

Minutes of the Franklin Township Environmental Commission meeting July 15, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 PM, and the Sunshine Law Notice read. The roll was called. Present were: W. Andrews, J. Johnson, C. MacIvor, D. Pydeski, R. Razani, A. Schmidt, P. Walitsky; and Council liaison T. Chase. Absent: S. Jaracz, D. Triggs (resigning).

Because there was a lot of business to deal with, the chair did not make a report. Later he mentioned that several wetlands determination letters had been received.

The minutes of the June 17 meeting were approved.

A number of e-mails were received concerning turtle(s) being run over on Skillman Lane, and suggesting that Council approve a Turtle Crossing sign, near the bridge where a brook passes underneath the road. The turtle(s) have not been identified as to species (if they were endangered Wood Turtles, the need would be serious). ... With D. Triggs resigning from the Commission, a new point person for the e-mail is needed. J. Johnson agreed to be the member checking the e-mail.

There were 10 (!) plans for review (though some had been reviewed previously, were back with minor changes).

Sustainable Jersey: T. Chase reported that Sustainable Jersey's review of our 2019 application for certification is complete, but he has not yet received it – they asked for the Complete Streets policy to be send again, the copy in the application was blank.

P. Walitsky reported on his visit, with Councilman Galtieri, to Philips Electric to learn about their Smart Cities street lights, which report back to the township on traffic and road conditions. These are being installed by some municipalities; use of PSE&G-owned poles may be an issue.

D. Pydeski asked whether we could get someone from NJ Division of Fish & Game to give a seminar on coyotes, which are being seen frequently in the township. A. Schmidt agreed to contact Cathy Blumig about this.

Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI): T. Chase reported that what the EC worked on in 2016 is finally about to be adopted by the Planning Board as one of several revisions to the Master Plan; Mark Healey wanted to do them all together. T. Chase will send the link to the posting on the municipal web site. D. Pydeski suggested making it available in the schools, as resource material on many aspects of the township.

A. Schmidt noted that the NJ Noise Control Council, of which he is a member, is updating the Model Noise Ordinance which townships can adopt. Unless we have a Unified Shared Services Agreement with the County, with whom we contract with for Health Department services, they can only enforce the State Noise Regulation (NJAC 7:29) which only covers commercial, industrial and public facility noise sources. Residential noise sources are not covered under 7:29 but are covered under the Model Ordinance.

He suggested that the township explore an agreement with the county Health Dept. to enforce on residents the DEP approved township Model ordinance, rather than enforcement being done by the police, who typically don't have meters to measure the noise level, and merely tell offenders to quiet down. A written warning should be issued for the first offense, but it should be possible to fine repeat offenders.

R. Razani brought up the prospect of getting a grant from the BPU to determine the carbon footprint of the township (in order to reduce it). She will investigate further. W. Andrews commented that the EC should make more applications for grants.

The 2019 Environmental Stewardship awards were briefly mentioned; we now have candidates for both the individual and group awards.

Operation Secure Shred was held on July 13 at the Sewerage Authority. The county reported that 377 vehicles brought documents for shredding and 11.30 tons of paper were collected and shredded.

Single use plastics: T. Chase will attend an ANJEC-sponsored meeting on July 23 in Lambertville. W. Andrews received a letter from the NJ Food Council, stating their preference for a statewide law banning plastic and paper bags rather than municipal ordinances with varying requirements.

W. Andrews reported that the Build-a-Rain Barrel workshop scheduled for Sept. 14 may not take place. The Watershed Institute does not have a Watershed Ambassador this year, and may not be able to send someone to conduct the workshop.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:41 PM.