

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
August 24, 2023 - 7:30 PM

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

Call meeting to order, meeting opened at 7:42pm.

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 – N/A

Review of Meeting Minutes – July 27, 2023 – Upon revision of date listed, motion to accept by Christine, seconded by Dana.

Planning Board Applications –

- Z16-2023-07.26.2023 Barbara Krassner- No EC comments.
- Z17-2023-08.01.2023 Diliberto- No EC Comments.
- Z18-2023-08.02.2023 James Brembt— EC Comments:
 - EC recommends considering the option to move the shed to the already-disturbed east side of the house to avoid the need for a variance.
 - If the shed is to remain on the west side of the property, consider where stormwater runoff from the shed will flow.
 - Why is there a need for a concrete pad? Not typical.

Committee Reports

MRMC –Last meeting, August 15; Next meeting October 17. Peter provided an email update from the August meeting:

(1) Christa Reeves (Water Quality Program Coordinator for MWA) gave an interesting presentation on fishery data following dam removals in the lower Musconetcong. Connected to their shad restoration project. They used both electroshocking and newer eDNA techniques. If interested, Peter will request a copy of her presentation. The EC members in attendance were interested in viewing the presentation.

(2) Peter joined the MRMC Standing Committee on Recreational and Scenic Resources.

(3) The MWA is embarking on a major Watershed implementation Plan and is looking for input from the public. This will be through a series of "Flow Together" workshops. The first step is to get input on areas of interest and meeting availability times. They are also interested in eventually holding a workshop meeting in Byram, if possible, at the town hall. Peter provided a customized flyer for viewing and to eventually post in public spaces. Peter has also already begun to share on social media. EC members agreed to host a MWA Flow Together workshop.

Recreation –Last meeting, August 21; Next meeting September 15. Harvey attended. Noted that Byram Fest needs volunteers. New, full-time recreation director was hired. EC agreed that it did not have enough members to staff a table at Byram Fest this year.

Open Space –August meeting cancelled. Next meeting October 9. Eric will get volunteer hours to Joe for trail building grant.

Council – Last meeting, August 15; Next meeting September 5. Last meeting, Council voted to put the 9.7 million dollar building bond on the November ballot (will be ~6% more on individual municipal tax). Received Highlands Council grant money for work on COJ – architects will lay out master plan. \$800,000 from federal funding (Covid) – Council voted to do something special for residents (cannot be used towards municipal building) – up for discussion at next Council Meeting. May need to be spent by 2025. Noted BTHS events – Beefsteak dinner, dragon boat races – 9/23 Cranbury Lake. Active plans for vacant strip mall on Tamarack Road near Cranbury Market & Deli.

New Business

-Fall hikes/trail clean-up (Cranberry Overlook)- Eric to reach out to Peter and the trails committee to set up a date for a fall trail building. Eric suggested a trail clean up in late September - November, noted many trail heads need to be brush-backed. Discussed need for shovels, trail hoes, small clippers, and safety glasses. May rent a hedge trimmer. Rachel to ask if Tools For Trails is still a vendor and get a full list of vendors overall. Eric will send potential dates to Trails Committee and Peter.

- Fall Educational Event(s)- Dana met with Danielle from the recreation committee to coordinate a date for a scavenger hunt or bird walk with children, make seed bombs from leftover seed packets.

-Mission Statement – To be discussed at future meetings.

-Peter's Facebook Page- Peter created a page named Friends of Byram Open Space. Provides information on the trails, upcoming EC events, and to hopefully be a community hub for groups in Byram.

-Byram Fest- EC not attending but will confirm with Rec on how the event will go.

Old Business

- Grant for conservation easements and waterfront landscape buffers- Lisa suggested looking into the grant from 2013 to see where the funds went. Rachel spoke with Joe and noted that a \$10,000 grant was issued by the Highlands for use in 2015 and some work was done. James believes it was previous EC secretary Margaret who started the grant effort.

-Mansfield Trail Superfund Site – Will be monitored in the fall of 2023. No other updates.

Training

-Need 3 more certificates for the year. Christine provided email verification of a class she took awaiting on the CEU certificate (has email proof).

Membership

-Alternate I and Alternate II positions remain vacant.

Budget –

- -2023 EC Purchases:
 - Additional event signage, supplies – Eric to investigate signs at Jersey Signs and tools
 - Trail tools- shovels, hoes, eye protection, kids' gloves, clippers
 - New Banner - \$130
 - Seeds - \$225
 - ANJEC yearly membership cost - \$400
 - Remaining budget - \$1,845.00

Other

Next Meeting to be held September 28, in-person.

Motion to Adjourn – was made at 9:44 PM by James, seconded by Christine.