

MINUTES

Chatham Township Environmental Commission

Tuesday June 3, 2014, 7:15 PM at the Township Municipal Building.

CTEC'S PURPOSE: To undertake projects and make recommendations concerning the protection or use of natural resources, including water resources and air quality, located within or directly affecting Chatham Township.

The Chatham Township Environmental Commission's goal is to provide a responsible environmental viewpoint to Township committees and boards and to undertake projects with a strong educational component in order to inform officials and residents about constructive actions that can be taken to preserve the environment.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT -- The meeting schedule for 2014 and January 2015 is posted on the main bulletin board at the Township municipal building and on the Chatham Township website at www.chathamtownship.org. The public is cordially invited to attend all meetings, join the discussions and participate in projects.

CTEC AND GREEN TEAM MEETING DATES FOR 2014 AND JANUARY 2015

Every first Tuesday February through December 2014 and the second Tuesday in January 2015.

February 4, March 4, April 1, May 6, June 3, July NO MEETING, August 5, September 2, October 7, November 4, December 2 in 2014 and January 13 in 2015.

ROLL CALL

Attending: C.Ritter, Township Committee liaison, F. Esposito, D. Stillinger, S. Carroll, G. Crimmins, M. Palmer, and Nils Klarlund, Township resident

APPROVED GREEN TEAM AND CTEC MINUTES OF MAY 6, 2014

GREEN TEAM MEETING

Chair S. Carroll opened the Green Team meeting at 7:35 p.m.

- Fishawack in two weeks, need volunteers.
- Green Fair in September, need volunteers.
- Sustainable Jersey says some actions are due next year.
- Revised tree ordinance is achievable. Need to establish a Tree Protection Committee. Township has a paid forester to inspect and make decisions on trees.
- Green Fair will give us Sustainable Jersey points.
- Prescription drug disposal program. Chatham Borough police department sponsored such an event several months ago.
- Eco-film series continues.
- Not clear that Chatham Borough will continue to work toward Silver certification.
- It looks very hopeful that we will achieve Bronze level recertification in 2015.
- Lighting in municipal building was redone to be more energy efficient.

INVASIVE SPECIES DISCUSSION

Nils Klarlund, Township resident, spoke on current conditions.

- Mr. Klarlund spoke about how his property on the slopes on River Road is overrun with smothering invasive species.
- Since Sandy conditions have worsened, former forest has no canopy, the downed trees are covered by multiflora rose and vines.
- Mr. Klarlund donated about 4.5 acres to Township with a conservation easement given to the Passaic River Coalition. He retained about an acre near the road. Five acres is the minimum for a parcel to be considered a farm for tax purposes.
- Former boxing camp occupied portion of Klarlund property. There are remnants of fire roads along the plateau just below the slopes. The fire roads ran from Esternay field to Southern Blvd.
- Sheep formerly grazed there.
- Even tree-of-heaven trees are covered with vines. Some native tree species are trying to grow but are being smothered.
- M. Palmer and J. Basralian, chair of the Township Open Space Committee, talked with Joe Dunn, head of the Morris County Soil Conservation District. The MCSCD could be hired to manage certain parcels and write a community forestry plan. Grants could be obtained.
- Klarlund neighbor on one side is indifferent to the problem, the neighbor on the other side is very concerned.
- Straightforward to identify issue on the Township website, post descriptions of some of the worst species.
- No practical way to enforce forest management on small parcels.

- New Jersey has an invasive species strike force (www.njisst.org) which is mapping invasive species and looking for volunteers.
- EC will continue the discussion about invasive species at future meetings.

APPLICATION/ENVIRONMENTAL PERMIT REVIEW

INNOVATIVE CONSTRUCTION & DESIGN, LLC, 51 MOUNTAIN AVENUE, BLOCK: 37 LOTS 12 & 14.(APRIL 22, 2014) Minor Subdivision w/front yard setback variances. Proposal to merge two lots and create two houses. This property is near the former Bernardo parcel which has been the subject of litigation for many years. The slopes in that area are very steep. A conservation easement on the slopes on another nearby property was violated to excess. Environmental Commission will follow the application.

REPORTS

Planning Board report

- Planning Board has sent letter to Township Committee recommending inclusion of the Green Checklist in the application checklist. Complete Streets is being incorporated into the Circulation Element of the Master Plan. A professional will compile all the parts of the Circulation Element into a single document. Planning Board approved incorporating the NRI into the Master Plan. D. Travisano.

Township Committee report

- Electronic newsletter coming out. Videos of Township Committee meetings are being made available on the website. C. Ritter, Township Committee liaison.

Communications Committee report

- Archive page on EC website is an excellent resource, serves as backup for important files. Township website has been updated and problems addressed with the CTEC website. Any EC member wanting to post material on the EC website should forward the items to F. Esposito who will work with Township Web Master Tom Salvas.

Recycling Committee report

- Survey is almost ready to go. Discussing possibility of private residences pursuing paying for weekly pickup individually. Survey would not be binding, just used to gauge support for public option for weekly recycling.
 - Areas of Chatham Glen are realizing income from recycling styrofoam and shredding paper.
 - F. Esposito has a meeting with the MUA next week.

Community Education and Outreach Committee report

- CTEC receives several e-mails every day. F. Esposito responds and archives the messages.
 M. Kelly, M. Schaaf, and F. Esposito, Chair.

Conservation Easement Subcommittee

- Conservation easements on 4 properties on River Road, including the one on the Greeve property, need to be recorded and accepted. Planning Board final subdivision approval was granted 3-21-96 conditioned that a conservation easement on all four new parcels had to be granted to the Township. Developer was Nick Parisi.
 - CTEC should pursue a mechanism for conservation easement monitoring and recording.
 - Lot grading plan is being revised to include more protection for conservation easements.

NOTES AND DISCUSSION

- What is the Township position on keeping bees? Bees are becoming stressed. Note that the Morris County Mosquito Commission routinely sprays Bti from airplanes on many waterbodies in the county.
- Bears have been sighted on Huron Drive. Bear workshop was held in November. EC bear education project? Update NRI with a section on bears?
- New and very good NJDEP website for maps, parcels and environmental information at NJ-GeoWeb, <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/gis/geoweb splash.htm>. Use Internet Explorer, not Chrome.
- Very good Morris County mapping facility at <http://morrisgisapps.co.morris.nj.us/apps/parcelsearcher.html>. Gives information about each parcel and has aerials layer.
- Discussion about requiring subdivision and site plans and related documents to be submitted in pdf format. If that happens CTEC should be on the list to receive all pdf plans and documents. Currently the township requires applicants to submit 25 paper copies of every sheet and document, which amounts to a large stack of paper and is costly for the applicant.

- Possible projects for grants.
- Waiting for the report card from Joe Dunn of the Morris County Soil Conservation District (www.mcsd.org/) on how Chatham Township is doing on its soil and sediment erosion control. Chatham Township, by means of its lot grading plan requirement, is one of four Morris County towns that assumes the responsibility for soil and erosion management instead of leaving it to the county.
- Note alternatives being proposed for Comprehensive Conservation Plan for Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. The word on the street is that Option B is most favored. Read the Plan at <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/Great%20Swamp/ccphome.html>. Draft plan just released.
- Bill Koch, Director of the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, is retiring after 43 years. See Events below.

RECENT LETTERS SENT

- April 2014. Memo to NJDEP concerning application for an LOI on Ferndale Road. Memo to Planning Board suggesting a conservation easement be obtained on steep slopes on a subdivision on Longview Road.
- March 2014. Memo to Planning Board urging adoption of Natural Resources Inventory as a section of the Conservation Element of the Master Plan.
- January 2014. Memo to Board of Adjustment concerning violation of conservation easement on steep slopes on a property on Susan Drive, memo to NJDEP urging an applicant for subdivision on Shunpike Road to obtain an LOI.

EVENTS

- The Eco Film and Discussion Series of the Chathams will show More Than Honey at the Library of the Chathams, on Thursday, June 5, 2014, at 7:30 pm. Local beekeeper Albert Tomaro, of Tomaro Honey, will lead discussion after the film.
- Tour historic Duke Farms. ANJEC Garden Party at Duke Farms, Sunday, June 8, 4:00pm - 8:00pm, Duke Farms Orientation Center, 1112 Dukes Parkway West, Hillsborough. \$75 per person.
- Passaic River Symposium VI, Intersecting Priorities, Organized by the Passaic River Institute of Montclair State University, Thursday October 9, 2014, Friday October 10, 2014, Montclair State University Conference Center, 1 Normal Avenue, Montclair, NJ. About \$60 if you identify yourself as an EC member. Note that any group can host a short workshop on their topic of interest. <http://www.montclair.edu/csam/passaic-river-institute/conferences-symposiums>.

MAIL RECEIVED

- Minutes of meetings of Long Hill and Chatham Borough Environmental Commissions.
- Notices and flyers.

ADJOURNED at 9:30 p.m.

dks 6-4-14