**STILLWATER TOWNSHIP**

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

**May 9, 2022**

**Regular/Zoom Meeting**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**  Mrs. Emmetts, Mrs. Tracey, Mr. Szabo, Mrs. Branagan, Ms. Wills, Ms. Coriston, Mr. Branagan

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Ms. Raff, Mr. Dvorsky

Mr. Branagan called the meeting to order at 7:06 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.

**Minutes**

Mrs. Tracey made a **motion** to approve the minutes of 4/11/22, seconded by Mrs. Emmetts.

**Roll Call Vote**: Mrs. Branagan, yes, Mrs. Emmetts, yes, Mr. Szabo, yes, Mrs. Tracey, yes, Ms. Wills, yes, Ms. Coriston, yes, Mr. Branagan, yes

Minutes Discussion:

-Ms. Chammings and Mr. Dvorsky attended the Nature Conservancy & Ridge and Valley Conservancy workshop on April 28, 2022.

-Mrs. Tracey is waiting for a response from her email that was forwarded to Dr. Lubnow, Princeton Hydro.

-Mr. Branagan confirmed the stream water testing with Eurofins for October 2022 and they will provide bottles at the beginning of October.

-The two site surveys from the April 11th EC meeting were conducted by Mr. Dvorsky, Ms. Wills and Ms. Coriston. Both Ms. Wills and Ms. Coriston found that although both sites were very different, each was interesting to observe. They briefly discussed the slope on the Old Schoolhouse Road property which they found to be precarious and needed to be addressed.

**Bills**

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

**Secretary:** $240.00

**Roll Call Vote**: Mrs. Branagan, yes, Mrs. Emmetts, yes, Mr. Szabo, yes, Mrs. Tracey, yes, Ms. Wills, yes, Ms. Coriston, yes, Mr. Branagan, yes

**At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 7:16 p.m.**

**There being no members of the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed at 7:16 p.m.**

**Correspondence**

-NJDEP Division of Solid and Hazardous Waste, re: May 4, 2022 Polystyrene Foam Food Service Ban and Single-Use Carryout Bags Ban

-Nature Conservancy & Ridge and Valley Conservancy: Kittatinny Ridge and Valley region workshop on April 28th, 6-8 p.m. at the Princeton Blairstown Center in Hardwick

-Resolution 2022-10: Ordinance amending Chapter 382 “Trees,” Section 382-15 “Enforcing Officer” shall be the Zoning Officer Tom Dixon

-Resolution 2022-063A: Beth Raff appointed as a Class IV Member of the Planning Board filling the vacancy of Jack Branagan

-EC Approved Budget 2022 (as of May 4, 2022)

**Old Business**

**VMP Shed:**

The Recreation Commission is interested in moving the shed to a different location if possible. The DPW will determine if it is usable or should be removed. Mr. Branagan contacted the CFO and the bear-proof receptacle will be ordered as soon as the Clean Communities funding is received.

**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. Branagan drafted a letter with the assistance of Mr. Szabo and provided an information packet for the EC to review. Mr. Branagan will be meeting with Ms. Raff to review the information and make possible additions to the letter. EC members expressed concern with a lengthy letter as it may lose its effectiveness and not be fully read. Ms. Coriston offered to email Dr. Obrupta for his input. She will contact Mr. Branagan to discuss her thoughts prior to emailing Dr. Obrupta and will email his contact information to Mr. Branagan. Mrs. Branagan questioned who the letter would be sent to and noted the EC members are not scientists and are not educated on the issue. She questioned if this was the responsibility of the EC. Mrs. Emmetts stated that spreading the biochar after use will cause it to leach back into the water. Mr. Branagan felt the biochar should be sent back to the manufacturer. Mrs. Emmetts noted it would then be sent onto someone else. Mr. Szabo stated proof is needed and he suggested contacting the NJDEP to request evidence that spreading the biochar after use is safe. Mr. Branagan stated the biochar will not only absorb phosphorus but also any volatile organics that are present. Mrs. Emmetts stated according to Fairview Lake they only had HABs occur twice in the last 20 years.

Following the lengthy discussion, Ms. Coriston agreed to review the letter and packet and reach out to both Mr. Branagan and Dr. Obrupta. Mr. Branagan will meet with Ms. Raff for her input.

**New Business**

**Volunteer/Member Recognition**:

-Mr. Dvorsky, Ms. Wills and Ms. Coriston for conducting the two site surveys.

-Mr. Szabo for assisting Mr. Branagan with the biochar letter.

-Mr. Branagan for drafting the biochar letter.

**Endangered and Threatened Species Sightings**:

-Bobcats (endangered)

Ms. Coriston observed an Eastern Gray Tree Frog and Mr. Szabo discussed a bear sighting in his neighborhood and bear awareness.

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

Mr. Branagan made a **motion** to accept the following site surveys, seconded by Mrs. Emmetts:

-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

**Roll Call Vote**: Mrs. Branagan, yes, Mrs. Emmetts, yes, Mr. Szabo, yes, Mrs. Tracey, yes, Ms. Wills, yes, Ms. Coriston, yes, Mr. Branagan, yes

**At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 7:45 p.m.**

**Michele Vosper, Middleville Road** was present by Zoom. She attended the Ridge & Valley/Nature Conservancy workshop. She discussed New Jersey being developed in the future and looking to find areas that can be preserved. She stated Stillwater is favorable to preservation referencing Bobcat Alley. The group is trying to educate the public. She referenced an online map with overlays depicting

developed, not developed, preserved properties, etc. She felt it was a resource that would be of interest to many people. Several groups spoke at the workshop and will be collaborating and providing outreach to landowners interested in preservation. Ms. Chammings reported the workshop was well attended by 50+ people including herself, Ms. Vosper, Mr. Dvorsky and his wife. The map Ms. Vosper was referring to is entitled the NJ Blueprint and has 20+ layers. Ms. Chammings noted it is great to see the layout of greenways and paths forming in Stillwater. Mrs. Branagan provided the following link for the map: <https://www.njmap2.com/blueprint/> The group will be holding another workshop in the near future. Mr. and Mrs. Branagan donated 55 acres to the Nature Conservancy as part of the Bobcat Alley project and Mr. Branagan stated they were great to work with. Ms. Vosper stated the Nature Conservancy just planted 40 trees on her property. Mr. Branagan stated there are two signs at Veteran’s Memorial Park Ms. Vosper may be interested in; one regarding tree restoration and the other animals in the area.

Ms. Chammings reported she forwarded Ms. Vosper’s letter regarding her concerns with the lighting at the DPW garage that is directed toward her property to the Township Committee. Ms. Raff also addressed it with the Planning Board. Mayor Scott and Committeeman Barta met with the DPW Supervisor and it was agreed the lighting would be redirected or a motion sensor would be installed.

**There being no further members of the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed to the public.**

**Planning Board (PB) Liaison Report:** No report.

**Township Liaison Report:** Committeewoman Chammings

Ms. Chammings reported the following items:

-Zoning Board application for a pool on a steep slope was approved. It was existing and was permitted by the previous owner. Some of the slope was manmade by excavation and replacing the pool will improve the situation.

-Township Committee may be interested in the preservation of land. Ms. Chammings suggested forming an Open Space Advisory Committee.

-Free tree seedlings were distributed to the public for Arbor Day. Resident Tom Paris also donated 60 Chestnut trees to the township for distribution. A thank you will be sent for his generosity.

-2022 Budget was adopted on 5/3/22 with a municipal tax of $4.64 per $204,000 assessed value.

-The tree ordinance was amended changing the Enforcing Officer to the Zoning Officer.

-Mt. Benevolence Road paving was approved.

-Field maintenance and janitorial services contracts were awarded.

-Dawn Tighe was appointed as the Deputy Tax Collector.

-Construction Fees Ordinance to increase fees was tabled after public concern.

With no further business to come before the Commission, Mrs. Emmetts made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m., seconded by Mrs. Emmetts. In a voice vote, all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kathy Wunder, Secretary