

COMMERCIAL TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
MINUTES OF November 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, Dale Schweitzer, Dustin Piccolo, Katie Dayton, and Lorraine Shourds and
Absent: Ken McGill

Minutes of August, September and October: Motion to approve minutes by Ken McGill, Seconded by Dustin Piccolo. motion carried.

ANJEC- They passed an approval to continue the restriction on harvesting horseshoe crabs again. They can still get them for the blood, but they need to release them. John did email about the osprey sign project and sent them links about the osprey sign project so hopefully we can get that in the next newsletter.

Website- entered the information about the ribbon cutting happening and about the number 5 recycling so that is all up to date at this point.

Sustainable Jersey- They had been in contact about being below the points level, and they offered to extend it, but we will still be below the points, so we will just allow our status to lapse and will work to re-earn it later. We have finalized the sign project and were able to get everything reimbursed. We used about half of the initial rewarded grant. It was closed out and approved as it. It ended up costing about 2700 dollars of the total grant. The cost was much less than originally anticipated because the overall cost of the sign was much less thanks to Seth's ability to manufacture it.

Terracycle- continues to roll along. John will continue to collect and send off the remainder of the items that are donated, but he has not been able to make a shipment recently. There was discussion about getting rid of the collection boxed and switching to a different collection system, such as a plastic trash can to make it easier to clean them and empty them out. Katie did email Jean Smith from the schools to work on collaborating with the schools on this project and the turtle crossing project and she seemed very excited to partner with the commission.

Bluebird- a neighbor on buckshutem is interested in having a gourd rack and at this point everything is quiet as we are in winter phase.

Single use plastic- continues to get most of the plastic from the sand plant and takes bags up to Millville each week to eventually get baled up once enough plastic is collected.

Land use board- still has not met, the November meeting has also been cancelled.

Facebook- Shared information about the number 5 plastic and information on the single use plastic recycling with Millville. There was a post made in the Laurel Lakes Happenings page asking about septic systems in that area and how they are all failing. The poster did state they were not able to attend the meeting, but they were looking into grants that they could use to revamp the systems. This is a huge issue in the area, and it is unclear who is best to address this, but this seems to be more of a land use board issue. There is also a growing concern among members of the commission that members of the township council have not been present at our meetings lately to help address some of these concerns and guide our conversations/ allow us to let members of the public know who they should be contacting with these specific concerns. There was

also a post complaining about someone dumping on private property. Katie directed them to contact the township to help guide them for more information.

New Business

Township solar project- sounds like a really good plan, it does not sound like it takes any effort on the homeowner and make less than a certain amount of money. You could qualify for up to 50 percent off of your electric bill of the overage of the base rate that Atlantic City Electric ACE charges. This is one of several smaller solar farms being installed. Installation will begin in December and will be available in spring to customers. As they make income in this project grants will be available back to the township.

Wildlife/Turtle crossing- Katie reached out to schools to see about getting it into the school system. The thought was to go out and give a little talk to the classes about why it is important to participate in this project, hand out the papers and then collect them a few weeks later so they can be collected and chosen by end of January so that they can be selected and ready for sale by March. Also will look to have a few different designs to choose from and provide a small prize to the kids whose art was selected. Also still in contact with the person from Project terrapin, but the connection has been intermittent. Katie will follow up with him to see if there are any other conservation ideas we could do.

Crab basket- The environmental commission will create a basket for the Christmas tree that the township is putting together. Dustin will decorate it.

Salem Oak Sign: Peter ordered a sign for the sapling planted in Veterans park and is being made by Seth. The sign will be installed in Veterans park by the oak.

Cumberland seed library: There is a seed library in Bridgeton library. We did discuss installing one in town, but there is one nearby if needed.

US Silica discussion: Eric Errickson- Mauricetown- Two biggest issues have always been trucks and sand. There are so many trucks coming in and out of town. Eric worked with the Mayor, State police, land use, county rd supervisor, county sign, county commissioner and head of public works and we were close to getting a designated truck route that would allow trucks on only 3 roads. The truck route had to be approved by the county, and it was denied by the state. Truck traffic is down due to changes implemented by the sand plant. There is sand still blowing but is improved from years prior. A lot of the improvement is due to Justo, the plant manager. He has taken care of a lot of the truck traffic. Has put up signage and cameras and he has a policy to tell trucks they cannot enter and exit that way, and has started getting in touch with the truck heads and can also deny loads for entered the plant the wrong way. Sand- the times there is sand on vehicles, Eric will notify Justo and he usually can take care of it and the sand is decreased the next day. He continues to keep a list and documentation in order to justify requests to incorporate to get new equipment. The berm is also a concern, and is a source of complaints. They were clear cut by ACE and US Silica changed the process of them processing sand instead of dredging sand, which caused a huge increase in sand in the environment. They are not watering the trees on the berm to continue to maintain them, but the berm has helped to decrease the amount of the sand in town overall. Most of the sand we get comes from the dryers, and if the stack scrubbers are not maintained we get sand in the environment. According to research done by Eric, silica sand is very dangerous to humans. He does not have direct knowledge of anyone getting silicosis at this point. The last application for renewal was 5 years ago, people were upset about the sand back then as well. Maybe we could have a survey completed, maybe by the DEP or external company, and have a way to pay for it, possibly through a fundraiser as suggested by Eric. The community would like to be reassured that the air is not polluted by the plant.

Tom McKee- Mauricetown. The plant is not required to complete a restoration of the property once you are completed, they only need to have a plan for restoration, but they do not have to actually complete the

restoration. They do have to replant trees but there is no need to sustain it. They are not meeting basic pollution prevention requirements, as it appears to the general public. Some issues, such as sand coming out to the road (track out sand) is very preventable. Industry standard to prevent the track out: USEPA Best Management Practice (BMP) called "Track-Out Controls". They also are supposed to clean up the roads as well. There is also a distance requirement from the road, and the whole plant is out of compliance. They could re-design the flow of truck traffic and build track out controls into the plans. The problem is significant, and they are sending trucks out to clean it up, but they are already too late. The permit is up for renewal in 2025 and April stated they are discussing beginning the process of beginning the renewal, so now is the time to voice these concerns.

David Kinsey: Mauricetown- could relocate the scale and scale house that could solve the track out issue. This would help with the dirt and debris and could be remediated through the inflow and outflow of the property. The DEP and NJ public health published a report in 2022 and looked at Commercial township to Cumberland county as it relates to cancer related deaths, lung cancer death, COPD ect. Commercial township has an elevated, sometimes double compared to Cumberland county as a whole. Lung cancer deaths had almost 100 deaths per 100,000 residents, compared to Cumberland county at 47 deaths per 100,000 residents. All cancer occurred at 299 vs 186. COPD and asthma numbers were suppressed. Symptoms of silica exposure can occur 20-30 years later after exposure to particulates. The increase in dust and particulates is directly correlated to deferred and poor maintenance. A suggestion would be requesting a copy of the permit and preventative maintenance and cleaning schedule, as well as a copy of their operating permit and rules and regulation off the operations. We should also have a copy of our charter within the scope of authority within the township. The current ordinance has a town engineer has an annual review. It is suggested to have a specific Commercial Township charter, if not write one, and establish our scope of authority within the Township. This will allow us to how we can influence the review process and other environmental concerns within the Township. If we do not have a charter, we should create one and have it include a member of the Township Board to be in attendance at our meetings to help with guiding what we can and cannot do within the township. It was also recommended if the Commission could contact the DEP to see if there are any reports from any of the complaints that have been filed and if we can have copies of the reports to ensure they have been remediated, and if not making sure that we can be the eyes to follow up on the complaints. It was also suggested that there is some sort of process to try and get community members to contact the commission when complaints are filed with the DEP or sand plant, or any other complaints, we can better follow up on the complaints.

The commission will continue to do the research and collect the needed documentation in order to prepare to present the concerns to the Sand plant in the near future. The commission thanked the members of the public for their input into the meetings.

Lorraine's resignation- Lorraine has submitted her resignation from the commission. Her time has been valued with the commission and we thank her for her time and service. She will work with the commission through January 2025 but would be willing to stay until a new member is added to the board. Peter read the resignation letter into the minutes. See attached.

Correspondence: none

Motion to adjourn made by Katie Dayton, Seconded by Dustin Picollo. Meeting adjourned.