**STILLWATER TOWNSHIP**

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

**June 12, 2023**

**Regular Meeting**

**In-Person/Zoom**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**  Ms. Coriston, Mrs. Emmetts, Dr. Mattes, Mr. Szabo, Mrs. Tsadilas, Ms. Wills, Mr. Dvorsky

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Mrs. Tracey, Mr. Branagan

Ms. Coriston, Vice-Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:00 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. Emmetts made a **motion** to approve the minutes of 5/8/23, seconded by Mr. Szabo.

**Roll Call Vote**: Ms. Coriston, yes, Mrs. Emmetts, yes, Dr. Mattes, yes, Mr. Szabo, yes, Mrs. Tsadilas, abstain, Ms. Wills, yes, Mr. Dvorsky, yes

**Bills**

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

Secretary: $255.00

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

Wills, yes, Mr. Dvorsky, yes

**At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 7:04 p.m.**

**Christine Dunbar, Paulins Kill Watershed Coordinator/Foodshed Alliance** appeared before the EC. She introduced herself and provided a presentation on the Paulins Kill Watershed Community Projects, noting her objective is to work closely with the community. Ms. Dunbar reviewed a handout and the various programs offered through the Foodshed Alliance including Water Quality Testing, Watershed Clean Ups, NJDEP Road Salt Study, and River Friendly Farms. She also thanked the Township and the Recreation Commission for holding their Clean-Up Days. Ms. Dunbar reviewed the 2023 Paulins Kill Watershed Winter Road Salt Monitoring Locations and Data collected. Mr. Dvorsky questioned the disparity between Sussex and Warren Counties and Ms. Dunbar felt it could be attributed to more development in the Upper River and less population in the Lower River. It could also be due to the distance and location of roads from the watershed. She discussed the River Friendly Farms Program and the opportunity for organizations and volunteers to come together for tree stewardship along the river in the section of reforestation, checking on each tree and documenting their status. Into the future, they are looking to expand the wild and scenic Delaware area up into the Paulinskill. The EC will receive information on that program in the future. Ms. Dunbar noted that many times she has been questioned about cows being in the river. Cows introduce nitrate, phosphate and E.coli into the water and diminishes the water quality and can also affect groundwater. Mrs. Emmetts questioned if there was a program to educate the farmers or approach the farm owner directly. Ms. Dunbar stated it was her understanding no livestock are permitted in public waterways. She asked about a local farm where livestock are in the water and how she could contact that farmer. She stated there are livestock, water management and waste management plans. Mr. Szabo suggested addressing the matter with the NJDEP as the river is a C-1 trout stocking waterway. He stated there are certain waters the State has designated as perfect water for trout and a mile or two downstream you will see cattle. Mr. Szabo felt the NJDEP hesitates to rule on farmers due to the Right to Farm Act. Ms. Coriston commented that the Department of Agriculture may have to get involved and sometimes the different departments do not interconnect. She agreed there is a problem but felt farmers will resist if approached. Mrs. Emmetts agreed. Ms. Dunbar contacted Sandra Howland, NJ Department of Agriculture, and she cited that livestock are not allowed in public waterways. Ms. Dunbar would like the river to be wild and scenic up to the lake spillway but it cannot happen if farms continue to allow their livestock in the water. Mrs. Emmetts suggested that Ms. Dunbar and her organization contact the farmer in question. Mr. Szabo noted this is a fourth generation farmer that owns land on both sides of the river with barbed wire across. The EC has been dealing with this issue for a long time. Ms. Dunbar asked if the EC would like to work with her and she will email the handbook and reference pages to Mrs. Wunder for EC review and possible contact with the farm owner.

At this point, **Mark Garner, Stillwater resident**, spoke on the matter referring to the Department of Agriculture codes and regulations. He has done his research and there are grants available to either exclude livestock from the water or get them another water source. He is interested in paddling the length of the Paulinskill River and became aware of the issue when he was blocked from doing so.

**Teresa Vaicys** asked who would be responsible for enforcing the matter and could someone contact the farmer directly.

Mr. Garner felt voluntary compliance would be better and that is why he is researching grant funding.

Mayor Chammings asked Ms. Dunbar to provide her with three packets of information and she will personally deliver them to the farmers in question. Ms. Chammings noted they will need time to read the information as it is their busy season. She agreed to reach out to them in two weeks or so after they have been provided the information and inquire if they would be willing to meet to discuss the matter. Ms. Dunbar agreed and thanked the EC for their time.

**There being no further members from the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed at 7:44 p.m.**

**Old Business**

**TREX Program Update:**

Ms. Coriston provided the following report:

**School TREX Recycling Program 2022-2023**

**Item 1: Poundage**

2021-22 Total: 496 pounds

2022-23 Total: 702 pounds

The amount of recyclable plastic removed from the solid waste stream was increased by 206 pounds by adding the community cans this school year. The school will receive a bench.

**Item 2: Appreciation**

A thank you to the following:

-The Township Committee for the space and allowance of the community cans.

-The Stillwater Township School Administration and faculty, especially:

Superintendent Dr. William Kochis; Principal Marissa Cramer; Cafeteria Connections Club Advisors Elaine Makarevich and Janet Mahedy;

-Parent/Grandparent volunteers who transported weighed plastic to Weis:

Crystal Dutzi, Tamarah Johnson, Kim Klimek, Erika McDonald, Barbi Quilter, Terri Starr

**Item 3: Summer Can Usage and Storage**

There have been a lot of questions from the school and the community about whether or not the cans will stay out for the summer to give the kids a head start next school year. The cans have been a huge hit with residents and Ms. Coriston would hate to pull them now.

1) She is more than happy to continue emptying the cans over the summer.

2) She has an issue with no place to store the collections at her house, unless she fills her basement (two cans a week for 10-12 weeks might take up more space than available)

3) There is no way to store it at the school over the summer. Ms. Coriston has already discussed it with Janet Mahedy.

4) Is there somewhere it can be stored in the township facility? Any ideas, thoughts or brainstorms on this matter?

Mayor Chammings will provide an area on her farm for storage of the collected plastic film over the summer.

**Stream Water Testing Subcommittee Meeting:** July 24, 2023

**ANJEC $1,500 Grant to Update the Open Space Plan:** EC was not awarded the grant funding.

**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.

**New Business**

**July EC Meeting 7/10/23:** Mrs. Wunder indicated that she will be unable to attend the July meeting as she will be on vacation. Following a brief discussion, the EC agreed that the July meeting would be cancelled.

**Sycamore Trees:** Mrs. Wunder reported that Mr. Branagan asked her to inquire if anyone on the EC has noticed damage to the Sycamore trees and the reason for such. Mrs. Tsadilas stated there were two different insects on her neighbor’s Sycamore trees and there is a definite issue. She will provide further information at the next meeting.

**Veteran’s Memorial Park (VMP)**: The EC thanked Mr. Dvorsky for cleaning the bridge sign. He was commended on a job well done.

**Volunteer/Member Recognition**:

-Mr. Dvorsky: Cleaning the bridge sign at VMP

-Ms. Coriston: Completed the Green Infrastructure Champions Training

**Endangered and Threatened Species**: None noted.

**At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 7:58 p.m.**

**Ms. Dunbar** asked that when addressing the Tier A Stormwater Designation to please keep her presentation and programs in mind. Mayor Chammings noted the township has received $75,000 to implement the stormwater requirements. Outflow mapping will be done and the DPW has started and most have been hand mapped at this point.

Mr. Dvorsky asked Ms. Coriston if mapping was included in the workshops she attended. Ms. Coriston stated they were mostly land use based, more focused on land as opposed to water; identifying land use, open space, bobcat alley, greenways, and the Nature Conservancy connecting open tracts.

**There being no further members of the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed at 8:05 p.m.**

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

-Discussed the Master Plan and future goals moving forward.

-Establish and orient new board members; almost a full board at this point.

-Short term rental proposal, no parameters set at this time as Air BNB rules and regulations address the matter well.

Mayor Chammings stated the Master Plan was adopted in November 2022.

Mrs. Emmetts noted the Swartswood Lake Watershed received $750,000 grant funding for a Watershed Management Plan and evaluating aeration system. At this point, they have received almost $2 million in grant funding. She noted the Watershed voted to allow the EC to use their DO meter for water testing.

**Township Liaison Report:** Mayor Chammings

-Noise ordinance was rescinded to its original version.

-Stormwater Management Plan requirement – wild life feeding on public property ordinance was introduced, public hearing will be held on 6/20.

-Stormwater Management Plan requirement – littering/pet waste ordinance already existing.

-In-Rem foreclosures moving forward – total of 36 properties.

-Township Committee Workshop Meeting – 6/12/23 to discuss future matters: DPW employee resignation; Recycling Center DPW coverage; Deputy Clerk resignation; Planning Board resignation of Don Donofrio; grant opportunities; $130,000 allocated for roof at Community Center – bid packets.

Mayor Chammings reported $72,000 was received for updates to the Community Center including new flooring and other minor items.

**Miscellaneous:**

Mrs. Tsadilas asked about the recycling shed at VMP. Mrs. Wunder stated the shed was removed as it was dilapidated and not safe any longer. The shed was repurposed from the Recycling Center and moved to VMP before its removal.

Mr. Szabo provided the following book to Mr. Garner, “Statistical Methods for Environmental Pollution Monitoring.”

Mrs. Tsadilas reported the Plant Exchange held at the Community Center on June 3rd went very well and included Master Gardeners from Rutgers and the State of NJ; National Gardeners Association also participated.

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

Respectfully submitted,

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Kathy Wunder, Secretary