacing lawns and lawn areas with flower gardens made up of native plants. This would encourage pollinators as well as work better for groundwater recharge and would also reduce the use of lawn chemicals.

Ms. Flaim advised that having Community Day in 2021 is still tentative. It may be necessary to postpone it again but there may be some alternatives in the form of smaller gatherings or the like. The Recreation Commission is looking at ideas.

**B. Other:** A discussion ensued about Franklinville Lake which is looking rather shabby and needs some cleaning up. It was agreed that the EC could sponsor a cleanup at that lake this year.

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

### **A. Mail:**

1. Letter from PSE&G regarding work at one of their right-of ways. Ms. Doherty, who lives next to this site, remarked that the work was done some time ago, before the permit was sought.
2. Malaga Diner is replacing their existing septic tanks with a new system and disposal field and requested a Treatment Works Approval from NJ DEP to do this.

**B. Announcements:** ANJEC has several training seminars coming up that are virtual. The notice about them has been sent to everyone and is also here: **2021 Fundamentals for Effective Environmental Commissions** – Saturdays and Tuesdays – Email ANJEC ([info@anjec.org](mailto:info@anjec.org)) for details and to register.

**X. Adjournment**

Upon a motion by Ms. Duerr, seconded by Mr. Cavone, and unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:43 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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