

**STILLWATER TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

**February 9, 2026
Regular Meeting
In-Person/Zoom**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Mattes, Mrs. Emmetts (Zoom), Dr. Lippencott, Mr. Szabo, Mrs. Tracey, Ms. Kral, Ms. Coriston

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Branagan

ALSO PRESENT: Committeewoman Chamblings

Ms. Coriston called the meeting to order at 7:05 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.

Matt Trochim - AmeriCorps NJ Watershed Ambassador, Watershed Management Area (WMA) 1/Upper Delaware Watersheds/Musconetcong Watershed Association

Mr. Trochim introduced himself to the EC and provided a brief background stating he is a graduate of NJIT with a History degree and became interested in environmental education his senior year in college when he found out he lived in a Super Fund Site in Pohatcong, the location of a contaminated aquifer. He indicated he would like to partner with the EC for litter clean-up events, invasive species removal and other programs. Mr. Trochim stated he is also interested in providing programs at the school. He has coordinated a clean up along a creek in Washington, working with the local DPW and would like to do the same in this area. He can provide the necessary supplies, advertise the event and seek volunteers. He is also interested in road salt studies and presentations. In response to EC questioning, Mr. Trochim spoke about events for the removal of invasives and tree shelters. He stated he would normally remove the invasives using clippers cutting back vines and transporting them away. He would partner with the township and DPW for the disposal. He provided his email to Ms. Chamblings for further communication on such an event. He could assist with shelter removal and is familiar with the Foodshed Alliance that is coordinating Floodplain Fridays during February and March at Veterans Memorial Park. Ms. Coriston stated she would like to put Mr. Trochim in touch with the STEM teacher at Stillwater School. Mr. Trochim stated with respect to educational programs, he could provide presentations on water and water quality. He offered to present a macroinvertebrate presentation in the spring as part of stream assessment. Dr. Lippencott stated the EC has worked on water quality and compiled a 40-year report of its findings. The EC would like to collaborate with other municipalities on water quality and he asked Mr. Trochim for his assistance. Dr. Lippencott noted our water quality reports could be found on the township website for Mr. Trochim's review. The EC thanked Mr. Trochim for the discussion and looks forward to working with him in the future.

Minutes

Ms. Coriston made a **motion** to approve the minutes of 1/12/26, seconded by Mr. Szabo.

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

Bills

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

Secretary: \$274.00

Roll Call Vote: Mrs. Emmetts, yes, Dr. Lippencott, yes, Dr. Mattes, yes, Mr. Szabo, yes, Mrs. Tracey, yes, Ms. Kral, 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 members of the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed at 7:25 p.m.

Correspondence:

-1/14/26 Email from M. Coriston, DEP Accomplishments Magazine – Better Than We Found It

-1/29/26 Email from Chris Dunbar, Floodplain Fridays at Veterans Memorial Park

-2/3/26 Email from Committeewoman Chamings, 2026 SC Trails Grant Webinar 2/4/26 @ 2 p.m.
-2/3/26 NJDEP Application Notice – PSE&G vegetative maintenance, application of herbicides, utility infrastructure repair, replacement and maintenance, and geotechnical investigations

Old Business

EC Discussion - Future guest speakers/presentations:

The EC discussed future presentations to be offered through the EC and compiled a list of speakers and topics as follows:

- Mike VanClef - NJ Invasive Species Strike Team
- Rich Kelsky – Forestry management and forest health
- President/Vice-President - Paradise Fishing Club
- Steve Mariconda - Dark Sky light pollution presentation
- Speaker/Presentation – Beaver and beaver damage
- Christine Dunbar and/or Matt Trochim – Road salt and the impact on waterways
- Stockton University Professor – Assessing forestry health using satellite imagery (in-person or Zoom)

Dr. Lippencott stated he had attended a recent webinar offered by Mr. Kelsky once a month associated with overgrazing, the large deer population, and invasive species both plant and animal. Dr. Lippencott would like to bring awareness to these issues and work toward solutions including speakers on each aspect and then collaborating together. He added that a Stockton professor suggested by Mr. Kelsky uses satellite imagery to assess forest health. Dr. Lippencott noted the EC still must determine specific objectives and strategy.

Swartswood State Park draft letter: Ms. Coriston

Ms. Coriston provided a draft of the revised letter. She asked the EC to review it and provide their input prior to the March EC meeting. This item will be added to the March agenda.

Cellco Verizon Wireless (Fredon) January Meeting – L. Kral

Ms. Kral reported the cell tower application was carried to the February Land Use Board (LUB) meeting. With respect to the application, Ms. Coriston noted the EC letter inquiring about an Environmental Impact Statement was sent to the Fredon LUB.

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

A discussion on follow-up testing will be held when Mr. Branagan is in attendance.

TREX Program Update: Ms. Coriston

Ms. Coriston reported 70 pounds of film has been collected this cycle. There are two additional collections that still need to be weighed.

Fishing Line Collection: No report.

New Business

Zoning Board Site Surveys (2):

- 1) 932 Saddleback Road, Block 3306, Lot 1: Variance for driveway standards and grades; front yard setback for the installation of a propane tank
- 2) 905 Morningside Drive, Block 2101, Lot 6: Convert an existing garage into an apartment as permitted accessory conditional use, and bulk variance relief for maximum square footage of an accessory structure whereas 1,000 sq. ft. is permitted and 2,494.5 sq. ft. is proposed

Dr. Lippencott, Mr. Szabo and Dr. Mattes stated there were no concerns with either application.

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

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

Environmental Commission Volunteer Recognition:

- Ms. Coriston for the TREX program.
- Dr. Lippencott, Dr. Mattes and Mr. Szabo – conducting the site survey inspections.
- Ms. Coriston for her attendance at the Trail Grant webinar 2/4/26.

Endangered/Threatened Species Sightings:

-Eagles (of special concern)

Other sighting: Bobcats, Eastern Screech Owl

2026 Sussex County Trails Grant Program:

Ms. Coriston attended the webinar on February 4th for more details on the trail grant and application. The EC discussed applying for trail improvement at Veterans Memorial Park (VMP), with two options. Ms. Chamming's stated the trail on the passive side is approximately a ½ mile and is very rustic with roots and grass. She suggested making it a smoother path, maintaining its natural aspects. It would probably cost less than \$25,000 to do so and the DPW could be used as in-kind labor to level it out. Signage, birdhouses and/or benches could also be incorporated into the project.

The second option would be finishing the path on the active side of the park which meanders along the river and joins the paved path at the park. Paving the remainder of that path would require NJDEP approval. Ms. Chamming's noted the \$25,000 award is a reimbursement grant. The EC needs to make a decision by its March meeting whether to apply to improve the VMP trail on the active side or the passive side of the park. Mr. Szabo commented that the trail should keep a rural look as it is a rural community. Ms. Chamming's agreed, stating making the passive side trail grassier and smoother would also make it easier to maintain. Mrs. Emmet's suggested having local scout groups make the birdhouses. Ms. Coriston asked the EC members to walk the trails on both sides of the park and decide which one would be a better candidate for improvement. Ms. Kral offered to conduct monthly forest bathing walks at VMP, which could be incorporated into the application process. Ms. Coriston will review the rubric for the application. The EC discussed the requirements of the application. Ms. Chamming's stated there are nine items listed and one is community engagement. She noted Barefoot University, a home school program, meets at the park every Thursday to conduct classes. The students will try to participate with the shelter removal during February. Ms. Chamming's will also provide the contact information for Barefoot University to Mr. Trochim for stewardship training and to Ms. Kral for the forest bathing program.

Ms. Coriston stated she will be unable to attend the EC meeting in March. She suggested the EC visit the Sussex County Open Space Committee webpage for more details on the grant and email her with any input.

At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 8:17 p.m.

There being no members of the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed at 8:17 p.m.

Planning Board (PB) Liaison Report: Dr. Lippencott January 21, 2026 Reorganization/Regular Meeting

-Chairperson 2026 – Bob Pierce

-Vice Chair 2026 – Amanda Kavanaugh

-Approved bill list

-Discussed under Old Business – short-term rentals and Air BNB ordinance.

-Public Session – a local business owner was vocal regarding ordinances and asked for the township to be more business friendly. The Planning Board is in favor of streamlining and maintaining our rural character and history while promoting business.

Township Committee (TC) Liaison Report: Committeewoman Chamming's January 20, 2026

-A resolution was adopted in support of the State Agriculture Board's farmland preservation of the Fairclough property. The property will need to be unsubdivided and merged into one lot.

-Ron Tappan will remain the Municipal QPA.

-Andy Martin was appointed as the Township Historian.

-Funds were transferred as needed.

-A resolution with Hampton to place a notation on the lot located behind the Community Center (owned by Hampton Township) indicating the lot will remain vacant was approved. Ms. Chamming's noted she was opposed to the idea and voted no.

-The township contracted with Gallagher Risk Management – George Morville.

-DPW has had a very difficult winter. The Township Committee is trying to hire new leadership. A new DPW worker has been hired.

-Ms. Chammings met with Habitat for Humanity to address the Fair Share Housing requirement that one property per year must be designated for rehabilitation or new housing.

-CERT held a JCP&L program on 2/10/26 at the Community Center.

Ms. Coriston commended the DPW for their service, the Recreation Commission and CERT for their community events and the Stillwater School for their recent snow play day where students played outside for one hour with many activities, allowing kids to just be kids.

Ms. Chammings noted the camaraderie among teachers and students at the school is amazing and the snow play day was great.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Wunder, Secretary