

**STILLWATER TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

**August 11, 2025
Regular Meeting**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. Lippencott

Chairperson Coriston called the meeting to order at 7 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 7/14/25, seconded by Ms. Coriston.

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

Bills

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

Secretary: \$274.00

Outreach/Events - EC Presentation 7/26/25: Refreshments \$95.23

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

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

Jeanne Gibson, 1071 Route 619 stated she owns property next to Swartswood State Park near the boat ramp. She expressed frustration with the current state of the park. The swimming area has shrunk, there are no boat rentals, no concession stand, swimming is closed two days per week, the campground is closed and the State has spent \$250,000 on new yurts. She asked if there was anything the township could do to address this matter and the decline of the park. She stated the park has been a big draw for tourists in the past and for local and County businesses. The EC noted there is a lifeguard shortage and may be the cause of the decreased swimming time. Ms. Gibson stated the park should improve their advertising for lifeguards. She asked if there was any way the township could put pressure on the State to address the matter. She has spoken to State Park officials and gets only excuses. There has also been a beaver issue that is finally being addressed. Ms. Coriston stated Ms. Gibson has made very valid points, the park is a draw to the township and local business and restaurants. She asked Ms. Gibson to submit an itemized list and the EC could draft a letter to the State. Mr. Szabo stated he commiserates with Ms. Gibson and he has tried many times unsuccessfully to have the issues she has mentioned addressed. He felt it was a political situation with little cooperation from Trenton. Ms. Gibson added that the house on the corner of Route 619 and Swartswood Road was supposed to house the Park Superintendent. It has been vacant for years and is in a dilapidated condition.

There being no one else from the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed at 7:17 p.m.

Correspondence:

-Email 7/10/25 - Tara Mezzanotte: Paulins Kill WSR Project Update – September EC meeting agenda – *Mrs. Wunder will confirm the meeting date with Ms. Mezzanotte.*

-Email 7/14/25 – Tara Mezzanotte: Link to article from Delaware Currents, “Warren County backs effort to name Paulins Kill a National Wild and Scenic River”

-Email 7/17/25 - Dr. Lippencott: Updated MLUL Notice Requirements

-Citizen Leadership Form: Leona Kral – *Mrs. Wunder will contact Ms. Kral to invite her to the September 8th EC meeting.*

NJDEP Application Notice: 917 Upper Drive, Block 1001, Lots 8-9, Addition

Old Business

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

Dr. Lippencott provided a public presentation on the report on July 26th at the Community Center. Ms. Coriston reported it was a very successful presentation by Dr. Lippencott and was well attended.

Stream Water Testing – Summer 2025:

Mr. Branagan will reach out to Dr. Lippencott and if it is determined they will move forward with the summer testing, a quote will be obtained and provided to Mrs. Wunder and the CFO as soon as possible. This item will be added to the next agenda for final approval.

TREX Program Update: Ms. Coriston

Ms. Coriston reported the collection continues throughout the summer and she has approximately 200-250 pounds stored at her house. She stated it must be weighed between now and the end of August at the Recycling Center. They are anticipating having a final weight of 1,000 pounds by November and exceeding their goal.

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

Swartswood Lakes and Watershed Association (SWLA) – Randy Sprague, Technical Director and Former President of the SWLA

Mr. Sprague discussed the SWLA mission to protect the water quality of the lake and make it useful to the residents of the community as well as those from other areas. There has been a decline in the public use of the lake as it has become less attractive.

He spoke about two grants that are currently underway, the first is funding for the Watershed Management Plan and the second for the Lake Management Plan. He asked the EC if they could review the Lake Management Plan to make sure there are no updates that need to be included. Mr. Sprague will email a copy to the EC and Ms. Coriston will discuss it further with Dr. Lippencott before committing to the review.

Mr. Sprague reviewed the new pure oxygen aeration system being proposed, the current system is a hypolimnetic aeration system that has been used for over 20 years and is not doing the job. The newer technology oxygen system which takes the oxygen from the air and injects it into the lake is a more focused approach in reducing the nutrients. This should bring the lake back to an C1 category. There is basically zero oxygen in the lake and trout need it to survive. The water is currently C1 entering and leaving the lake but not in the lake itself. He referred to a chart entitled, “2005 Total Maximum Daily Load Study Phosphorus vs. Cost. The full report is available on the NJDEP website.

Mr. Sprague stated harvesting has not been done by the State in over 10 years. He referred to the compressors which need to be replaced and an oxygen generation system installed. He discussed the new system pure oxygen lines that will go into the lake to a mixing chamber to send oxygen to the bottom of the lake, using four lines as opposed to just one. Mr. Sprague stated one million dollars in grant funding is needed for the proposed system. Sufficient funding has been obtained to start the design process and to obtain initial permits but more is needed.

Mr. Szabo provided a history of the compressor building and its construction 20 years ago by local technical school students providing labor and some materials. He suggested Mr. Sprague contact the school again to see if they would be interested in constructing a new building for the compressors.

Mr. Sprague discussed the Lotus issue in the lake while referring to photos depicting the issue. He also mentioned the invasive Water Chestnut in the lake that volunteers have been removing.

Mr. Sprague stated the SWLA is trying to control the problematic weeds in the lake. He stated the Lotus is highly invasive and is not native to New Jersey. Pennsylvania, New York and Connecticut all agree it is not native; Connecticut and Massachusetts ban it from their waters as it is so highly invasive. The State of New Jersey on the other hand states it is native, cannot be touched and must be allowed to grow. He

met with legislators and representatives of the State about 16 years ago and it was agreed a certain amount of Lotus could be removed. At that time the State Park harvester broke and it has been sitting in a parking lot in Ogdensburg for the past 10 years, unrepaired. The Lotus has since spread and is now in the beach area as well as several other locations on the lake. The State has now designated certain biodiversity zones for the preservation of the Lotus and other endangered and threatened species. He questioned why the zones would include the beach, boat launch and boat rental areas restricting the park from being enjoyed and posing a danger to boaters that may fall into the water. He referred to a photo entitled, "Swartswood Lake Survey and Monitoring Project Area," depicting the areas of the invasive Lotus. The SWLA applied for and received grant funding for harvesting/hydro-raking. The State has since prohibited hydro-raking, and herbicides can no longer be used. Herbicides have been used in the past to address invasives including Coontail and Milfoil. The harvesters have been brought in today to be used for the next couple of weeks. Unfortunately, at this point in the year the plants have gone to seed and the seeds will now be spread out over the lake during the process and continue to grow. He asked the EC to be aware of these issues and the points he has made.

Mr. Sprague has spoken to Mike Ingatamort and Parker Space about the issues and he is a member of the Public Lakes Alliance of New Jersey. He has received the pitch that it is an election year. He is hoping for legislators to be voted in who can and will do the job needed. Mr. Sprague stated the in-lake nutrient problem is the biggest issue.

Mrs. Emmetts stated the irony of the situation is the Lakes Association was started in 1980 to save the lake, a State lake, and the lack of cooperation is very frustrating.

The EC thanked Mr. Sprague for his presentation.

ANJEC Environmental Achievement Awards:

The Environmental Achievement Award program recognizes exceptional projects carried out by Environmental Commissions and civic groups. Projects begun after 1/1/23 and completed by 8/1/25 are eligible for nomination for a 2025 award.

Awards will be presented on October 10, 2025, during the ANJEC Environmental Congress.

Following a brief discussion, Mayor Chammings stated she will discuss nominating the EC and the 40-Year Surface Water Quality Report (1984-2024) at the next Township Committee meeting as the nomination should come from the governing body. The Municipal Clerk will complete the application and submit it prior to the deadline of September 5, 2025.

ANJEC Environmental Congress:

Ms. Coriston expressed interest in attending the ANJEC Environmental Congress and asked if there were any other EC members interested. The event will be held on October 10 at the New Brunswick Theological Seminary, New Brunswick, New Jersey, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. and the cost is \$115 for ANJEC members. This item will be added to the September agenda.

Site Surveys:

-Zoning Board – Block 306, Lot 5 application for a deck replacement/deck construction

-Planning Board – Block 3807, Lot 1; Block 3903, Lots 6, 12, 13.01 application for lot line adjustments so that pond and pond perimeter will be added to Block 3807, Lot 1

Mr. Branagan and Dr. Mattes reported there were no issues.

Ms. Coriston made a **motion** to accept the site surveys as listed, seconded by Mrs. Emmetts.

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

Environmental Commission Volunteer Recognition:

-EC members for assisting with set-up for the 7/26/25 presentation at the Community Center.

-Mayor Chammings and Committeewoman Delaney for their attendance at the presentation.

-Ms. Coriston for the TREX program.

-EC members for checking the fishing receptacles.

Endangered/Threatened Species Sightings:

-Timber Rattlesnake sightings; a total of three within two days. They may be coming off the ridge in search of water.

New Jersey Outdoor Alliance: As a member of the NJ Outdoor Alliance, Mr. Szabo received a five-page report from the group dated 8/2/25. The report discusses threatened and endangered concerns with respect to the ocean and offshore windmills. Two thousand windmills will be constructed along the east coast with 600 located in New Jersey. Mr. Szabo asked for the report to be included in the August meeting minutes. (SEE ATTACHED)

At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 8:24 p.m.

Larry McDonough, 919 Old Foundry Road was present at the EC meeting and he offered to assist the EC or volunteer as needed. The EC asked if Mr. McDonough would be interested in serving on the EC as there are currently two Alternate Member positions available. He was provided with information about the Citizenship Leadership form available on the township website.

There being no members of the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed at 8:27 p.m.

Planning Board (PB) Liaison Report: Mayor Chamblings

The Planning Board is currently reviewing short-term rentals with respect to Air BNBS, VRBO, etc. and the licensing of such as well as limitations on the number of occupants. Four model ordinances were reviewed with focus on the one from Lake Hopatcong.

Township Liaison Report: Mayor Chamblings

-There is an open position on the DPW.

-The DPW is working on South Shore Terrace addressing drainage; Cedar Ridge Road is being oil and stoned from Horse Valley Road to Old Station Road on the Fredon border; and the road shoulders are being trimmed.

-A new shelter has been constructed at the DPW property for the storage of equipment.

With no further business to come before the Commission, Mrs. Emmetts made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m., seconded by Mr. Szabo. In a voice vote, all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Wunder, Secretary