

**STILLWATER TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

**October 7, 2024
Regular Meeting**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Branagan, Mrs. Emmetts, Dr. Mattes, Mr. Szabo, Mrs. Tracey, Mr. Dvorsky, Ms. Coriston

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

Chairperson Coriston called the meeting to order at 8 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 beginning at 8 p.m. Regular meetings are held on the second Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m., at the Stillwater Township Municipal Building located in Middletown, New Jersey unless noticed or it is a legal holiday. Adequate notice was provided for the change. The flag was saluted and roll call taken.

Minutes

Mrs. Emmetts made a **motion** to approve the minutes of September 9, 2024, seconded by Mr. Branagan.

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

Bills

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

Secretary: \$255.00

M. Coriston – ANJEC Environmental Congress Mileage: \$137.35

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

At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 8:03 p.m. There being no members of the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed at 8:03 p.m.

Correspondence

-NJDEP Application: Block 4105, Lot 19, 933 South Shore Terrace, addition, driveway, retaining walls, walkway (C. Tracey) – *Mrs. Tracey asked for clarification on specific details of the application and has not received a response to date.*

-Resignation: Emily Wills (Regular Member/Planning Board Liaison) *Thank you letter to be sent from the EC.*

Mrs. Emmetts made a **motion** to accept the resignation of Emily Wills with regret, seconded by Ms. Coriston.

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

-Email 9/23/24: New Jersey's Natural and Working Lands Strategy – NJDEP Release 9/19/24 -M. Coriston

-Fall Educational Opportunities: M Coriston

Old Business

40-Year Surface Water Quality Report (1984-2024)/Stream Water Testing 2024: Dr. Lippencott

Ms. Coriston and Dr. Lippencott thanked those EC members that submitted comments on the report. Dr. Lippencott appreciated Ms. Coriston's editing and compiling input. He is working to address and consider the comments to the best of his ability and he is open to discuss any if needed.

Mr. Szabo, Mr. Branagan, Dr. Mattes and Dr. Lippencott will conduct the sampling. Mr. Branagan is obtaining the quote and will email it to Mrs. Wunder upon receipt for the CFO. Eurofins will deliver 100 bottles and an ice chest by October 14th. The sampling will be done on October 16th.

Samples of temperature and ph will be taken and compared with the Eurofins lab results. Dr. Lippencott secured a meter from his certified lab with no charge to calibrate readings. His intent is to cover data gaps in the report. If there is an issue with the quote, he offered to reach out to labs that he works with. Ms. Coriston recommended reviewing the 40-Year Surface Water Quality Report in 2025 and determining objectives and goals. Dr. Lippencott will hold off on finalizing the report until the October sampling results are received. He does not believe the conclusions and recommendations will change and he felt sampling will be consistent with the last 38 years of testing. He mentioned there are some data gaps that could be filled by short term quarterly testing. Although this can be costly, grant funding can be pursued. He recommended testing E coli at its worse time during the month of July as opposed to October. Mrs. Tracey stated she has E.coli readings from Paulinskill Lake she can provide to Dr. Lippencott. He stated he would like a statistical data set, seasonally, over two years to be compared with other data sets to get a larger picture. He agreed it could be discussed further in the future. Both E.coli and fecal coliforms will be tested this time, staying consistent with prior parameters and using the same laboratory. He found a very high correlation between E.coli and fecal coliforms. Mr. Branagan noted that lead and aluminum would not be tested and the EC ceased doing so in 2015. Dr. Lippencott stated lead was consistently undetectable. Mr. Dvorsky asked if there was any correlation between quality of water and stormwater management mandates. Mayor Chammings stated the township still must conform to their Tier A Stormwater Management Practices.

Wild and Scenic River Partnership Program:

The EC discussed whether or not to move forward with participating in the program. Ms. Coriston asked if the EC was interested in having Ms. Dunbar attend the November 14th meeting with other representatives to further discuss inclusion in the program and does the EC want to make a recommendation to the Township Committee to do so. Ms. Coriston stated at first she thought why not take part in the feasibility study until she realized it was a five- or six-year process with many changing parts. She could not get a hard timeline and she was not satisfied with the functionality of the Management Council. The township has the EC, Recreation Commission, lake associations and Category One designations to protect the water. Mr. Dvorsky asked what happens if the townships above or below us on the river choose to participate and we do not. Ms. Coriston was not sure, stating it seems if you do not sign on, the water still gets managed only we would not have any input. We would still have our township entities and C1 oversight.

Mr. Szabo mentioned the wastewater treatment plants in the area and effluent from Kittatinny High School and Newton entering the Paulins Kill. He noted in the past he and Mr. Branagan attended Paulins Kill collaboration meetings in Blairstown with other towns both upstream and downstream from ours. He stated if needed it would be very easy to get in touch with other townships.

Ms. Coriston noted the EC can choose to say no at this time and agree to participate at a later date. These programs have been in place for decades.

Mrs. Emmetts made a **motion** recommending Stillwater Township does not participate in the Wild and Scenic River program at this time, seconded by Mr. Szabo.

At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 8:41 p.m. specifically to the topic of the Wild and Scenic River Partnership Program.

Dr. Lippencott stated he agreed with the motion and liked “at this time.” He stated the presentation by Christine Dunbar assured the EC that there were no restrictions. He looked into it further and learned that New Jersey has banned general wetlands permits within the WSR study area. Mayor Chammings stated this could affect permits needed by PSE&G for vegetation maintenance. She stated this could be significant to both a homeowner and a corporation. Dr. Lippencott stated the intent of the WSR Act was to prevent dams which he felt was an old issue. It has little to do with water quality. He reviewed the Musconetcong information and it was noted a Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) study was needed. This would be done only because there was an impact or issue. He added that C1 waters provide protection.

One of the recommendations of his report is to collaborate with other groups and communities. This could be more water quality driven than government driven and the timing of the report is very good as what WSR is doing for water quality can be questioned. Mayor Chammings noted that asking the township to participate would require a Township Committee member to assess or follow requirements of the program or process. It would also fall on an EC member and the decision is both a wise and conscientious one that she fully supports.

There being no further members of the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed at 8:57 p.m.

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

Mayor Chammings commended the EC for their research and work on making this determination.

Mr. Dvorsky asked if anyone could use the river for pool filling, irrigation, etc. Mayor Chammings suggested he contact the Sussex County Water Quality Advisory Committee. Dr. Lippencott referred him to the Division of Water Allocation.

TREX Program Update:

Ms. Coriston reported the goal of 1,000 pounds was surpassed with a collection as of 10/4/24 of 1,052 pounds. The collection cycle ends on November 1st. She will ask to begin a new cycle on January 1st.

There has been an issue with people disposing of beer and hard seltzer cans in the receptacle at town hall. She posted a message on the unofficial Stillwater Facebook page. The collection goal being met will be officially announced during Spirit Week at Stillwater School.

Recycling Center Flyer:

Mr. Szabo stated a new Recycling Center flyer is available describing what is accepted or not accepted at the center and also at SCMUA. He reviewed the flyer for the EC. Mayor Chammings stated it was drafted to stop contamination of the recycling stream. A letter was received from SCMUA indicating if the township does not clean up their recycling process they will no longer accept it. The flyer was done as part of the mission of Miss Stillwater.

Fishing Line Collection:

All lines are to be cleaned of litter/leaves, hooks and lead sinkers. Lead sinkers are to be provided at the meeting for recycling.

New Business

Following review of the budget worksheet, Mrs. Emmetts made a **motion** to accept the 2025 Budget Request to be forwarded to the CFO/Township Committee, seconded by Mr. Branagan as follows:

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|----------------------------|------------|
| Advertising: | \$ 125.00 |
| Forms/Books: | \$ 100.00 |
| Office Supplies: | \$ 200.00 |
| Membership: | \$ 500.00 |
| Stream Water Testing: | \$3,500.00 |
| Community Outreach/Events: | \$ 200.00 |
| Seminars/Training: | \$ 400.00 |
| Brochures: | \$ 250.00 |
| Printing: | \$ 250.00 |
| Mileage Reimbursement: | \$ 175.00 |
| Total: | \$5,650.00 |

Salary & Wages: Percentage increase as determined by the Township Committee.

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

ANJEC Environmental Congress: *See attached report provided by Ms. Coriston.

Site Survey Application:

Zoning Board (C. Tracey) 901 Elm Terrace, Block 4304, Lot 2 – application to construct a shed. Ms. Coriston made a **motion** to accept the site survey, seconded by Mrs. Emmetts.

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

Volunteer/Member Recognition:

- Mrs. Emmetts/Mrs. Tracey for their attendance at the COLA meeting.
- Mrs. Tracey for conducting the site survey.
- Mr. Branagan/Mr. Dvorsky for the fishing line collection.
- Mr. Szabo/Mr. Branagan for meeting with Dr. Lippencott.
- The EC for providing comments on the 40-Year Water Quality Report

Coalition of Lakes Association (COLA):

Mrs. Tracey and Mrs. Emmetts reported the meeting consisted of a hydro-raking presentation. Mrs. Emmetts stated the NJDEP awarded a grant to the Swartswood Lakes Watershed Association for hydro-raking and they have yet to receive the funding. This year they were told hydro-raking is not permitted on the lake due to threatened and endangered species - Lotus.

Membership Packet:

Mr. Szabo suggested putting a membership packet together for individuals interested in possibly applying to serve on the EC. The packet could include recent meeting minutes, the annual reports for three years, the ANJEC quarterly reports and a citizenship form. Mrs. Wunder agreed to do so once someone has expressed interest in serving. She noted the minutes and reports are constantly changing and would need to be current copies.

Endangered and Threatened Species:

A resident reported seeing a mountain lion and they submitted a photo to the NJDEP for confirmation.

At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 9:38 p.m.

There being no members of the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed at 9:38 p.m.

Planning Board (PB) Liaison Report: Mayor Chamblings

A lively discussion was held on reviving the Economic Development Commission to help revitalize the township.

Township Committee (TC) Liaison Report: Mayor Chamblings

- The records in the garage bays are being purged.
- The town hall will be closed on October 24th for departmental purging and record retention.
- Grow Works provided a presentation to the Committee regarding the expansion of a hemp business on Fairview Lake Road. The Committee requested further information and a plan, to determine the next step.
- Two ordinances were introduced: 1) To sell the fire truck 2004 Pierce \$50,000 to be used for training.
- 2) Floodplain Management Plan – upgraded regulations.
- Moving forward with a liquor license transfer from the Boat House to the Swartswood Deli.
- A discussion was held on rehabilitation/affordable housing.
- Passed a bill list for \$2.27 million for mostly schools and the County.
- Mayor Chamblings will be bringing the supplies donated by Stillwater residents to North Carolina to aid in the hurricane aftermath. She will also be loaning her RTV for their use. The Mayor is overwhelmed by the generosity of the Stillwater community, which is so greatly appreciated. She asked that everyone pray for the people in the affected areas.

With no further business to come before the Commission, Mrs. Emmetts made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting at 9:54 p.m., seconded by Ms. Coriston. In a voice vote, all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Wunder, Secretary