

**STILLWATER TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
January 8, 2024
Reorganization/Regular Meeting
In-Person/Zoom**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Coriston, Mrs. Emmetts (via Zoom), Mr. Szabo, Mrs. Tracey, Dr. Mattes, Ms. Wills, Mr. Branagan

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Dvorsky

Mrs. Wunder 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.

Reorganization

Member Appointments:

Ed Szabo – Regular Member 3-year term expiration 12/31/26

Margaret Emmetts – Regular Member 3-year term expiration 12/31/26

Emily Wills – Regular Member 3-year term expiration 12/31/26

Greg Dvorsky – Alternate #1 1-year term expiration 12/31/24

Chairperson:

Mr. Szabo made a **motion** to elect Mr. Branagan as Chairperson for 2024, seconded by Mrs. Tracey.

Mr. Branagan declined the nomination.

Mr. Branagan made a **motion** to elect Ms. Coriston as Chairperson for 2024, seconded by Mrs. Tracey.

There being no further nominations, nominations were closed.

Roll Call Vote: Ms. Coriston, yes, Mrs. Emmetts, yes, Dr. Mattes, yes, Mr. Szabo, yes, Mrs. Tracey, yes, Ms. Wills, yes, Mr. Branagan, yes

Vice Chairperson:

Ms. Coriston made a **motion** to elect Dr. Mattes as Vice Chairperson for 2024, seconded by Mrs. Tracey.

There being no further nominations, nominations were closed.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Branagan, yes Mrs. Emmetts, yes, Dr. Mattes, yes, Mr. Szabo, yes, Mrs. Tracey, yes, Ms. Wills, yes, Ms. Coriston, yes

Secretary:

Mrs. Emmetts made a **motion** to appoint Mrs. Wunder as the Commission Secretary for 2024, seconded by Ms. Wills.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Branagan, yes Mrs. Emmetts, yes, Dr. Mattes, yes, Mr. Szabo, yes, Mrs. Tracey, yes, Ms. Wills, yes, Ms. Coriston, yes

Meeting Dates/Official Newspaper:

Mr. Szabo made a **motion** to approve the following meeting dates and official newspapers for 2024, seconded by Mr. Branagan:

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Branagan, yes Mrs. Emmetts, yes, Dr. Mattes, yes, Mr. Szabo, yes, Mrs. Tracey, yes, Ms. Wills, yes, Ms. Coriston, yes

Stillwater Township
Environmental Commission
Schedule of Meeting Dates
2024

The Stillwater Township Environmental Commission, County of Sussex, New Jersey will hold regular meetings on the second Monday of each month, unless it is a legal holiday or is otherwise noted, beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the Municipal Building, 964 Stillwater Road, Middleville, New Jersey.

The in-person/Zoom meeting dates are as follows:

January 8, 2024 Reorganization/Regular	
February 15, 2024 (third Thursday)	August 12, 2024
March 11, 2024	September 9, 2024
April 8, 2024	October 17, 2024 (third Thursday)
May 13, 2024	November 14, 2024 (second Thursday)
June 10, 2024	December 9, 2024
July 8, 2024	January 13, 2025 Reorganization/Regular

Each meeting may be accessed via the following Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85976326681>

The agenda for all meetings, more or less:

- Call to Order
- Open Public Meetings Statement
- Flag Salute
- Roll Call
- Approval of Minutes
- Bills
- Public Input
- Correspondence
- Old Business
- New Business
- Public Input
- Planning Board Liaison Report
- Township Liaison Report
- Adjournment

The Daily New Jersey Herald and Sunday Herald and the Township Journal are hereby designated as the official newspapers for legal publication for the Stillwater Township Environmental Commission.

At this point in the meeting, Ms. Coriston resumed as Chairperson.

Minutes

Ms. Wills made a **motion** to approve the minutes of 12/11/24, as amended, seconded by Mrs. Tracey.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Branagan, yes Mrs. Emmetts, yes, Dr. Mattes, abstain, Mr. Szabo, yes, Mrs. Tracey, yes, Ms. Wills, yes, Ms. Coriston, yes

Bills

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

Secretary:	\$255.00
2024 ANJEC Membership (8 members):	\$470.00

A discussion was held with Mr. Szabo expressing concern about the cost of the ANJEC membership. He stated it was a huge expense for what is provided. He felt they do not attend meetings and do not always provide the information that is requested. He asked for the bill to be reconsidered or at least reviewed, and

he suggested membership for seven members rather than eight. Mr. Branagan felt for the additional \$45 the EC should pay for all members to have access to ANJEC. Mr. Szabo suggested drafting a letter to ANJEC noting that with today's economy and the costs being so much, they should consider decreasing their membership fees. Mr. Szabo offered to draft the letter to be reviewed at the February EC meeting. All agreed.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Branagan, yes Mrs. Emmetts, yes, Dr. Mattes, yes, Mr. Szabo, yes, Mrs. Tracey, yes, Ms. Wills, yes, Ms. Coriston, yes

**At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 7:25 p.m.
There being no public present, this portion of the meeting was closed at 7:25 p.m.**

Correspondence:

-Resolution 2024-012 Holiday Schedule for Stillwater Township 2024
-Resolution 2024-014 Township Committee Approving Appointments of Boards and Commissions
-Emailed 12/15/23: NJDEP Application Notice – Block 2301, Lot 1 – 1003 Route 521 – application to construct a barn requiring Freshwater Wetlands General Permit 8 *Mr. Branagan and Mr. Szabo could not locate the complete application at town hall and did not conduct a site visit.*

Old Business

2023 EC Annual Report:

Ms. Coriston made a **motion** to forward the 2023 Annual EC Report to the Township Committee, seconded by Ms. Wills.

**Stillwater Township Environmental Commission
2023 Annual Report**

During the course of 2023 the Stillwater Township Environmental Commission engaged in the following activities:

- Members met monthly at the Municipal Building or virtually via Zoom.
- Monofilament fishing lines were collected from various locations around the township and recycled.
- A budget sheet was drawn-up and adopted.
- Sightings of threatened and endangered species were recorded.
- Outstanding volunteers were recognized.
- An amphibian crossing survey was completed.
- Commission members attended various workshops and webinars.
- Members walked properties and reported their findings to the Planning Board and Zoning Board.
- The Commission maintained membership in ANJEC.
- Members attended Coalition of Lakes Association (COLA) meetings.
- The Commission continued to meet with Christine Dunbar, Coordinator for the Paulins Kill River Watershed Commission.
- Resignations were accepted and new members appointed to the Commission.
- Members coordinated with the Stillwater School in a TREX Plastic Film collection program.
- The Commission initiated a Stream Water Study which is undergoing with Dr. Lippencott and appointed a subcommittee to meet with Dr. Lippencott.
- A member applied for but did not receive an ANJEC grant for \$1,500 to update the Open Space and Recreation Plan.
- A Member applied for but did not receive a Recycling Education Grant (REO Grant).
- A member cleaned the bridge sign at Veterans Memorial Park.
- Members worked on and attended the Water Safety Fair held at Swartswood State Park.
- Members installed bluebird houses at Veterans Memorial Park.
- A Biochar Ordinance was adopted by the Township Committee on February 7, 2023. Terms of this ordinance were initiated by the Environmental Commission.

-The July ANJEC publication included an article on Page 6 regarding the Biochar Resolution enacted as a result of the Stillwater Township Environmental Commission's work.

-Member Mandy Coriston obtained the Green Infrastructure Champion certification following the completion of 20 hours of training.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Branagan, yes Mrs. Emmetts, yes, Dr. Mattes, yes, Mr. Szabo, yes, Mrs. Tracey, yes, Ms. Wills, yes, Ms. Coriston, yes

TREX Program Update:

Ms. Coriston reported the students are a quarter of the way to meeting their goal of 1,000 pounds with a collection of 250 pounds to date. She is still seeking parent volunteers to take the collection to Weis. She has placed a notice in the school newsletter and also sent out emails. Ms. Coriston has been picking up the collection and delivering it to Weis. The students are enjoying the program. There are collection bins located in the cafeteria and vestibule of the school. A lot of waste has been removed from the solid waste stream as a result of the program.

Stream Water Study Subcommittee:

Mr. Branagan and Mr. Szabo contacted Mr. Lippencott to inform him of tonight's meeting if he was available.

Fishing Line Collection:

Mr. Branagan reported there was a fall stocking in October, and he will visit the receptacle sites in the near future.

New Business

Volunteer/Member Recognition:

-EC members for their work in 2023 and their continuing service in 2024.

-Mr. Branagan was recognized for his many years of service and leadership as both a Chairperson and a member.

-Mrs. Emmetts for drafting the 2023 Annual EC Report.

Endangered and Threatened Species:

-Bobcats

At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 7:35 p.m.

There being no members of the public present, this portion of the meeting was closed at 7:35 p.m.

Planning Board (PB) Liaison Report: Ms. Wills

-An amendment to the AF & EJV LLC resolution was made at the December meeting. Mayor Chamings provided a brief background on the AF & EJV LLC application to reverse prior approval of a subdivision in order for the property to be acquired by the Nature Conservancy and become a part of bobcat alley.

Mr. Branagan referred to the site survey he and Mr. Szabo conducted for a Zoning Board application. The property is located on Palmetto Trail and he was disappointed to hear it was approved for development. Mr. Branagan and Mr. Szabo felt there were both environmental and drainage issues with the property as well as it being grossly undersized, all of which were noted on the site survey form. Mayor Chamings indicated the EC report was acknowledged at the Zoning Board hearing for the application. She suggested obtaining the audio of the meeting to clarify the board's reasoning for granting the approval. Dr. Mattes questioned if there would be legal ramifications of not allowing the owner to build after they have been paying taxes on the property for years and the possible township liability issue due to a denial. Mayor Chamings noted the board is advised by their attorney and the Zoning Board

determined the owner is building within the constraints of the lot, and there are several homes similar in size or larger located on adjacent properties. If an application meets all the conditions and can obtain Board of Health approval, it is difficult not to grant the variance relief. Mr. Szabo questioned if the Board of Health inspected the property and if a report available. Mrs. Wunder noted information on septic and wells can be found on the SC Board of Health website.

Township Liaison Report: Mayor Chammings – Reorganization Meeting

- Committeewoman Chammings was elected as Mayor for 2024.
- Committeewoman Rumsey was elected as Deputy Mayor for 2024.
- Liaison appointments will be made at the January 16th Committee meeting.

The EC congratulated Ms. Chammings as Mayor. Mr. Branagan and Mrs. Emmetts thanked Mayor Chammings for providing invaluable information to the EC as liaison.

With no further business to come before the Commission, Mr. Branagan made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting at 7:53 p.m., seconded by Mrs. Emmetts. In a voice vote, all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Wunder, Secretary