

**Minutes of the Franklin Township Environmental Commission virtual meeting
May 17, 2021**

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM (late due to difficulty in getting into Webex; see at end), and the Sunshine Law Notice read. The roll was called. Present were: W. Andrews, S. Jaracz, M. Santiago, A. Schmidt, R. Suydam, and Council liaison T. Chase. P. Walitsky joined at 7:37 PM. J. Johnson did not attend due to illness.

Chair's report: not much. Some progress on finding preparedness for the plastic bag ban. Nothing new on Franklin Day.

The minutes of the May 3 meeting were approved as submitted.

A. Schmidt commented on how public discussion was listed in the agenda.

The meeting was opened to the public. There were no comments. The meeting was closed to public participation.

W. Andrews reported on querying Mark Healey about volunteers (responsibility?) He did not receive a response. And there was no response from the Rutgers Prep student.

R. Suydam asked what is happening about Amy Spears' internship. W. Andrews responded that Bob Vornlocker had told him that action would have to wait until the 2021 township budget is passed. T. Chase attempted to explain that this may be due to Tara Kenyon being appointed as in effect liaison from the EC to township government, with supervisory role over an intern. A. Schmidt commented that the EC ought to be consulted about this role. P. Walitsky and R. Suydam said that this appears to be a step toward a sustainability officer (and grants coordinator, Tara Kenyon has gotten grants for the township). R. Suydam suggested asking Bob Vornlocker what his vision is for Tara Kenyon's role with the EC. W. Andrews will work on a position description for a sustainability officer.

Plans review: P. Walitsky reported that EC comments are being posted with application materials on the Planning and Zoning Board web pages. New applications: St. Sharbel Maronite Catholic Church proposes to tear down its existing church and build a new one on the same site. Tabachnik Foods proposes to build an addition to their plant on Hamilton St./Cordington Ave., approved many years ago but never built. This would be a good site for a green roof – they could grow their own herbs. The EC should regularly ask for charging stations as well as pervious pavement at warehouses and other industrial developments..

New business: green infrastructure planning: we had the report from Tara Kenyon at the last meeting, but there are still questions to be answered. EC web page: all members are asked to "test drive" the current version and report any suggestions. Site plan check list: Mark Healey pointed out Sustainable Jersey's suggested checklist, and ANJEC has a one-page checklist, which R. Suydam suggested would be a good starting point for an internal checklist for the EC (Mark Healey has pointed out that the EC cannot require applicants to complete a checklist). For instance, a question could be, is a charging station for electric vehicles in the plan? T. Chase suggested asking our congresspeople for money in the infrastructure bill to assist multifamily housing with installing charging stations.

Shade Tree/EC joint subcommittee: to meet in June. Ideas for changes to the Shade Tree ordinance are sought.

A. Schmidt read to the Commission his proposed e-mail to Council that DEP no-idling signs be installed at all warehouses. He moved and S. Jaracz seconded that the EC send this e-mail. He

has experience enforcing anti-idling regulations (counties enforce them). This passed unanimously. W. Andrews will send the e-mail as chair.

Plastic bag ban education subcommittee: M. Santiago reported that they met on May 4 and will meet again on May 25. They are seeking what other communities are doing. On May 27 there will be a state webinar on this subject. There is a lot of information available, the EC's role should be to make it a Franklin thing. A. Schmidt suggested e-mailing Council, asking them to fund reusable shopping bags to be given out at Franklin Day, with a flyer explaining the rules. S. Jaracz suggested printing the rules on the bags. W. Andrews suggested printing a QR code leading to the rules. R. Suydam pointed out that such bags would be just a part of an educational campaign. A. Schmidt moved that such an e-mail be sent to the mayor and council; seconded by R. Suydam. This passed unanimously.

T. Chase reported on AB 4843 (requiring counties, towns and non-profits to have a forest management plan prepared for all forest lots of 25 acres or more) and associated bills; but he hasn't read them all).

Old business: Environmental Stewardship awards: P. Walitsky will contact the Center School concerning their planned installation of solar cells over their parking lot. Opposing truck transfer of liquefied natural gas and the Gibbstown port for this: an e-mail was sent to the person who wrote to us, suggesting that they might have meant to contact Franklin Township in Gloucester County, which would be more directly affected.

T. Chase explained how township field assessors will resume using township electric vehicles after June 1.

The meeting was opened to the public. There were no comments, and the meeting was closed to the public.

S. Jaracz explained what had happened to the Webex access: the township had canceled his Webex account, without informing him. The EC should have two accounts, two people able to open the meeting. W. Andrews will contact Bob McQueen to this end, and T. Chase will ask him what happened.

'The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 PM.