

**STILLWATER TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
December 8, 2025
Regular Meeting**

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

Chairperson Coriston 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. 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, unless it is a legal holiday or otherwise noted.

The flag was saluted and roll call taken.

Minutes

The minutes of 11/10/25 were tabled to the January 12, 2026, agenda as a quorum of those eligible to vote was not present.

Bills

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

Secretary: \$274.00

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Branagan, yes, Dr. Lippencott, yes, Dr. Mattes, yes, Mr. Szabo, yes, Ms. Kral, yes, Ms. Coriston, yes

**At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 7:14 p.m.
There being no public present, this portion of the meeting was closed at 7:14 p.m.**

Correspondence:

-January 2026 EC Agenda items: 2026 EC Meeting Dates; 2025 EC Annual Report; 2026 ANJEC Membership

-Resolution 2025-156: Appointment of Leona Kral (Alternate #1, term expiring 12/31/26) – *Ms. Kral was sworn in by the Municipal Clerk prior to the meeting.*

-Emails (11/18, 11/19, 11/21/25) - J. Secofsky, re: Cell Tower Application, Fredon

At this point in the meeting, Ms. Kral reviewed a letter she had drafted on behalf of the Environmental Commission that she would like to read at the Fredon Land Use Board meeting for the cell tower application. Following review of the letter, the EC expressed concerns with it coming from the EC so early in the process with little information on the hearing. Mr. Szabo referred to the third paragraph of the letter asking Fredon to request an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and include Stillwater in the process. He was unsure of the regulations pertaining to the requirement of an EIS and questioned if Fredon would then place the burden on Stillwater. Ms. Kral stated if the radio frequency system is hitting the lake it will affect the fish which in turn will affect the birds. The electromagnetic waves also affect the migratory birds and confuse them. Ms. Kral stated she had reviewed the plans and application documents, noting the tower will be 173 feet in height equivalent to 17 stories and is located on the Spring Valley horse farm property. Thirteen of the 173 feet will be a faux windmill. Ms. Kral felt an EIS would provide environmental information to the Fredon board, allowing them to consider the impacts. Mr. Szabo asked if cell service in Stillwater would be enhanced by the cell tower installation and Ms. Kral indicated it would. For the record, Ms. Coriston noted her husband is an employee for Verizon though not in the cell tower division. Ms. Kral stated she worked for Verizon for 30 years and is now retired. Ms. Coriston stated she will attend the application meeting as a member of the public and cautioned against making a statement at this time as there is little information as to what will be taking place at the meeting. In response to Dr. Lippencott, Ms. Kral stated there is a group of residents bringing up other points such as the lack of visual information, real estate values, safety and concerns with the visual aspect of the tower. The group is requesting the application be denied due to the lack of that information. She read a portion of their letter, indicating there is failure to demonstrate a lack of substantial negative impact. Their letter does not really address the environmental aspect of the proposal and that is why she would like the EC to do so. Dr. Lippencott felt the questions addressed in Ms. Kral's letter could be asked as an individual

and then depending on the answers, the EC could choose to respond at the next meeting. He suggested asking if there is a cross-municipal impact. Mayor Chammings agreed, stating this will be a lengthy process and not just one meeting. The first meeting is normally for completeness only. She referred to a cell tower placed on municipal property in Stillwater bordering two municipalities. She felt there was an EIS completed in that case. She suggested gathering information at this point. Following further discussion, the EC agreed Ms. Kral could ask questions as an individual while indicating she is a member of the EC, but could not do so on behalf of the EC or represent the EC. Ms. Kral stated she will ask the following questions at the meeting:

1. Is there a cross-municipality ecological impact?
2. Has an EIS been completed or will one be done?
3. What are the plans for an environmental assessment and is one ready or will it be ready to review?

Dr. Mattes felt it was a well-written letter and was surprised that an Environmental Impact Statement has not been done. He stated no one has ever done an in-depth study on the effect on people or long-term exposure and chronic effects. Wildlife is a concern but what is the effect on humans? Dr. Mattes stated he fully supports Ms. Kral making inquiries and bringing the information back to the EC. Ms. Coriston thanked Ms. Kral for putting so much thought into the letter and research.

Old Business

Swartswood State Park draft letter: Ms. Coriston

Ms. Coriston is finalizing the second draft of the letter. She stated there may be administration changes in the State government in January that may affect who receives the letter. This item will be added to the January agenda.

TREX Program Update: Ms. Coriston

Ms. Coriston reported the group has hit the challenge cycle of 1,002 pounds, passing the goal of 1,000 pounds. The new cycle began December 1st. The four-year total for the program is 3,252 pounds collected since the fall of 2021. Ms. Coriston stated she is very proud of the community and their participation. Collection totals per year are as follows:

2021-22 496 pounds
2022-23 702 pounds
2023-24 1,052 pounds
2024-25 1,002 pounds

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. Mr. Branagan picked up line from his receptacles.

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

No report at this time.

New Business

ANJEC Municipal Environmental Commissions in New Jersey - E. Szabo

Mr. Szabo referred to the Environmental Commission information packets he provided at the November meeting, stating he wanted to share the historical background information with the EC. The packet informs us of our overall impact when pursuing activities or participating in such. Ms. Coriston felt it was a very interesting read, providing the history of ECs in New Jersey and including information on the resources found on the ANJEC website. She thanked Mr. Szabo for sharing it. Mr. Szabo felt it could be used to attract new members and could be included in the packet of information provided to perspective members. Dr. Lippencott felt it was good and informative. He was encouraged by the aspect that we as an EC are fulfilling many purposes and objectives of an EC, including the 40-Year Surface Water Quality Report and connections with other organizations. In his experience with this EC, there has been good efforts with respect to categories noted in the packet. Ms. Coriston stated items on the agenda are varied and it has allowed us to be effective in diverse pursuits.

5th/6th Grade Field Trip:

Ms. Coriston reported that she and Mayor Chammings attended the NJ School of Conservation 5th/6th grade field trip. The 5th grade classroom included topics such as climate change, listening to the outside environment, and art using items from the environment with respect to climate change. The 6th grade classroom included a lesson on heat, outside temperature readings and leadership challenge course. It was a very fun and cold day! Ms. Coriston was grateful she and Mayor Chammings were included and acknowledged Laura Ciccolella and the STEM program.

Environmental Commission Volunteer Recognition:

- Ms. Coriston and Mayor Chammings for participating in the 5th/6th grade field trip.
- Ms. Coriston for the TREX program.
- Mr. Branagan for checking his fishing receptacles.
- Ms. Kral for conducting research on the cell tower application.

Endangered/Threatened Species Sightings:

- Eagles/Bobcats

At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 8:06 p.m.

There being no public present, this portion of the meeting was closed at 8:06 p.m.

Trees: Dr. Lippencott

Dr. Lippencott reported he has noticed several issues with the Ash and Beech trees on his property including canopy, invasives and deer overharvesting anything that tries to grow. He stated something significant is happening to the trees. The problem is town-wide and he would like to discuss it from a township perspective. Dr. Lippencott asked if the EC would be interested in having a forester attend a future EC meeting as a guest speaker to discuss such issues. Ms. Coriston stated she recently attended a webinar on the subject and will provide the link to the EC. She suggested holding a public information presentation with a forester, similar to the water report presentation held at the Community Center. Dr. Mattes stated he has his forester as well as a State Forester coming to his farm on December 17th and invited Dr. Lippencott to participate. Dr. Lippencott asked for this subject to be added to the January agenda for discussion – local experts to speak on issues such as forestry/tree health growth, canopy aspect; wildlife impacts, invasive species – insect and vegetative, wetlands aspect and fuel for forest fires. Ms. Kral commended the EC, stating the work they are doing is amazing. She noted forest fires are an important issue especially with the drought and dead wood all over the place. Mayor Chammings stated our canopy is very old and has aged without letting light through which in turn affected the undergrowth. Mayor Chammings stated the Firewise Prevention Program provided a presentation at a Township Committee meeting. She learned that you can contract with the Forest Fire Association to conduct controlled burns on farm property to get rid of undergrowth - \$100 permit fee. Also, Ridge and Valley is one of the largest organizations that advise residents on how to care for and maintain their properties. The Mayor suggested having them present to the EC in 2026. Other possibilities included NJ Forest Fire, NJ Invasive Species Strike Team and Steve Komar. Using drones has also been implemented to mitigate many of the issues. Dr. Lippencott suggested a brainstorming session to draft a list of meetings and put together a document including the information.

Mr. Szabo offered to contact Stillwater resident Rich Kelsky to attend the next EC meeting as a guest speaker. Mr. Kelsky has provided presentations on forestry and farming. Ms. Coriston noted the January meeting is reorganization and the agenda is very full at this point. Dr. Lippencott would like to first compose a list of potential speakers and issues to be discussed and suggested having Mr. Kelsky at a later date.

Planning Board (PB) Liaison Report: Dr. Lippencott

11/19/25:

- Bills were approved and the 2026 Budget Request was finalized.

- Tabled the discussion on Air BNBs and short-term rentals. The Zoning Officer has requested clarification on short-term rentals vs. Bed and Breakfast.
- Discussed lake community properties less than 7 acres, variance requests, zoning and septic systems and discharges around lake areas.

Township Committee (TC) Liaison Report: Mayor Chamblings

11/12/25:

- Resolutions were passed.
- Working on the 2026 budget – ordinances for salaries and wages; healthcare benefits.
- Ordinance for bucket truck was considered.
- A small retirement party will be held on December 19, 2025, at town hall for Jerry Leatham, DPW Supervisor.
- Rabies Clinic was held with 82 cats and dogs being vaccinated.
- CERT Basic Training class certified 17+ participants. CERT meeting held on November 19th.
- Maureen Tsadilas was awarded the Distinguished Volunteer Award by Congressman Kean.

12/2/25:

- Working on acquiring a grant writer.
- \$50,000 grant received for stormwater management.
- A Stormwater Subcommittee will be established by resolution and will include an EC member as well as ZB, PB, TC, DPW member, Engineer and a resident.
- The Township Committee will officially name Andy Martin as our Local Historian.
- Tax Sale was held on 12/3/25; 22 properties were listed with a few being redeemed by the property owners.

Miscellaneous Items:

Ms. Coriston reported she and Mayor Chamblings received a lovely thank you note for attending the 5th/6th grade field trip. She commended the RC for the tree lighting ceremony, noting it was a great event. And she commended Maureen Tsadilas for being recognized with the Distinguished Volunteer Award. Ms. Coriston wished all a peaceful and safe holiday season!

With no further business to come before the Commission, Ms. Coriston made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m., seconded by Mr. Branagan. In a voice vote, all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Wunder, Secretary