

Chatham Township Environmental Commission
58 Meyersville Rd, Chatham, NJ 07928, 973-635-4600
Minutes of the Tuesday, September 1, 2020

The meeting of the Chatham Township Environmental Commission Special Meeting convened at 7:24 pm on Tuesday, September 1, 2020, by Zoom video conference due to COVID-19. In attendance were CTEC members Maureen Kelly, Amy Mason, Dot Stillinger and Township Committee Liaison Celeste Fondaco. Absent: Cara Feeser, Dan Miller, Matt Palmer, Doris Rhee and Jessica Romeo.

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 2020 January 2021 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 including the Land Use Subcommittee, join the discussions and participate in projects.

CTEC AND GREEN TEAM MEETINGS FOR 2020 AND JANUARY 2021 First Tuesdays except second Tuesday in January 2021 to meet after the Township Committee reorganization meeting: February 4, March 3, April 7, May 5, June 2, June 30, July NO MEETING, August 4 (Cancelled), September 1, October 6, November 10 (avoid election day), December 1 and January 12, 2021.

Due to no quorum, the June 30, 2020 meeting minutes were not approved.

GREEN TEAM MEETING Maureen Kelly, Green Team Chair, J. Romeo, Green Team Vice Chair
-Discussed researching into a Water Conservation Ordinance. Will check with surrounding communities. Highly recommended by SJ.

-Discussed landscapers use of gas-powered leaf blowers, noise level, environmental impact. Will continue to research. "Quiet Princeton" is a group of residents interested in reducing noise disturbance in Princeton.

- Watershed Association advises "Questions to ask your nursery before buying plants: Neonicotinoids are insecticides applied to nursery plants to keep them looking 'ideal' for sale. They may also persist in plants treated with them for years and can continue to harm pollinator populations for a long time. Here are some questions to ask your plant nursery before purchasing plants for your gardens. #pollinatorweek

1. Are these plants or seeds treated with neonicotinoids or systemic insecticides?
2. Do you know if your plant suppliers use them?
3. Please consider removing neonic products and treated plants from your shelves.

MILKWEED PLANT GIVE-A-WAY Jessica Romeo - Milkweed plants in organic pots were distributed to residents.
- Very much interest in the booth at the Farmers Market Sat. July 18, 2020. There were lots of great conversations about why planting native is important and what we can do to support species such as monarchs. Milkweed is the only food of Monarch butterflies.

MEMO TO PLANNING BOARD CONCERNING LOTS ON RIVER ROAD

- When the two lots on River Road begin to be developed CTEC will send another memo to the boards involved.
- Suggest that there is an opportunity now to establish a conservation zone along the slopes on River Road.
- Frank Banisch, Township Planner, endorses the idea of a preserved Greenway along the slopes.

NORTH NEW JERSEY SUSTAINABLE MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE Jessica Romeo, Northern Jersey Sustainable Municipal Alliance

- Please join us via Zoom for a regional strategy meeting on Thursday, Oct 1st @ 7:30p.m.
- Take Our Pre-Meeting Survey!!

To help us hit the ground running, we created a brief survey. You can access it here:

<https://forms.gle/fZL7VeRvtb29qHKH6>. The survey asks you to:

- * share projects and action areas where you've had success despite the pandemic
- * vote for "big ideas" that we can discuss at the meeting. When we have the results, we'll loop back with a meeting plan.

NEW JERSEY'S CLEAN ENERGY PROGRAM Amy Mason, Energy Subcommittee - Amy has resumed email communication with an energy aggregation company. Discussing resources.

CHARGING STATIONS FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLES – Twp. Administrator Bob Hoffmann has requested that CTEC investigate grants for charging stations for electric vehicles. This could earn SJ points.

CTEC will research grant opportunities for electric vehicle charging stations. Discussed a few locations within the township and possibly at DPW, as the township is interested in purchase an electric vehicle(s).

NEW STORMWATER RULES GO INTO EFFECT IN MARCH 2021

- Municipalities must have a new ordinance effective March 2, 2021. The new stormwater regulations will help keep pollutants out of the streams that drain to drinking water sources.

- CTEC can review the model ordinance from a local perspective. Visit <https://thewatershed.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/TWI-Enhanced-Ordinance-highlights-final.pdf>.

- Flavia Cummins, Glenmere Drive, pointed out a new wrinkle on stormwater pollutants. She observed that for years granules from new roofs land in gutters and then into storm drains. She was planning to write a letter to the EPA and others which CTEC might want to endorse.

TREE SEEDLING GIVE-A-WAY UPDATE Cara Feeser

- The Chatham Township Environmental Commission held its much anticipated Tree Seedling Give-A-Way for the third year in a row on Saturday May 30, 2020. The small seedlings obtained from the New Jersey forestry service grow into decorative yard trees after several years of watering and mulching. Almost 85 cars lined up in the lower parking lot of the Chatham Township municipal building to decide which species they wanted, bur oak, paw paw, persimmon and red bud, and received a bag of up to 5 trees loaded into their vehicle by environmental commission volunteers. The event was organized by Lisa McHugh and carried out by her and Maureen Kelly, Chair of the Chatham Township Green Team. Environmental Commission Deputy Chair Cara Feeser, administrator of the project, said, "In spite of the restrictions caused by the pandemic this year's seedling handout was the best. All participants waited patiently in their cars and appreciated the efforts of the volunteers."

TRASH / LITTER CLEAN UP – Maureen Kelly discussed that while she is walking her neighborhood, she is finding and disposing of litter that is left on roadways, trails and parks. As many people are outdoors now, it would be encouraging for people to clean up the environment in their travels. Any pictures CTEC receives of trash cleanup can be posted.

ROLLING KNOLLS

- The portion of the Superfund site owned by the Miele Trust now has granted a conservation easement to the EPA requiring that it "shall be preserved as open space. There shall be no development of the Subject Property for any purposes, including, without limitation, for residential, commercial, or industrial use."

- The PRPs (Principal Responsible Parties, that is, Chevron, Novatis and Nokia) issued a document rebutting the need for the comprehensive cleanup proposed by the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. Several of the statements in the rebuttal need verification, regarding disturbance of habitat. The habitat proposed for disturbance in the Refuge document is sub-par and needs restoration in any event.

- The remedy currently proposed by the EPA will leave almost 140 acres in Chatham Township surrounded by a fence carrying "No Trespassing" signs, limiting the ability of the Township to use the property for trails or to improve habitat. A clause in the agreement states, "b. There will be no use of the Subject Property that is inconsistent with the remedy selected by EPA for the Site."

- The property adjoins the Refuge.

APPLICATION/ENVIRONMENTAL PERMIT REVIEW

- Ongoing. Many of the plans submitted to the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment will be made available to the public online in digital format.

- Discussion. The role of the EC. The NJDEP and the Township Engineer have assumed many of the environmental oversight activities that used to be mainly the responsibility of the EC and non-profit environmental groups.

REPORTS

• Planning Board Don Travisano, Planning Board liaison, has left the area. CTEC needs a new Planning Board liaison. By New Jersey law the EC is required to have a joint EC-PB member. Any CTEC member interested is encouraged to step forward. Members on CTEC need to make the commitment of attending and contributing to discussions.

• Pesticide reduction Subcommittee Cara Feeser.

- Lincoln Landscaping contracted to maintain playing field and colony pool using mostly organic methods with few chemicals. This maintain may lead through the fall.

NOTES AND RESOURCES

• **Pilgrim oil pipeline** - In September 2019 the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit agreed with arguments made by the New Jersey attorney general that a private company (PennEast) lacked legal authority to seize or condemn state lands in federal court under the 11th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Under the legal doctrine of sovereign immunity, a state cannot be sued by a private company without its consent. Tom Gilbert, campaign director for the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, said the ruling makes clear that PennEast seriously overstepped the law in trying to condemn state-owned lands, many preserved in partnership with counties, towns and private land trusts. The PennEast pipeline is a controversial 120-mile project to bring natural gas from Pennsylvania's Marcellus Shale into New Jersey and metropolitan markets.

- An oil pipeline is more sinister than a gas pipeline. A gas discharge disperses quickly into the atmosphere; an oil spill poisons the land.

- Rumors that Pilgrim is beginning to apply for permits. NOTE that the Township Committee has voted to continue its membership in the coalition of towns contributing to legal fees to fight the pipeline.

- Visit <http://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=af162ec18761444b929957b8c82ab903> to see if the Pilgrim Pipeline goes near your house. The web site was developed by Drew professor Lisa Jordan and her students. The map is also on the EC website. Click anywhere on a map for information about that object.

• Online resources

- 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.

- Very good Morris County mapping utility at <https://morrisgisapps.co.morris.nj.us/apps/parcelsearcher/>, hit Map and use the i tool. Gives information about each parcel and has aerials layer. Search for more detailed information about a parcel at <https://mcweb1.co.morris.nj.us/MCTaxBoard/>. Use Microsoft Internet Explorer for both.

- View open space and Green Acres properties at <https://www.state.nj.us/dep/greenacres/ga50/docs/roslite.pdf> and <https://www.state.nj.us/dep/greenacres/openspace.html>.

EVENTS

- Wednesday September 9th, 6-7:30 pm Via Zoom Webinar, New Stormwater Rules: Compliance & Enhancement. Register at <https://thewatershed.doubleknot.com/event/model-enhanced-stormwater-management-ordinance-webinar/2718500>. Free.

- Thursday, Oct 1st @ 7:30p.m. North New Jersey Sustainable Municipal Alliance Zoom planning meeting.

MAIL RECEIVED

- Notices of LOI and General Permit requests
- Newsletters - Monthly financial report

ADJOURN 8:11

Carolyn Scannelli
Minutes Secretary