

**Environmental Commission Minutes**  
**April 23, 2026 @ 7:00 p.m.**

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**Roll Call** – Meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m.

<b>Member</b>	<b>Present</b>
Peter Dlugos – Chair	X
Eric Duch – Co-Chair	X
Dana Flynn	
Christine Aboulhosn	
James Myers	X
Randy Gutwein	X
Joshua Spahl	X
Greg Smith – Planning Board Liaison	X
Ricky Proctor – Council Liaison	X

**Open Public Meeting Statement**

This meeting is called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Law. This meeting has been electronically sent to the newspapers, posted on the bulletin board of the Municipal Building, and uploaded to Byram’s website, [www.byramtwp.org](http://www.byramtwp.org) 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 Municipal Clerk. A resolution indicating the time, date, and location of the Open Space meetings for the year 2026 was forwarded to the designated newspaper for online publication, posted on the bulletin boards and main doors of the Municipal Building and on the Township’s Website and forwarded to the Secretary of State of the State of New Jersey.

**Public Participation and Open Forum**

Ursula Davis of 228 Forest Lake Dr S and Laura Sliker of 30 Old Indian Spring Rd. were in attendance.

**Review of March 2026 Meeting Minutes**–minutes corrected: Randy was not present. James made a motion to approve minutes with the correction; seconded by Randy.

**Committee Reports**

- **MRMC** – Randy updated the Commission on the following items: current programs by the Morris County Mosquito Commission, an MWA Grant application to the National Park Foundation to improve capacity build, fundraising and public engagement, and to partner with the Student Conservation Association in order to improve the education trail with a sensory garden and trail spur to the lime kilns. MWA is also currently writing an application to apply for the Open Outdoors for Kids and/or Field Science Grants (awaiting NPF guidance) in order to expand our “in school education programs”. He also described a “River Towns” program they are initiating. The MWA is sponsoring a series of River Watcher Events:  
<https://www.musconetcong.org/event-details/river-watcher-events-2026-05-19-18-30> including HAB Training: 5/19/2026, Bacteria Training: 5/26/2026, HAB Data Collection starts: 6/1/2026 and Bacteria Monitoring starts: 6/8/2026. There was no updates on Roxbury Ice Detention Center, and a Native Plant Sale is taking place:  
<https://www.musconetcong.org/shop>
- **Open Space** – Peter reported that the County Trails Grant application is proceeding smoothly–due May 15th. He also updated the commission on a plan to have the acre or so of dense barberry at the center of the loop on the Briar Ridge South trail treated by a contractor identified by our township forester.
- **Town Council** –Ricky updated the EC on the following items: the challenges created by the rising cost of health insurance, plans to fund the new police station; fire prevention functions moved to Hardyston; the demise of the dog

park concept in COJ due to copperhead presence; deliberations about the trail crossing on Tamarack Rd., and upcoming BTHS events.

▪ **Byram Trail Keepers** – Peter reported that the Byram “GPS Trail Map” made in Google Maps is now posted on the Township Trails page. He encouraged commissioners to access it and use it—especially in the field—and give feedback for improvements.

## Member Reports

Randy described elements of the current controversy about a possible data center in Andover Township, and inquired whether our EC could be of assistance. Peter will contact the Andover Township EC leadership to see if there are opportunities to be supportive.

## New Business

- Warm welcome to Josh Spahl (Alternate 1 member): Peter welcomed Josh, a rising senior at LVRHS, to the EC
- Earth Day recap: There was a good turnout despite the rainy weather. Two truckloads of primarily multiflora rose, wineberry, and autumn olive were removed from the trailsides, and the two interpretative signs were cleaned and are now readable.
- iPhone Nature Photography Class with BTHS was rescheduled to May 3rd at 2:00pm in the Roseville Schoolhouse. Class is limited to 25.
- NJUCF Community Forestry Management Plan: the updated plan for 2026-20230 has been submitted and is being evaluated.
- Byram Seniors Group Talk—“Invasive Plants in Byram”—June 25th at 1 pm at the firehouse. Peter is giving this talk and he invited EC members to attend.
- EC member needed for Byram Grant Team: Community Energy Plan Grants - Sustainable Jersey. Ricky made a motion to authorize Greg to serve. Peter will convey to Mayor Rubenstein.
- Planning for National Trails Day—June 6th—nothing has been decided at this time.
- Native Habitat Restoration at Glenside Woods—Peter indicated that he would choose a few dates and advertise for volunteer support to remove the barberry on this parcel.
- Trail Reroute at Briar Ridge North: this out-and-back trail either needs to be shortened or made into a lolly pop trail in order to remove the northern trailhead at Whiporwill Ln. Residents of this private road do not want the trail to bottom out on their street. Peter will work on a redesign with plans to complete by July. Eric recommended using MeetUp to get additional support.
- Next Social Hike: TBD

## Planning Board Applications:

Robert Wroblewski, hearing date 05/07:  [Block 268 Lot 756, 159 Lackawanna Drive, Wroblewski](#)  
–reviewed at March 2026 meeting

Maria Lacatena, hearing date 05/07:  [Block 58 Lot 76, 71 Brookwood Drive, Maria Lacatena](#)  
–reviewed at March 2026 meeting

Vito Lombardo, hearing date 05/21:  [Block 42 Lot 112, 10 Route 206, Vito Lombardo](#)

The EC recommends converting the planned tree and shrub bed located at the front of the property into a rain garden to catch additional stormwater runoff and keep more stormwater on site. Two curb cuts can be installed in the area of the 7 parking spaces to divert runoff into this landscaped water-harvesting basin. Native plants, shrubs, and grasses should be used in the rain garden.

Joe Van Fleet, hearing date 05/21:  [Z15-2025, Block 228 Lot 313.02, 2 Bank Street, Van Fleet](#)

While the EC appreciates the recycling effort, there are concerns about unregulated storage in close proximity to Lake Lackawanna, especially with steep slopes and associated runoff upland from the storage area, and the possibility for contamination of lake water.

Highlands Interactive Map: <https://www.nj.gov/njhighlands/gis/REX/#-74.69086,40.90764,5.17>

## **Old Business**

- Greg Smith: Thoughts on Deer and Light Pollution: Greg shared his interest in working on the deer overpopulation problem, given its impact on property damage, tick populations, and invasive plants. He will investigate funding for a deer density survey (they are now using thermal drones for this; James mentioned other reliable, low costs methods foresters are using.) He is also interested in reducing light pollution in Byram. The Dark Sky Foundation has information on the impact of lights that send beams UP as opposed to down only. Is COJ compliant? Discussion ensued about the EC's mission to educate our residents, acknowledging that residential legislation would be difficult. Ricky mentioned, however, the possibility of changing commercial standards in Byram. To be continued.
- Native Plant Program: the EC is on schedule to host a program in September. More details to come.
- Mansfield Trail Superfund Site: no update
- Prescribed burn in Tamarack Park: burn has been postponed to the fall due to the damp conditions and need to properly prepare the site for maximum effect (barberry suppression).
- "Dirty Dirt" In Forest Lakes: Greg reported that a contractor has been approved to move the pile on Harbor View Beach parking lot.
- MWA Drain Way Project and West Brookwood River Cleanup: no updates

**Training** – NJUCF CEUs – 2 needed.

**Membership** – Alternate II position is vacant.

**Annual Budget** – \$2,600 – ANJEC \$500 renewal + root-cutting shovel (\$50) spent + \$700+ allocated for Native Plant event + \$75 allocated for Earth Day (\$1225 remaining)

**Next Meeting** to be held Thursday, May 28 at 7 p.m.

**Motion to Adjourn** was made at 8:45pm. Eric made the motion, and it was seconded by James.