

Minutes of the Franklin Township Environmental Commission meeting, October 7, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM, and the Sunshine Law Notice read. The roll was called. Present were: W. Andrews, T. Chase, S. Jaracz, M. Santiago, A. Schmidt, E. Vastola, and P. Walitsky, and sustainability coordinator T. Kenyon. Council liaison E. Potosnak arrived at 7:09 PM. Absent: E. Pires, R. Suydam.

Chair's report: he mentioned upcoming environmental webinars, including Tuesday nights on stormwater management.

The minutes of the Sept. 30 meeting were approved as submitted.

The meeting was opened to the public. Terri Thorson alerted the Commission to Somerset County's Weekend in the Past, Oct. 12-13, when various historic buildings are opened to the public, specifically the Meadows Foundation's Wyckoff-Garretson house. The meeting was then closed to the public.

There was no correspondence.

Site plans: three site plans are scheduled before the Planning Board, but only one, Devin, is up on the web site, but not including the site plan. T. Kenyon reviewed the township engineer's comments and our previous comments. This is a revision; it is proposed to take down one house and a garage at 11 Bunker Hill Rd and build eight single-family houses – essentially an extension of Princeton Highlands.

New business: Master Plans are now required, upon revision, to include a Climate Change Hazard Vulnerability Assessment. Sustainable Jersey grants are available to assist in preparing this. T. Kenyon has not yet been able to discuss this with Mark Healey, who will have principal responsibility for preparing this, for approval by the Planning Board.

Subcommittee reports: M. Santiago has talked to the Chamber of Commerce about the possibility of creating a green coalition of businesses, and a partnership of activities that the EC can participate in.

S. Jaracz reported that a showing of the film on the Green Amendment is now definitely scheduled for Nov. 14, with Maya van Rossum, Delaware Riverkeeper and supporter of the amendment, present for discussion. E. Potosnak and Senator Smith are not available; S. Jaracz has reached out to Sen. Linda Greenstein, sponsor of the bill introduced in the state Senate. She may just send a representative if the crowd is not large.

S. Jaracz has drafted an article on our EVAL award, but it is not yet ready for discussion with the Commission. Jenny Kafas has sent a draft article on No Mow until Earth Day and leaving leaves on the lawn, but in his judgment it is emotional rather than fact-filled. A. Schmidt asked that the article on the EVAL award be sent to the Commission prior to the next meeting when it will be presented for EC approval.

P. Walitsky spoke about the Torus proposal for collection of food waste for composting. He spoke with BioGen, a subsidiary of Trenton Renewables, who carry out the actual composting. They offered a tour of their facility. P. Walitsky, E. Vastola and David Desrochers of Canal Walk's environmental committee will tour the facility. The Canal Walk environmental committee expects that it will not be difficult to find at least five households there to enroll in Torus' program. This will then serve as a pilot program before we publicize Torus broadly to the township.

W. Andrews brought up news reports of possible reopening of shuttered nuclear power plants, including Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania and Holtec in Michigan.

T. Kenyon showed proposed designs for the banner (for the PSE&G/Sustainable Jersey energy efficiency program) and business cards for EC members. After a few minor revisions these will be presented to the township's printer for quotes. Our designs require four colors; she will also ask for quoted for a two-color version.

The meeting was again opened to the public. There were no comments. The meeting was then adjourned, at 7:46 PM.