**STILLWATER TOWNSHIP**

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

**August 8, 2022**

**Regular/Zoom Meeting**

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Ms. Wills

Mrs. Branagan arrived at 7:50 p.m.

Mr. Branagan called the meeting to order at 7:04 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**

Mr. Szabo made a **motion** to approve the minutes of 7/18/22, seconded by Mrs. Tracey.

**Discussion**:

-Ms. Coriston attended the Blueprint NJ webinar

-Planning Board/Environmental Commission liaison: No member interested at this time. Mrs. Emmetts has agreed to attend the August 17th Planning Board meeting on the Master Plan draft on behalf of the Environmental Commission.

-Bear-proof receptacles: Mrs. Wunder has not received a response from Lafayette Township and will follow-up.

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

**Bills**

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

**Secretary:** $240.00

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

**At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 7:10 p.m.**

**Elaine Makarevich, Stillwater School teacher** was present via Zoom and spoke about the recycling of plastic film at the school being conducted through the TREX program. EC member Ms. Coriston is working with Mrs. Makarevich on the program. The plastic film collection includes bags, mailers, air-filled plastic, food wrapping, basically anything that is not normal plastic. She is hoping to have collection bins located in the municipality at the town hall, the Community Center and the Recycling Center in the near future. Each bin will include a poster indicating what items can be appropriately disposed. Mrs. Makarevich noted that all disposed plastic must be cleaned and free of food particles. Bins are currently located at the school and students collect the plastic as part of a math lesson, sorting and weighing it. She also works with teacher Janet Mahedy and the 4th and 6th grade students in the Recycling Club once a week collecting, weighing and bagging the plastic. Volunteers then pick the plastic up and deliver it to the Weis in Newton. Several community volunteers would be needed to pick up plastic from the municipal locations. The Commission and Mrs. Makarevich discussed the responsibility of volunteers collecting, sorting and weighing the plastic from the municipal bins compared to collecting from the bins and bringing it to a central location at the school where the students can sort and weigh it. Mrs. Makarevich stated she could work with 10-20 students to address the municipal collection if notified ahead of time that the collection was being done and delivered to the school. She would have no issue weighing it and including it with the school collection to be delivered to Weis. Mr. Branagan expressed concern with items being mixed in with the plastic film disposal, noting his experience with collecting plastic bags at the Recycling Center was very negative. Mrs. Makarevich suggested having only two municipal bins, located at the town hall and the Community Center. She has receptacles that can be used for the collection, including lids and a hole for disposal. The program runs throughout the school year and approval has been received from the Township Committee for the placement of the bins. The next step is to get community volunteers. Last year the program collected 500 pounds of plastic and received a wind chime made from Trex which is displayed in the school gazebo. Mr. Dvorsky asked if clothing bins could be repurposed to be used at the school entrance for one consolidated collection location. Mrs. Makarevich indicated this was discussed in the past, however the Board of Education was concerned with safety and security issues with cars entering the student areas. It could also potentially lead to illegal dumping outside the bins. Ms. Chammings offered to provide clear plastic bags through the township for the municipal bins, funded through the Clean Communities Program. Mrs. Makarevich was grateful as their budget is tight. Ms. Coriston and Mrs. Makarevich will discuss the matter further next week and will come up with a plan for moving forward.

The EC thanked Mrs. Makarevich for her time.

**There being no further members of the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed at 7:40 p.m.**

**Correspondence**

**NJ Conservation Blueprint Map 101 Webinar, July 20, 2022:** Ms. Coriston attended the webinar and reported the course included the basic tools for using the program. She noted the accuracy of the program is incredible and she felt it would be a very useful tool moving forward with respect to site surveys, lots, slopes, overall topography, etc. There will be a series of webinars offered on the topic and she will continue to attend.

**Citizen Leadership Form – Maureen Tsadilas:**  Following review of Ms. Tsadilas’ form, Mr. Dvorsky made a **motion** to accept the applicant, Maureen Tsadilas, for appointment, seconded by Mrs. Emmetts.

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

**Old Business**

**Reminder: Township Committee Meeting, August 16, 2022 at 7 p.m. Biochar Letter:**

Mr. Branagan reminded the EC that the biochar letter will be reviewed by the Township Committee at their August 16th meeting and he asked the members to attend if possible to provide their input and support of the letter. The EC would like the Township Committee to recognize the issue and address it. Mr. Szabo referred to a letter from the Swartswood Lakes and Watershed Association (SWLA) written August 3, 2003 to the State and copied to the Stillwater Township Mayor regarding concerns with the State’s backing of a proposal for the use of bio-soil/sludge. The lake association opposed the proposal. Mr. Szabo offered to read the letter at the August 16th Township Committee meeting. Mrs. Emmetts had no objection from the lake association standpoint. Mr. Dvorsky had no objection and felt it was a good idea. Mr. Szabo also referred to recent news in New York State regarding bio-soil/sludge that has caused an outbreak of polio.

Mr. Dvorsky briefly discussed the importation of soil in the township and Ms. Chammings referred to the township ordinance which allows for a certain amount of soil to be brought in without a permit. Once the allowable amount is exceeded a permit and certification are required. Enforcement of such is through the Zoning Officer.

**New Business**

**Veteran’s Memorial Park (VMP) Bridge Sign:** Mr. Branagan reported the sign over the bridge needs to be cleaned. He contacted Bob Vendetti who made the sign, and he recommended using a 30-second rinse from Lowe’s that is sprayed on and rinsed off. Mr. Branagan noted the product is safe for use near water. The EC suggested having the DPW do so and Ms. Chammings will follow-up with the DPW Supervisor.

**Bear-proof Receptacle at VMP:** Mr. Dvorsky suggested establishing a carry-in/carry-out policy at the park similar to that at the State Park. Mrs. Emmetts noted the State Park also has a maintenance crew enforcing the policy. Ms. Coriston agreed with Mr. Dvorsky’s suggestion noting unfortunately that not everyone will comply. Ms. Chammings will follow-up with the CFO to inquire if carry-in/carry-out bags can be purchased for use at the parks to see how well the implementation of the policy would work.

Ms. Chammings reported the township Stormwater Management designation has been changed to a Tier A and a waiver may be pursued. As part of the designation change, there are ordinance requirements that must be met. The carry-in/carry-out policy would fit perfectly. Ms. Chammings will discuss the policy with the Township Committee during her liaison report and indicate the EC is in full support of the program. Ms. Chammings discussed the change in the Stormwater Management designation stating it is based partially on our discharge into Category One streams. Water quality of our surface water is decreasing.

**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.

Mr. Branagan displayed a receptacle removed from the site on Saddleback Road. He asked that members check their receptacles.

Mr. Szabo spoke of a property along the river where the State has stocked for many years. The State now wants to impose a catch and release in that area. In response, the owner will not allow fishing along his property. Mr. Szabo will wait until after the fall season to see if line needs to be picked up.

Mr. Branagan reviewed the fishing receptacle locations and who is responsible for each receptacle. This item will be added to the next agenda for further discussion.

**Site Survey Inspection – Zoning Board:**

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

Block 3402, Lot 4.01, in-ground pool in the front yard

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

**Volunteer/Member Recognition**:

-Ms. Coriston for attending the webinar on the NJ Blueprint Map.

-Mr. Branagan for conducting the site survey and trying to reattach the sign on the cardboard dumpster at the Recycling Center. (Ms. Chamming will contact Paul Hawkins of the DPW regarding the sign)

**Endangered and Threatened Species Sightings**:

Mr. Szabo spoke about a bobcat sighting in his yard on Swartswood Lake. He also displayed a photo of a 3.5 inch caterpillar and reported that a wolf at the Lakota Preserve had been killed by a rattlesnake bite.

**At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 8:40 p.m.**

**Elaine Makarevich, Stillwater School teacher,** via Zoombriefly discussed the North American Monarch, noting it has been added to the endangered species list. She stated a program has been implemented at Stillwater School using butterfly weed as there is a shortage of milkweed available for larvae.

**There being no further members of the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed to the public at 8:44 p.m.**

**Planning Board (PB) Liaison Report:**

Mrs. Emmetts agreed to attend the August 17, 2022 Planning Board meeting on the Master Plan on behalf of the Environmental Commission. This item will be added to the September agenda.

**Township Committee Liaison Report**: Committeewoman Chammings

-The Zoning Board heard several applications at their last meeting including applications for an in-ground pool, a generator and a single-family dwelling reconstruction; two resolutions were memorialized. Board Engineer Joe Golden resigned effective at the end of 2022.

-Recreation Summer Camp is currently being held for two weeks.

-The Fall Festival will be a collaboration between the Recreation Commission and the Historical Society.

-The town-wide garage sale will be held on October 15-16, 2022.

-Ms. Halpin represented Stillwater at the Queen of the Fair contest.

-River Friendly Farm post cards are available.

With no further business to come before the Commission, Mr. Szabo made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 p.m., seconded by Mrs. Emmetts. In a voice vote, all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kathy Wunder, Secretary