

Environmental Commission Minutes
May 28, 2026 @ 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call – Meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

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

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 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 Environmental Commission 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: No members of the public were present.

April 2026 Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved.

Committee Reports

- **MRMC** – no meeting to report on.
- **Open Space** –three topics were discussed: the 2026 County Trails Grant, logistics of getting approximately 1 acre of dense barberry along the Briar Ridge South trail professionally treated, and a proposal to enhance the road signage, wayfinding, and interpretive signage at the township’s main open space preserves.
- **Town Council** – Last meeting held May 19; next meeting June 16 – no report
- **Byram Trail Keepers** – Last meeting held March 5 –Peter reported that there are 3 new Trailkeepers since the previous EC meeting, and plans are afoot to reroute the north end of the Briar Ridge North trail into a loop.

Member Reports

New Business

- A motion was made by Randy and seconded by Dana to approve \$75 of reimbursement to Peter Dlugos for purchasing Earth Day seedlings. It was unanimously approved.
- The commission discussed the concept of a Byram Twp. Environmental Stewardship Award. It was decided to give the ward on a rolling basis, as meritted, and to give the awards at Town Council meetings, if possible. Randy will work on making a certificate.
- Peter updated the commission on the ongoing native habitat restoration at Glenside Woods. The main immediate goal is barberry removal to preempt areas of monoculture from forming or expanding. The

issue of follow-up planting was briefly discussed. Ferns would make a good choice in the shady areas. Josh recommended planting ramp and aster, and indicated that he has some seed to donate.

- Native Plant event in September: Dana announced that the event with Wild Ridge Plants will be held on Saturday, 9/12 at the firehouse. She is working on a flyer and logistics. Some native plants will be given away, and some will be for sale. A motion was made by Christine and seconded by Josh to spend up to \$1000 on the event; it was approved unanimously.
- Byram Fest Planning: the commission determined that not enough members will be in town that weekend to enable EC participation.
- NJUCF 2026-2030 Community Forestry Management Plan: Peter highlighted key elements of the plan for new commission members.
- MWA PFAS sampling project: Peter described grant-funded and administration fee-free PFAS testing being offered to interested lake communities and private well owners by the MWA.
- MS4 Assessment Reporting (Year 2 project): Peter shared resources from the state that could assist the township in its Year 2 requirement to do an assessment of Byram's stormwater systems and challenges. James commented that many of the suggested improvements are on private land, making the township ability to implement somewhat limited.
- Andover Township Redevelopment Plan–Rt. 206 Corridor: Peter commented on the permitted uses of the tract of land south of Forest Lakes Dr. and east of Rt. 206, including possible warehouse development. He suggested that concerned Byram residents may want to closely follow the Andover Township developments.
- Highlands “Trail Town” and MWA “River Town” initiatives: Peter briefly described the aims and requirements of these ecotourism initiatives, and suggested that the limited direct access that Byram residents have to the Musconetcong may make the Trail Town program the more feasible of the two.
- Partnership with Sparta Township Environmental Commission: Peter recently met and worked with Neil Sauerwein, Chair of the Sparta Twp. EC. Peter believes it might be wise to create an “alliance” between the ECs of Byram, Sparta, Stanhope and Hopatcong on issues of mutual concern and interest.

Planning Board Application:

 [Block 377 Lot 2, Block 378 Lot 1, Block 384 Lot 1, 750 Waterloo Road, Patriot's Path Council](#)

Comments: The EC anticipates specific project plans as they evolve. Of particular interest is any plan for tree removal (following marking and inventory in compliance with township ordinance) and any plans for sediment or erosion control during new construction, including new landscaping.

Old Business

- Mansfield Trail Superfund Site update: tree clearing has been completed. The Highlands Trail and adjoining areas will be closed off starting in July for major remediation projects, including placing an impermeable barrier over the dump pits to prevent the contamination plume from growing larger due to storm water infiltration.
- Prescribed burn in Tamarack Park update: a team from the NJ Forest Fire service was out recently flagging the perimeter of the areas to be burned. This is the first step in preparation.
- “Dirty Dirt” In Forest Lakes: no recent action to report. Peter mentioned that planting on the large pile behind 12 Hemlock might be the most effective way to stabilize it. Greg offered that the owners have been advised to take no steps toward remediation.
- West Brookwood River Cleanup: no plans at the moment

Training – NJUCF CEUs – .5 needed.

Membership – Alternate II position vacant.

Annual Budget – \$2,600 – ~\$1225 remaining (recent approved spending: up to \$1k for native plant sale and \$75

for Earth Day seedlings)

Next Meeting to be held Thursday, June 25 at 7 p.m.

Motion to Adjourn was made by James and seconded by Dana. Meeting ended at 8:48 p.m.