

## Minutes of the Franklin Township Environmental Commission meeting August 31, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 PM, and the Sunshine Law Notice read. The roll was called. Present were: W. Andrews, S. Jaracz, J. Johnson, C. MacIvor, R. Suydam, A. Schmidt, and P. Walitsky; and Council liaison T. Chase. R. Razani appeared at 7:40 PM. D. Pydeski was prevented from attending by unexpected family responsibilities.

Chair's Report: W. Andrews submitted the final list of Environmental Stewardship awardees to Bob McQueen; it is posted on the web site. A. Schmidt pointed out that it is missing the 2019 awardees; W. Andrews will have them added. The Environmental Justice bill passed both houses of the Legislature, is awaiting the governor's signature. ANJEC and the Watershed Institute are sponsoring a webinar on the new stormwater management regulations on Sept. 9.

The minutes of August 17 were approved unanimously.

Website/e-mail/social media: a number of e-mails were received from the Wyland Foundation about water conservation. Another e-mail was from Maria Santiago, wanting to participate in EC activities. J. Johnson wrote a reply urging her to listen in on EC meetings.

Plans review: the Somerset Run application for two pickleball courts. No important environmental issues were seen, though it was pointed out that if one tree to be removed is large, they would have to plant more than one replacement tree.

A. Schmidt left at this point for another meeting.

New business: municipal energy aggregation is not going anywhere at present; what about community solar? Where could a solar cell field be placed? Township land is generally under Green Acres restrictions. Over parking lots? Let us look for someone knowledgeable to advise us of possibilities.

R. Razani presented concerning ambiguous goals of the state Energy Master Plan. Overall, the state and nation need to get to net *negative* CO<sub>2</sub> emissions; but the EC can only work on minimizing emissions in Franklin Township. She discussed the call for Community Energy Master Plans. The state has announced an ambitious target – 100% renewable generation of electricity by 2050, 80% reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions – but not how to get there. How do we get data for even a baseline of community energy use? PSE&G has data by ZIP code, but the southern end of the township is in the Princeton ZIP code, and the middle in the Franklin Park ZIP code.

P. Walitsky reached out to the Franklin Food Bank as to whether they would be interested in distributing free LED bulbs, to be donated by Philips Electric; but he hasn't yet reached the right person at the Food Bank. What about other non-profits (501c-3 status)? Only such organizations can apply to Philips for bulbs.

Old business updates were considered. In future listings they will be ordered by how active they are. Energy Aggregation will be removed from the list for now, as Council does not wish to act now. The list of Environmental Stewardship awards has been completed, with the addition of the 2019 awards. The issue of LED street lights was reviewed: the BPU is pushing PSE&G to do this. PSE&G claimed that LEDs would require more maintenance. P. Walitsky wrote to the BPU, pointing out that they would require *less* maintenance, as they last longer. Since then nothing has happened.

Undergrounding utility wires – again a BPU matter. What economic analysis has been done, of the cost of undergrounding utilities along existing streets vs. the cost of repeated repairs

after storms, over a long period of time? This calculation should take into account the increasing frequency of damaging storms with global warming. We need to write to the BPU asking for such a study, with a copy to the Star-Ledger. It was moved and approved to write such a letter (R. Suydam and J. Johnson to work on a draft).

Stream cleanup, Sept. 26 – T. Chase to contact Bob Vornlocker to be sure it is supported by the township.

Updating the stormwater management ordinance: several EC members have signed up for the Sept. 9 ANJEC/Watershed webinar. Carl Hauck thanked T. Chase for informing him of this.

T. Chase is to follow up with Bob Vornlocker about municipal energy data, needed for an application for a grant for planning a municipal energy master plan.

It was moved and approved to open the meeting to the public. There were no public attendees. Moved and approved to close the meeting to the public.

J. Johnson will rearrange the Old Business items pursuant to discussion above as to how 'live' they are.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.