**STILLWATER TOWNSHIP**

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

**August 14, 2023**

**Regular Meeting**

**In-Person/Zoom**

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Dr. Mattes, 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 6/12/23, seconded by Mr. Szabo.

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

**Bills**

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

Secretary: $255.00

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

**Bob Lippencott** reported on the Stream Water Testing subcommittee meeting held on July 24, 2023, including Mr. Lippencott, Mr. Branagan, Mrs. Emmetts and Mr. Szabo. Each subcommittee member was provided with a copy of the “Stream Surface Water Sampling – Chemical Data and Biological Analysis through Macroinvertebrates,” prepared by Steve Grodsky. Dates of sampling in the analysis range from 1984 to 2003. A spreadsheet was also provided to the subcommittee including sampling from 1984 to the most recent in fall of 2022. Mr. Lippencott has volunteered to take the data from the sampling period where the analysis report concludes up to the most recent testing, 2004 through 2022, incorporating the data for such items as surface analysis, data quality issues, land use mapping, GIS, and include conclusions and recommendations for future testing. He noted future sampling may not be necessary based on 40 years of consistent water quality or the EC may find they want to change to parameters that are more suited to the area.

**There being no further members from the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed at 7:10 p.m.**

**Correspondence:**

-EC Budget Status through 6/30/23

-Email 6/13/23: Stillwater Fall Festival, October 7, 2023, 11 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

-Email 6/25/23: Christine Dunbar, Paulins Kill Watershed Coordinator/Foodshed Alliance – Animal Management Plan

-Email 7/12/23: 5th Annual Northwest NJ Rivers Conference – September 30, 2023, Centenary University

Mrs. Tsadilas made the following Recreation Commission/Community Center report:

A K-9 Demonstration by Detective Mike Scott will be held on 8/15/23 at 1 p.m. at the Community Center. The Sheriff’s Department offers several programs. The Fall Festival Committee has been meeting monthly, providing input and making changes. Vendor and tractor applications are being received and vendor spots are filling up quickly. They are looking for volunteers for the day so please let Mrs. Tsadilas know if you are available. A POW Recognition Program will be provided on 9/15/23 at the Community Center with a guest speaker and light dinner, from 4-6:30 p.m. National POW/MIA Day is 9/15/23. Pre-registration is required. Community Center programs are geared toward families and all ages. Mrs. Tsadilas also reported that new handicap doors have been installed at the center for easier accessibility. A calendar of all events can be found on the township website.

Christine Dunbar was present at the June meeting and spoke about the livestock in the Paulinskill and waste management. Ms. Dunbar has since provided a packet of information to the EC addressing the issue and for the farm owner to review. Ms. Dunbar is currently waiting to hear back from Sandra Howland of the New Jersey Department of Agriculture on the matter. Mrs. Tsadilas stated there are some unhappy people with the cows and the fence blocking kayaking travel. Ms. Coriston felt there are conflicting interests and the EC definitely has to stay abreast of the matter. Ms. Chammings noted it is currently a very busy time for farmers and they may be more willing to discuss the issue in the fall.

**Old Business**

**TREX Program Update:**

Ms. Coriston reported she has been emptying the receptacle 1-2 times per week. Ms. Chammings has provided her shed for storage of the collection which will be brought back to the school in September. Ms. Coriston will be working with Janet Mahedy the advisor of Community Connections at the school. The second receptacle will be placed back at the Community Center in September.

**Stream Water Testing Subcommittee Meeting:** Report provided by Mr. Lippencott under the first Open Public Session.

**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.

**Sycamore Trees:**

The EC received an email from Mr. Branagan stating that Mr. Branagan’s forester has indicated the issue with the trees is due to the weather.

**New Business**

**Volunteer/Member Recognition**:

-Mr. Szabo, Mrs. Emmetts, Mr. Branagan for their participation in the Stream Water Testing Subcommittee meeting held on 7/24/23.

-Ms. Coriston attended an online session/lunch and learn on Climate Change Resilience on 7/27/23. She spoke about Executive Order No. 89 which is New Jersey’s climate resilience policy and the council that is tasked with creating resiliency action plans. The first being the extreme heat resiliency plan which will be released in the next four to six weeks followed by a public comment period. Ms. Coriston stated it was very interesting as it will be wide sweeping and will address all areas of the state. Her interest in the webinar was focused on how this will trickle down to the local level and actions the municipality may have to take in the future. She will email the links for further information on the subject to Mrs. Wunder to be forwarded to the EC. All the information can be found on the NJDEP website.

Mr. Szabo commented that over the years he has provided articles and other forms of media on climate change. He worries that it is political vs. scientific. No more gas cars, stoves, oil burners, etc. and the radical approaches are unbelievable. He monitors the issue based on the media and feels it should be talked about from a political point of view as well as a common sense one. There are two sides to every issue. He felt it is most times unscientific and more emotional. Mr. Szabo stated he is grateful that Mr. Lippencott is willing to help the EC on such issues, in addition to Dr. Mattes.

Mrs. Emmetts stated she is glad that climate change is being addressed and referred to a new book entitled, “Heat Will Kill Us.” It is affecting crops, animal movement, wildfires, storms/hurricanes, etc. She also spoke about a conference taking place in South America including several nations working together to protect the rain forests.

Ms. Coriston stated she may have slides from the lunch and learn she attended that may be helpful and if so, she will forward them to the EC.

**Recreation Commission:**

Mrs. Tsadilas reported the Recreation Commission did a County display for the fair highlighting all aspects of Stillwater and the different places to visit including local cafes, businesses, bears, etc. It will be on display at the town hall to view and also online. She commended Recreation Commission member Gina McCabe-Richardson for her work on the project.

**Endangered and Threatened Species**:

Mrs. Tsadilas reported a sighting of a very large male bobcat.

**At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 7:53 p.m.**

**There being no members of the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed at 7:53 p.m.**

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

-Two amended resolutions were accepted.

-Airbnbs and short term rentals were discussed. The board felt an ordinance would not be necessary at this time, but may add something to the current landlord registration for long term/short term rentals. This will be a continuing discussion.

**Township Liaison Report:** Mayor Chammings

-The DPW is working hard on Mt. Benevolence Road.

-Paul Hawkins, Acting DPW Supervisor has resigned.

-There are only four members on the DPW at this time and Mayor Chammings commended them for their hard work.

-An Executive Session will be held on 8/15/23 for the purpose of discussing the needs and positions of the DPW and to review employee applications.

-A new employee has been hired at the Recycling Center.

-The DPW is on-call for the Recycling Center if needed.

-The Recycling Center staff is doing a good job. Mrs. Emmetts commented that it looks neater than it has been in years.

-Joe Funari is in charge of doing the paperwork for the DPW.

-A fee ordinance will be drafted for the Recycling Center to be more in line with SCMUA.

-Clean Up Day will be held in September and four tires per household will be accepted at the Recycling Center.

-Val Ingles has been hired at the front desk at town hall during the hours of 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Danielle Locascio has been hired at the front desk at town hall during the hours of 9 a.m.-3 p.m. on Fridays. Both employees are very personable and a good addition to the office.

-Lynda Knott, Municipal Clerk, will be retiring December 31, 2023.

-The parking area will be revamped at the Community Center to address the handicap access. The new doors have a handicap access button. The doors are also coded for center users. The floor has been completed and roof specifications are out for bid with an opening of August 30th.

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

Respectfully submitted,

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Kathy Wunder, Secretary