

Minutes of the Franklin Township Environmental Commission meeting April 18, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM, and the Sunshine Law notice read. The roll was called. Present were: W. Andrews, C. MacIvor, D. Pydeski, A. Schmidt, D. Triggs, A. Vernick, and P. Walitsky, and Council liaison T. Chase. J. Clyde arrived at 7:10 PM.

W. Andrews reported briefly on the success of the stream clean-up at Weston Canal Rd/Causeway on April 16. He noted that the Saving Water Challenge appears in Franklin Times.

Michèle Samarya-Timm, Somerset County Health Dept., spoke. She shared an announcement of well water testing under auspices of Raritan Headwaters Association. But her principal topic was arthropod (mosquito and tick) borne diseases, not only Zika virus and Lyme disease but also dengue and chikun-gunya. [I would add that there other tick-borne diseases, ehrlichiosis and babesiosis.] She is publicizing a campaign, Fight the Bite. She has done a presentation for county government employees, would like to present to Franklin in the Council chambers, broadcast on Franklin TV, with joint sponsorship by the Environmental Commission. She has created a variety of materials to educate people on protecting themselves from mosquitoes and ticks, including signs for trailheads. The Environmental Commission voted unanimously to support this. Ms. Samarya-Timm will contact Jennifer Gamba for a date when the Council chamber is available. [I received the Fight the Bite flyer, with dates of presentations already scheduled, in e-mail, and passed it on to Bob Vornlocker with the above information.]

The minutes of the April 4 meeting were approved. Four site plans were reviewed.

Sustainable Jersey: T. Chase reported on attending a meeting of Sustainable Somerset [on Complete Streets policy], and that Takeena Deas of Sustainable Somerset would like to address the next Green Team meeting.

Community Gardens: T. Chase reported that enlargement of the Naaman Williams Park garden is imminent, engineers having visited to make measurements for Public Works. Michèle Samarya-Timm reported that there is a kids' community garden program at 935 Hamilton St. She is looking for someone to supervise the program (relieving Diane Leach-Thompson). John Clyde will speak to Food Bank people to see if any of them could do this.

John Clyde reported on the stream clean-up. Close to 900 lbs of waste was collected. For next year, at Councilman Vassanella's suggestion, he is interested in Mile Run below the confluence with DeRussey's Brook (previous clean-ups have focused on the area between DeRussey's Brook and Hamilton St). He will walk that area.

Paul Walitsky reported that there is money in the township budget for an EC banner, and a printer is on contract for such items and could even do the art work. For Franklin Day a table and chairs are needed, and a canopy for sun protection. C. MacIvor volunteered these, and their transportation.

T. Chase answered Mark Healey's questions about the ERI update.

Possible new members for the EC, which has one vacancy, were discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM.