**STILLWATER TOWNSHIP**

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

**April 11, 2022**

**Regular/Zoom Meeting**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**  Mrs. Emmetts, Mrs. Tracey, Ms. Raff, Mr. Szabo, Mr. Dvorsky, Mrs. Branagan ( Zoom), Ms. Wills, Ms. Coriston, Mr. Branagan (Zoom)

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

Mr. Branagan called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m. with the statement that this meeting is in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. This was a regularly scheduled meeting of the Stillwater Township Environmental Commission. Regular meetings are held on the second Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m., at the Stillwater Township Municipal Building located in Middleville, New Jersey.

The flag was saluted and roll call taken.

**Appointment:** The Township Committee appointed Amanda Coriston as an Alternate #2 member, term expiring 12/31/22. Ms. Coriston was sworn in by the Municipal Clerk prior to the meeting.

**Minutes**

Mrs. Tracey made a **motion** to approve the minutes of 3/14/22, seconded by Mr. Dvorsky.

**Roll Call Vote**: Mrs. Branagan, yes, Mr. Dvorsky, yes, Mrs. Emmetts, yes, Ms. Raff, yes, Mr. Szabo, yes, Mrs. Tracey, yes, Mr. Branagan, yes

Discussion: Mrs. Tracey reported she had not received a response to her email sent to the COLA presentation speaker regarding the biochar and she will follow-up prior to the next EC meeting. The EC discussed testing vs. sending the biochar back to the manufacturer. The cost for testing is relatively inexpensive at less than $25 to test for phosphorus. Mrs. Emmetts noted the concern is based on other materials that may be contained in the disposed biochar.

**Bills**

Mrs. Emmetts made a **motion** to approve the following bill, pending availability of funds, seconded by Mr. Szabo:

**Secretary:** $240.00

**Roll Call Vote**: Mrs. Branagan, yes, Mr. Dvorsky, yes, Mrs. Emmetts, yes, Ms. Raff, yes, Mr. Szabo, yes, Mrs. Tracey, yes, Mr. Branagan, yes

**At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 7:18 p.m.**

**There being no members of the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed at 7:19 p.m.**

**Correspondence**

**-Resolution 2022-061 Appointing Amanda Coriston as an Alternate #2 member**

**-Resolution 2022-069 Approving the Preferred Tree List**

**-Euronfins Approval of Quote:** *Mr. Branagan reported he contacted Eurofins to inform them the EC approved the quote and water testing would be conducted in the fall.*

**-2022 ANJEC Grants for Open Space Stewardship Projects: Applications due 5/2/22**

**-NJDEP Application: Block 2401, Lot 53 – General Permit #8**: *The application is for an addition to an existing single-family dwelling extending into the wetlands buffer area. Mr. Dvorsky and Mr. Szabo offered to visit the site. Mr. Szabo was not sure if the EC site survey application would be sufficient for an NJDEP inspection. Mr. Branagan stated he would contact the application Wetlands Specialist Brian Cramer to obtain further information. Mr. Szabo requested that Mr. Branagan provide him the site survey application to inquire if it would be suitable or if additional criteria should be considered.*

**Old Business**

**VMP Shed:**

Mr. Branagan reported the lock and sign were removed from the shed. Following a brief discussion, it was determined the shed should remain until the bear-proof receptacle is received.

**Tree Swallow Nests:**

Mr. Branagan and Mr. Szabo cleaned the tree swallow boxes reporting one had been damaged.

**Fishing Line Collection:**

All line is to be cleaned of litter/leaves, hooks and lead sinkers. Lead sinkers are to be provided at the meeting for recycling.

**Biochar Letter Review – Fairview Lake:**

Mr. Szabo, Ms. Raff and Mr. Branagan will try to meet prior to the May meeting to draft a letter for EC review. Mrs. Emmetts will proofread the letter when completed.

**New Business**

**Paradise Fishing Club:**

Mr. Szabo reported 150 brown trout were stocked this year at a cost of $5,000; 15”-17” @ $20 each and 19”-21” @ $45 each. He noted the trout stocked were superb.

**Volunteer/Member Recognition**:

**-Mr. Szabo and Mr. Branagan** for cleaning the tree swallow boxes.

**-Mrs. Raff** for following up on the shed at VMP so the sign could be removed.

**Endangered and Threatened Species Sightings**: None observed.

**Site Survey Inspections (2) – Zoning Board:**

-Block 2601, Lot 3, application for the construction of an above-ground pool exceeding 15% slope

-Block 4104, Lot 4, application to expand an existing driveway

Mr. Dvorsky would conduct both site surveys and Ms. Coriston and Ms. Wills would accompany him to observe the site survey procedure. The inspection was tentatively set for Thursday, 4/14/22 at 5 p.m. Mr. Dvorsky would notify the homeowners prior to the inspection.

**At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 7:50 p.m.**

**Michele Vosper, Middleville Road** was present by Zoom. She expressed concern with the lighting on the DPW garage. She had submitted a letter addressing her concerns and including an article entitled, “Let’s enjoy more of the Nighttime Sky,” from the NJ Sierran edition April-June 2022. She resides across the road from the DPW facility and the light on the building is extremely bright at night. She questioned if this has been an issue of concern in the past and suggested an alternative lighting system which is triggered by movement or one with less disturbing lighting. Ms. Vosper noted it has a negative effect on both the neighborhood and the wildlife. Mr. Branagan agreed with her concerns and asked if it could be changed to a motion light or possibly directed at the ground. Ms. Chammings will bring the matter to the Township Committee. She also suggested that Ms. Raff address it with the Planning Board. Mr. Szabo stated this issue may be a good fit for the ANJEC grant. Ms. Chammings provided a PBS THIRTEEN presentation article entitled, “Why light pollution is a solvable environmental crisis,” dated 4/1/22.

**There being further members of the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed to the public at 7:58 p.m.**

**Planning Board (PB) Liaison Report:** (Ms. Raff)

Ms. Raff reported the Planning Board reviewed a site plan application for the North Shore House for the removal of an existing deck to be replaced with a larger deck including walkways. The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was waived due to prior Planning Board approval.

**Township Liaison Report:** Committeewoman Chammings

Ms. Chammings reported the following items:

-The Zoning Board/Planning Board to a Land Use Board conversion was voted down.

-The ordinance regarding residency requirements was tabled.

-Employee Greg Holcomb resigned from the Recycling Center.

-A letter was sent to the current owner of 947A Old Schoolhouse Road indicating the Zoning Board overturned the Zoning Officer’s determination and the owner must address the stump removal and vegetation piles on the property. The letter was sent 3/30/22 and the owner has 10 days to abate the matter.

-The 2022 Budget was introduced on 4/5/22.

-An ordinance was introduced amending the designated enforcing officer under the Tree Ordinance.

-The Committee is concerned with upcoming road projects and how far funding will carry.

-Paving will begin shortly on Pond Brook Road.

-The ordinance limiting or banning single use plastic bags in the township was voted down. Ms. Chammings was concerned with the possible effect the failure of the ordinance to pass would have on the Clean Communities funding.

-Tonya Stark resigned from the Recreation Commission and Planning Board.

-The Township Committee approved a resolution opposing a proposal by the New Jersey and Pennsylvania chapters of the Sierra Club to change the designation of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area to the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve, until a formal plan is presented for public review and comment.

-Two applications were deemed complete by the Zoning Board. They are the applications pending EC site survey inspections.

-The Township Committee is moving forward on pursuing outstanding taxes on 94 properties. There has been $30,000 collected in redemptions at this point. The Committee will move forward with 14 foreclosures of larger properties.

-An inspection is due on the Crandon Lakes dam in two years. Mr. Fisher and Ms. Chammings will serve on a committee with Crandon Lakes and Hampton to address seven issues prior to the inspection.

-Ms. Chammings contacted Nathaniel Sajdak and Ms. DiBlasio regarding damage by four-wheelers near the Twin Bridges that occurred on property owned by the Nature Conservancy.

-Ms. Chammings reported her students are still working on the testing of the biochar.

Mr. Dvorsky questioned if Stillwater had an Emergency Management Plan in place. Ms. Chammings stated yes and noted a Swift 9-1-1 message is also in place for emergency situations, and updates are posted on the township website and Office of Emergency Management (OEM) webpage. She added that the Sussex County website also provides information countywide and is a wealth of information.

With no further business to come before the Commission, Mr. Szabo made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m., seconded by Mrs. Emmetts. In a voice vote, all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kathy Wunder, Secretary