**STILLWATER TOWNSHIP**

 **ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

 **October 17, 2022**

 **Regular/Zoom Meeting**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**  Mrs. Branagan, Ms. Coriston (via Zoom), Mrs. Emmetts, Mr. Szabo, Mrs. Tsadilas, Mr. Branagan

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Mrs. Tracey, Ms. Wills, Mr. Dvorsky

Mr. Branagan called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. with the statement that this meeting is in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. This was a rescheduled meeting of the Stillwater Township Environmental Commission due to the Columbus Day holiday. 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. Emmetts made a **motion** to approve the minutes of 9/12/22, seconded by Mrs. Branagan.

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

**Bills**

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

**Secretary:** $240.00

**J. Branagan**: $18.13 (Site Survey Inspection Mileage)

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

**At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 7:11 p.m.**

**There being no members of the public present, this portion of the meeting was closed at 7:11 p.m.**

**Correspondence**

There was no correspondence to report. Mr. Branagan informed the new EC members that Environmental Commission Handbooks were available to those interested.

**Old Business**

**Biochar Update:**

Mr. Branagan spoke with Township Attorney Howard Vex who asked that research be done to see if there are manufacturers that would accept the biochar back after use. Ms. Coriston provided a list of EPA regulated companies to Mrs. Wunder for her research and she stated the more biochar is used as a bio-filter in a body of water the more prevalent regulations will become. Biochar used as a bio-filter in water can be recycled but should be dried for lower shipping costs. Mrs. Wunder reached out to several biochar companies and Biochar Now indicated they do accept it as long as it was purchased through their company. There is no cost to return it except for the shipping fees. Mr. Branagan would attend the next Township Committee meeting and provide the information to Mr. Vex. Mr. Szabo reported he attended the last Township Committee meeting and asked about the progress on drafting a biochar ordinance. Mr. Vex indicated the Township Committee is working very quickly on the matter. Mr. Szabo noted biochar should not be allowed on any soil located in the community. Mr. Szabo felt it was not the EC’s responsibility to do the research, it should be up to the product user to research and prove the results. The ordinance should state that if biochar is used it must be removed after use. Mrs. Emmetts felt the user will not initiate legislation and it is in the best interest of the EC to do so. Ms. Coriston recommended continuing to follow up with the Township Committee on the issue. The facts have been presented and progress is being made. Mrs. Tsadilas suggested scheduling a meeting with Fairview Lake Association to bring them up to date on the matter. Mrs. Branagan felt Fairview Lake should be notified and educated on the drafting of the proposed biochar ordinance. Mrs. Tsadilas stated she would attend the next Township Committee meeting and Mr. Branagan indicated he would contact Fairview Lake to keep them informed. Mr. Szabo suggested including a penalty possibly under the littering/dumping section of the code, as he felt that would be more effective. Ms. Chammings questioned if it would be more appropriate to do so under the existing soil ordinance.

**Veterans Memorial Park (VMP):**

The bridge sign cleaning is on hold due to DPW staffing shortages. The Township Committee did not have an issue with implementing a carry-in/carry-out policy at the park. The CFO will research the costs and remaining Clean Communities funding following Clean-Up Day. The “No Parking” sign was installed but in the wrong location on the gate to the fields at VMP. A new sign will be purchased and installed near the river, no charge to the EC.

**Stillwater School - Community Connections TREX Program:**

Ms. Coriston reported that the receptacles were located at the Municipal Building and the Community Center. Ms. Chammings will provide the bags and the DPW will drill holes in the bottom of the receptacles and weigh them down for future storms. Community volunteers are still needed to check the receptacles.

**Stream Water Testing:**

EC members will label the bottles following the meeting tonight. Water testing will be conducted toward the end of October.

**New Business**

**2023 EC Budget Review:**

Mrs. Emmetts made a **motion** to maintain the same budget as 2022, seconded by Mr. Branagan as follows:

Advertising: $125.00

Forms/Books: $100.00

Office Supplies: $200.00

Membership: $425.00

Stream Water Testing: $3,500.00

Community Outreach/Events: $200.00

Seminars/Training: $400.00

Brochures: $250.00

Printing: $200.00

Mileage: $250.00

Total $5,560.00

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

**Site Survey Inspections (3) – Zoning Board and Planning Board:**

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

-Site Survey Acceptance (3): 1) Minor Subdivision of Lot 1, Block 3303 and Lot 3, Block 302

 2) Construct 24’ x 30’ addition, Lot 53, Block 2401

3) Disturb slopes greater than 15% to construct a driveway; construct an accessory building with a height exceeding 15’, Lot 2.01, Block 3804

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

**Volunteer/Member Recognition**:

-Ms. Coriston for providing a list of EPA regulated biochar companies.

-Mrs. Wunder for conducting the research on the biochar companies.

-Mr. Branagan for conducting the three site surveys.

**Endangered and Threatened Species Sightings**:

-Red-shouldered Hawk

Miscellaneous sightings: garter snakes, porcupines, fisher cats

**At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 7:55 p.m.**

**There being no members of the public present, this portion of the meeting was closed to the public at 7:55 p.m.**

**Planning Board Liaison Report**: Mr. Branagan

-Discussion was held on the following topics: Master Plan, rental properties and related fees; public input on rental fees and having a less restrictive ordinance; extending the 30-day period for short-term rentals; Air BNBs; short-term rental smoke certifications and landlord registrations and who is responsible for such. At this time, Stillwater only has an ordinance for Bed and Breakfast.

Miscellaneous: Mr. Branagan questioned speeding on Old Schoolhouse Road. Ms. Chammings reported that State Police presence has been addressing the issue of speeding in the township.

**Township Committee Liaison Report**: Committeewoman Chammings

-A representative of the Animal Protection League of New Jersey provided a presentation at the last Township Committee meeting regarding geese and bears. Ms. Chammings asked her to reach out to the EC regarding bear-proof containers. She will also provide a presentation at the Community Center in the near future. Mrs. Emmetts noted the State Park has bear pamphlets available and may be able to provide to the township. Mr. Szabo referenced a recent bear attack on a child in Connecticut in a no hunting area. He noted the bear growth pattern is as unbelievable in Connecticut as it is in New Jersey. Mrs. Tsadilas asked if the township has an ordinance for feeding deer which in turn bring in bears. Ms. Chammings stated that matter falls under the jurisdiction of the NJDEP Fish and Wildlife.

-Ms. Chammings will follow-up on the TREX program information posting on the town website and Facebook page. Ms. Coriston can forward all information to Lynda Knott, Municipal Clerk.

-Ms. Chammings thanked Mrs. Tsadilas, Mrs. Tosti and Mrs. Delaney for their work on the Fall Festival. They did a wonderful job and the event was well-attended with great weather.

-Two DPW employees were hired.

-Interviewing is being conducted for a temporary DPW employee.

-The Township Attorney and Tax Collector will meet tomorrow and will have a foreclosure update at the Township Committee meeting.

-The Tax Collector will retire at the end of October. Three candidates are set to be interviewed for the position.

-An applicant for the Recreation Commission secretary position will attend the next meeting.

-Two ordinances are on the agenda for the 10/18/22 meeting: 1) Weight Classification; 2) Residency

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

Respectfully submitted,

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Kathy Wunder, Secretary