

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
February 23, 2023 - 7:30 PM

Dana Flynn	Chairperson	X
Eric Duch	Co-Chairperson	X
Lisa Shimamoto	Member	X
Peter Dlugos	Member	X
James Myers	Member	X
Christine Aboulhosn	Member	X
	Alternate 1	
	Alternate 2	
Harvey Roseff	Council Liaison	
Rachel Popadich	Secretary	x

Also in attendance: Mayor Alex Rubenstein

Call meeting to order, meeting opened at 7:32pm.

**Open Public Meeting Statement-** Adequate notice of this Zoom meeting has been published specifying the time and access information in compliance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of this meeting has also been electronically sent to the newspapers and uploaded to Byram’s website, at not less than 48 hours in advance of the meeting. In addition, a copy of this notice is on file in the office of the Environmental Commission Secretary.

**Public Participation** – No public participation.

**Review of Meeting Minutes** – January 26, 2023, – Motion to accept by Lisa, seconded by Peter

**Planning Board Applications** – Highlands link to be added with applications on agenda

[202-2023-01.09.2023 Prestia](#) EC Comments:

- Will there be a septic leach field on the owned lot across the street, since there is no room on the lot with proposed work?
- Please have the applicant confirm their intention for runoff in regards to gutters. Where will they empty? Recommend draining to a rain garden or dry well.
- Since the bulkhead does not appear to extend above grade, the EC recommends a 10-foot wide vegetative buffer along 80 percent of the shoreline due to existing steep slopes.

**Committee Reports**

**MRMC** – Last meeting, February 21; Next meeting April 18. Peter attended the February 21, meeting. Upcoming event- Fishing Exhibit in Lebanon Township, April 1. Representative from Musconetcong Watershed Association presented on water quality testing, conducted from 2017-2018 and 2020-2021 on the Musconetcong River starting from Saxton Falls in Allamuchy through Hampton. Reports showed high PH levels and e-coli, possibly from thunderstorms and run off, damaged septic systems, cow or goose manure. There is a possibility of Musconetcong Watershed Association forming a steak holder group. MRMC to put out park brochures for National Scenic River portion.

Recreation – Upcoming meeting March 20; Lisa will attend in March. Lisa offered to temporarily stand-in as EC liaison. Peter offered to lead hikes in April and October. Monthly hikes are to be scheduled at various locations, to be posted on the Township website. First hike was February 18; details will be provided by Rec.

Open Space – Eric reported from the February 13 meeting - goals for 2023 include providing outreach for the soil ordinance as a Nixle alert or include it in the spring newsletter. Next meeting April 10, to discuss land improvement. Trail grant has been used to acquire trail markers, township manager and forester put up temporary blue trail markers from Tamarack Trail to Roseville Road where Hudson Farm – Wolf Lake Mountain Trail begins as well on Cranberry Overlook. Grant of \$5,000 has been spent on trail markers and kiosks, no improvements to trail clear vegetation or create tread included in the scope of work. Peter noted that some of the new trails on Hudson Farm Property are overgrown in the summer, making them mostly inaccessible. Glenside Woods forest stand improvements were conducted in January under the direction of the Forester, this would be a good opportunity for a hike to review the work conducted and see if any other projects could be identified. Peter and Eric volunteered to hike it.

Council - Last Council meeting, February 21; Next meeting March 7.

- No current updates.

### **New Business**

-2023 Events- Discussed doing an Earth Day event on April 22, at Co-Johnson Park. Will give out re-usable bags and seed packets of native or pollinator wildflower species. New supplies will be needed, banner, tape, etc. Looking into offering a guided hike after the festivities. Lisa suggested to attract more children on the hike to consider making it into a geocaching hike. Sponsor trail clean-ups/invasive species removal events- will be revisited in March.

-EC would like to start a Facebook page – Dana to speak with Town Manager.

-Eric suggested educating the public using funding and program options available from the NJ Clean Communities. Christine contacted Mike the NJ Clean Communities Coordinator, waiting on a response.

-Mission Statement – discussed potentially updating the EC mission statement in 2023.

### **Old Business**

- Planning Board liaison – Mayor Rubenstein - 1 member of the EC must be a member of the PB or vice versa. There is a 4-hour training at Rutgers that is required to be a member of the PB. Eric suggested a PB member come to the EC, limiting their time to a 30-minute attendance of the EC meeting. At this time no EC members have agreed to be a part of the PB. EC has provided accommodations to make it easier for a PB member to join the EC including doing planning board applications early in the meeting to limit their attendance time, not require them to attend meetings when there are no plans to review, and not be required to participate in other EC discussions or events.

-Grants to create an inventory and maps of conservation easements and waterfront landscape buffers - Lisa researched grants to hire a company to conduct the inventory and input the data. James noted that in the past, the EC had a \$10,000 grant for easements that closed out in 2014. Eric reached out to the Highlands for grant help, input, reporting functions. Could potentially get funding from ANJEC.

Alex questioned what the EC will do with the information for conservation easements once obtained. Lisa to provide information to residents on their properties, in the future, to be put onto deeds, and ultimately as a layer in the Highlands mapping. Alex to review this information with Joe, Council.

-Forest Lakes soil contamination - Christine no update from Forest Lakes on the property that has plastic tarps to hold back the soil from washing down the slope during rainstorms, causing the soil to possibly become contaminated. The property owner's tarps are no longer covering the contaminated soil and the silt fence is not being maintained. Lisa advised Christine to contact the zoning officer to report the silt fence not being upkept to prevent soil contamination. EC requested an update from the Zoning Department. The EC followed up but is still waiting to receive additional details from the town planner.

-Trails Committee – Alex- the Trails Committee has recently received applications to meet the necessary number of members needed to form the committee and the council intends to interview them all before appointing them to the committee. EC members can participate as members of the public.

-Tamarack Trail tree cutting - No updates reported on the cut trees.

-TREX Plastic Challenge- Goal Completed at 531 pounds collected. Rec to continue, but likely stopping the program after completion.

-Lake Management Plan – No update.

-Mansfield Trail Superfund Site – No update.

-James – Tilcon Quarry application comments

## **Membership**

-Peter spoke to Byram Superintendent John Fritzky about getting students involved with the EC meetings and events.

-Eric is going to reach out to ANJEC for help in recruiting new members to the EC to fill the vacant spots.

-One Member, Alternate I, and Alternate II positions currently vacant.

## **Training**

-Eric attended the ANJEC Electric Vehicle webinar

-Christine attended ANJEC webinar training.

-Fundamentals for Environmental Commissions – March 2023

**Budget** – New budget not posted until April.

- -2023 EC Purchases:
  - Renewed ANJEC membership

- Arbor Day/Earth Day, educational events

**Other**

**Next Meeting to be held March 23, in-person**

**Motion to Adjourn** – was made at 9:52 PM by Dana Flynn, seconded by Lisa Shimamoto.