

COMMERCIAL TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

MINUTES OF May 14, 2024

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm by Chairperson Peter Manzelmann. He announced that the meeting is being held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Present: Peter Manzelmann, John Dayton, Ken McGill, Dale Schweitzer, Dustin Piccolo and Lorraine Shourds.
Absent: Katie Dayton

Minutes of April 9th, 2024: Addition of where points were selected to be used for teracycle. Points were used towards youth programs for environmental advocacy. Motion to approve the amended minutes by Ken McGill, Seconded by Dustin Piccolo. motion carried.

ANJEC- Lorraine was not present to present a formal report but the committee did discuss various emails and newsletters received and if there was any currently relevant offerings for the committee. There was discussion about the membership to ANJEC, but it did seem the consensus was to maintain membership. There was also an article posted on civilian scientists that was interesting. There was discussion about attempting to participate in more of the offering.

Chris Finch- Head of Millville recycling. Came to discuss plastic recycling and what is happening in Millville and how we are continuing the single use plastic recycling and number 5 recycling. Chris shared that there is not as much of a market for number 5 recycling as there is for number 1, so that is why it is not currently selected. There was a new system installed to help sort recycling which is mechanically sorted that will help to expedite the process, and may make number 5 recycling more available for Cumberland County recycling. Chris will let the committee know if that is an option in the future. Also discussed not placing recycling in plastic bags so that the machine does not get bound up. Millville owns the plastic and cardboard bailers on their own, and it is not leased through Trex. They are finding it is a slow process to get the word out, but it has been a slow process to get this information that plastic recycling is available. The plan will be to get out and get the word out more over the summer about the plastic film bailer and the option to recycle plastic in Millville. He will also be talking with local businesses as well. When the bailer gets full Millville will get 14 cents a pound from trex, and he needs to have 14 bails per shipment, which will equate to about one shipment a year. They will be stored in shipping containers until they can be shipped out. The reminder and NJ today could be good for advertising, as well as social media accounts. Our recycling does not go to Millville, but it goes directly to the County. Chris has been taking single use plastics that Peter has been collecting through Commercial Township. Chris shared information about what is recyclable and working to help make information on the various programs, such as rechargeable battery recycling. Chris will send the flyer and link to John, and he will share the information with Lorraine and Katie for the Facebook page and website.

Website- Lorraine has been doing a nice job of adding things such as the tree planting and the event at the Ella Morie Park dedication. Peter was curious to know if there was a way to track visits, but we would have to check with the township directly.

Sustainable Jersey and Osprey sign- Nothing new with sustainable Jersey. The second of three deadlines has passed, and the next one is the end of July. There are going to be some projects that will not be fully complete before the end of this year, so it is likely we could lose our bronze status. Some of the points given to activities are very involved for a low point return. Peter and Maryanne are volunteering as members of the commission

to have a table at a school event about and will be presenting about trees. Unfortunately, that would not count for points.

Osprey sign- final draft of the sign has been completed, and we just need to decide on the final color green we would like to use for the background. Once that is decided Seth will confirm all of the details for fabrication and installation. Part of the plans will be creating a pollinator garden and walkway to the sign as well as some basic restoration of the surrounding areas. Seth will deal directly with the county for the invoice. We will do a small flyer to announce the ribbon cutting and event.

Terracycle- John was able to send a box of another 5lbs of materials out. There will likely be another shipment sent out before the next meeting. To date we have sent around 30lbs in.

Bluebird and purple martin- Martins have arrived for the season. Of the 6 bluebird boxes 2 have hatched, and the other 3 have tree swallows in them. The sand plan removed the cement blocks for the ceremony. Dustin also created a mockup design of some plantings and garden space to be planted at the park. It would include some trees that would need to be purchased, as well as some items we could split from members of the community. They mowed over the day lilies and so they would need to be on board to stop mowing. There is also prep work that needs to be done for the area before planting can occur. Some things could be planted now, but smaller perennials should wait until the fall. The sand plant has committed \$500 dollars towards the planting. Peter will confirm with Justo from the plant that the money is being given to the county.

Mary Ella Morie park- dedication was great and it was well attended. Members of the community spoke and discussed Mary Ella's life and the importance of the area for the wildlife. Peter and Allen were also able to take a small nature walk and show some baby blue birds.

Salem Oak earth day planting- The sapling was planted on Earth Day weekend. It was attended by members of the Township Committee and Environmental Commission. There is fencing around it to protect it, and Seth is willing to put in a placard for the tree and the history/importance of the tree.

US Silica- called and thanked them for all they did for the dedication of the park and the maintenance of the park. They are willing to do more so there has been discussion of some things we would like to see there.

#5 plastic- no updates

Land use board- nothing that is being voted on at this point, but there was a member of the community who came about property that is owned and plans to add two small buildings and possible approval to have a retail store on the sight. The DEP has been involved and he is within the laws about how much development he can do and distance to wetland areas. There was not an official presentation, he just wanted to see what if any resistance he may be met with. He was told to look into variance about traffic patterns and lighting/safety. It would be a cannabis grow/process and retail location at that property. The land use board altered the ordinance to where sale would be allowed within the township, and it would include the commercial zone on Buckshutem rd, Main St. in port Norris and on the corridor on North Ave. He is two lots in, so he was looking to see if the land use board would allow a variance.

New Business

Peter received an email from a resident who saw there was tree cutting occurring on a property owned by Mr. Henderson. Peter visited with Stephanie in the zoning office and looked up the property at 2522 Odgen St. He cleared the area to make room to get something through to his additional property. The area is zoned residential. Peter read a letter about Zoning permit received about tree removal. It is only applicable to new residential construction or site plans. It was determined that he did not need to submit for permit for tree removal since it was not part of a land use development application. The commission recommends that the concerned citizen talk to Stephanie at the Township regarding their concerns.

Sustainable book group- Heather provided Peter with information on a book group Ocean City and Upper Township and Peter thought that moving forward we may be in a position to have a community book group about climate change.

Open to the public: Motion made to open the meeting to the public by Ken, seconded by John. Maryanne Manzelman, Mauricetown- discussed a magazine article in the Jersey Magazine about great places in the state and Maurice River and there is information about Commercial Township and the Strawberry Ave. bird walk.

Chris also mentioned that Millville is looking into getting a Teracycle cigarette butt recycling program into Millville. He does think it would be something the commission could look into as doing in addition to the bathroom product recycling.

Correspondence:

Motion to adjourn made by Ken seconded Dustin. Motion passed and meeting adjourned.