**STILLWATER TOWNSHIP**

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

**November 14, 2022**

**Regular/Zoom Meeting**

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Mrs. Emmetts\*

\*Mrs. Emmetts attempted to attend via Zoom however, due to technical difficulties on the township side, she was unable to access the meeting.

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. 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**

Ms. Coriston made a **motion** to approve the minutes of 10/17/22, seconded by Mrs. Tsadilas.

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

**Bills**

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

Secretary:$240.00

J. Branagan: $70.79 (Water Testing Mileage)

Mr. Branagan explained the breakdown of the mileage fee as follows: $31.00 for the actual testing and the remainder was the cost to drive the samples to Wind Gap, PA. It was a total of 121 miles at .58/mile.

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

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

**There being no members of the public present, this portion of the meeting was closed at 7:10 p.m.**

**Correspondence**

**NJ DEP Application**: General Permit #24 to repair an existing septic system located on Block 505, Lot 16, Curving Lane – Mr. Szabo offered to visit the site for any concerns. Mr. Dvorsky noted the system is an ECO Flow System and stated he would like to see the installation in process. He questioned whether or not biochar would be used. Mrs. Wunder noted the complete NJDEP application could be viewed in the Municipal Clerk’s office. Mr. Dvorsky would contact the owner and review the application.

**Stillwater Township Trees Inquiry**: Mrs. Tsadilas stated she had attended a recent Senior Event at the Community Center and a couple asked her who planted the trees along the Stillwater roads. Ms. Chammings stated the County Shade Commission planted them across the bridge toward LC Service and out Route 521 toward Blairstown, as well as in other areas. Mr. Szabo added that former Committeeperson Paul Klimek was instrumental in obtaining the trees from the County years ago and he was responsible for the planting of the beautiful Maple trees along Pond Brook Road.

**Old Business**

**Biochar Update:**

Mr. Branagan spoke with Mark Koch of Fairview Lake and Mr. Koch indicated they have 150 bags of biochar. Mr. Branagan explained to him that the EC has appeared before the Township Committee requesting the drafting of an ordinance regulating the spreading of the used biochar. Mr. Koch stated he would not contest such an ordinance. Mr. Branagan informed Mr. Koch that Biochar Now will accept the used biochar but it must be dried before being returned. Mr. Koch will inform Mr. Neumann and those involved of the proposed ordinance and he agreed that they would follow the determination of the township. Ms. Coriston asked if all 150 bags of biochar were used and she expressed concern with such a large amount as it could throw the ecosystem off in the wrong direction. Mrs. Branagan stated her understanding was that the 150 bags would be used over two seasons not all at once. Mr. Branagan suggested Ms. Coriston contact Mr. Koch or Biochar Now for clarification. Mr. Dvorsky noted the biochar was used by Fairview Lake to address HABs, not prevent it. Mr. Szabo felt a history of the biochar matter before the EC would be helpful so everyone has the same understanding of the issue. He also suggested that once biochar is returned to the manufacturer, a receipt to the township should be required. Mrs. Wunder reported the Clerk had informed her the Township Attorney would be requesting authorization from the Township Committee at their next meeting to draft a biochar ordinance which will then be introduce on December 6th. The EC agreed they would like to review the proposed ordinance before introduction and the next EC meeting falls after December 6th. A lengthy discussion followed as to the process leading to this point which has been both frustrating and confusing. Mr. Branagan, Mrs. Tsadilas and Mr. Szabo will attend the next Township Committee meeting. Ms. Chammings will ask for an amendment to the Township Committee agenda under Old Business to address the biochar ordinance allowing the EC time to review the draft ordinance prior to its introduction. Introduction would then take place in early 2023.

**Veteran’s Memorial Park (VMP):**

Ms. Chammings reported the carry-in/carry-out policy would be initiated in the spring. Bags will be purchased through the Clean Communities grant. The bridge sign will also be cleaned in the spring and a new sign for the parking area is to be ordered.

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

Ms. Chammings reported the bags she picked up for the collection receptacles are too small. Ms. Coriston has correct bags that were donated. She collected from both receptacles at town hall and the Community Center. Ms. Coriston stated that Mrs. Makarevich would like to thank the EC for their support of the program. She noted Mrs. Makarevich does such a wonderful job and goes above and beyond for the students. Ms. Coriston asked about the TREX program information which has still not been posted to the township website. Ms. Chammings will follow-up. Volunteers are still needed to check the two collection receptacles.

**Stream Water Testing:**

Mr. Szabo and Mr. Branagan obtained the water samples for the testing which took over four hours to complete. Mr. Szabo suggested having the company do the sampling in the future as it may be more efficient to do so. Mr. Branagan will contact Eurofins for a quote.

Mr. Szabo reported about a newer resident Bob Lippencott, PhD, LSRP (brother of George Lippencott, Chairman of the Zoning Board) who has worked for the State of New Jersey and now works for a company named TRC and he is not only a water scientist but has also provided expert court testimony on the subject. Mr. Szabo informed him of the EC water testing and Mr. Lippencott offered to review the results and provide input, as well as attend a future EC meeting. The EC thought it was a great idea and would welcome his input.

Mrs. Wunder distributed the water testing site map indicating the testing locations.

**New Business**

**2021 Annual Report:**

Mrs. Emmetts drafted the Annual Report which will be reviewed by the EC for any changes or additions and will be added to the December 12th EC agenda.

**Site Survey Inspection – Zoning Board:**

Mr. Szabo and Mrs. Tsadilas would conduct the site survey for the following property: Block 3804, Lot 1.03, application to construct a driveway exceeding 15% slopes and reduced sight distance of 215’ is proposed with 250’ required.

**Volunteer/Member Recognition**:

-Mr. Branagan and Mr. Szabo for the water testing sampling.

-Ms. Coriston for the TREX program collection.

-Mrs. Tsadilas, Mrs. Branagan and Mrs. Emmetts for labeling the sample bottles.

**Endangered and Threatened Species Sightings**:

-Bobcat

As a goose/duck hunter, Mr. Szabo stated he received an email (from the Federal government to the State) warning of the Avian flu outbreak common among birds. Only very active birds should be harvested and beware of slow, inactive birds. Instructions were included on how to handle such birds if you come across one.

**At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 8:23 p.m.**

**There being no members of the public present, this portion of the meeting was closed to the public at 8:23 p.m.**

**Green Infrastructure Champions Training Program:**

Ms. Coriston reported registration for the program begins December 1, 2022 and ties in with the stormwater designation and identifying green projects. There are 10 classes online and they are free. Ms. Coriston will email the information to Mrs. Wunder to be forwarded to the EC members.

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

The Planner presented the Master Plan with changes. The final draft should be completed soon and presented at an upcoming Township Committee meeting.

**Township Committee Liaison Report**: Committeewoman Chammings

-The Committee has authorized architect Sam Wykoff to provide a scope of work for bid proposals to address the roof at the Community Center which is in need of repair.

-The veteran’s event held at the Community Center was well attended; a job well done by Jen Minervino of the Recreation Commission.

-Furnace and roof issues at the Community Center need to be budgeted for in the future.

-Second interviews were conducted for the position of Tax Collector and Terry Beshada was hired at $40/hour for 12 hours per week.

-Long-time employee Alfia Schemm, Planning/Zoning Secretary, will be retiring effective 12/31/22.

-A Recreation Commission secretary will be hired at the November 15th Committee meeting.

-Tax foreclosures are moving forward.

-Ms. Chammings acknowledged the final STTA newsletter and commended Mr. Szabo on 32 years of service to the residents.

-Congratulations to Ms. Rumsey for her re-election and Mrs. Delaney for her election to the Township Committee.

-Best wishes to outgoing Committeeman Fisher in the future.

With no further business to come before the Commission, Mr. Szabo made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m., seconded by Ms. Coriston. In a voice vote, all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kathy Wunder, Secretary