

**STILLWATER TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Branagan (Zoom), Mrs. Emmetts (Zoom), Dr. Lippencott, Mr. Szabo, Mrs. Tracey

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. Mattes, Ms. Kral, Ms. Coriston

ALSO PRESENT: Committeewoman Chamblings

Mrs. Wunder 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.

Mrs. Tracey made a **motion** to appoint Dr. Lippencott as Acting Chair for the meeting due to the absence of Ms. Coriston (Chair) and Dr. Mattes (Vice-Chair), seconded by Mr. Szabo.

Roll Call Vote: Mrs. Emmetts, yes, Dr. Lippencott, yes, Mr. Szabo, yes, Mrs. Tracey, yes

Minutes

Mrs. Emmetts made a **motion** to approve the minutes of 2/9/26, seconded by Mrs. Tracey.

Roll Call Vote: Mrs. Emmetts, yes, Dr. Lippencott, yes, Mr. Szabo, yes, Mrs. Tracey, yes

Bills

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

Secretary: \$274.00

Roll Call Vote: Mrs. Emmetts, yes, Dr. Lippencott, yes, Mr. Szabo, yes, Mrs. Tracey, yes

At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 7:15 p.m.

There being no members of the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed at 7:15 p.m.

Correspondence:

-SC Open Space Committee Minutes: December 18, 2025

-C. Dunbar – Winter Salt Snapshot Day – March 4 & 5, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Newton NJ

-C. Dunbar – Floodplain Fridays: March Stewardship, March 6, 13, 20 & 27, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

-Email 2/24/26– Tara Mezzanotte, WSR – Request to meet with EC @ April meeting – *An email was sent to Ms. Mezzanotte indicating the EC has reviewed the information she has provided and feels it does not address their concerns, specifically with respect to the NJDEP permit requirement. Absent an amendment or modification of the NJ statutes and regulations regarding those permit requirements for the WSR study, the EC does not believe further presentations or discussion is warranted. The EC enjoyed building a working relationship and looks forward to continuing it into the future. Ms. Mezzanotte responded that she enjoyed the process and thanked the EC for their inspiration to form an EC in Knowlton. She will continue to keep the EC updated.*

-Letter to the Editor from Steve Ellis, Retired NJDEP, Former Regional State Parks Superintendent: *Ms. Chamblings provided a copy of the letter to the EC as they are currently drafting their own letter to the NJDEP regarding Swartswood State Park, with some of the same concerns Mr. Ellis has expressed. Mr. Szabo felt such comments coming in retirement from someone who was very high up in the NJDEP is a powerful statement. Ms. Chamblings stated Mr. Ellis has a website regarding the State Park issues at fixourparksnj.org for those interested.*

Mr. Branagan joined the meeting at 7:25 p.m. by Zoom.

Old Business

2026 Sussex County Trails Grant Program – Veterans Memorial Park (VMP) trail improvement:

Ms. Chamblings will obtain two quotes for laying topsoil and hydroseeding on the passive side trail, hoping it falls under the \$25,000 grant amount. Having a good base of soil, tamping it down and hydroseeding will provide a natural environment. Ms. Chamming offered to provide a presentation before the Open Space Committee. Dr. Lippencott, Mr. Branagan and Mr. Szabo will meet at the VMP trail before the next meeting. Ms. Chamblings stated the grant can also include tree removal so long as it all comes in less than \$25,000. She is putting together a PowerPoint presentation with a GIS map and outline, depicting areas that need improvement. She encourages all members to visit the trail and review the application rubric which she will provide.

EC Discussion - Future guest speakers/presentations:

Dr. Lippencott felt the speakers chosen should be in line with the objectives and initiatives the EC are working on.

Swartswood State Park draft letter: Ms. Coriston

Ms. Coriston provided a draft of the revised letter for EC review and finalizing. Mr. Szabo had a few minor changes. It was agreed that in addition to Acting NJDEP Commissioner Potosnak, the letter would also be sent to Senator Parker Space, Assemblywoman Dawn Fantasia and Assemblyman Mike Inganamort of Legislative District 24.

Mrs. Tracey made a **motion** to send the letter as amended, seconded by Mr. Szabo.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Branagan, yes, Mrs. Emmetts, yes, Dr. Lippencott, yes, Mr. Szabo, yes, Mrs. Tracey, yes

Cellco Verizon Wireless (Fredon) February Meeting – L. Kral:

The application was carried to the April meeting pending sufficient legal notice.

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

Dr. Lippencott discussed follow-up testing to the Surface Quality Report. A determination needs to be made on what sampling to do, adding/removing parameters, and timing. He felt we do not need to do sampling every two years once a testing plan has been developed and data set generated. Testing every four to five years would be sufficient. Timing and temperature of the sample as well as sampling during warmer weather is critical. He suggested sometime between June and August. Dr. Lippencott discussed the possibility of funding the testing through the MS4 Stormwater Grant. There is currently \$3500.00 in the EC budget for stream water testing which can be supplemented with the grant funding. Mrs. Emmetts recommended maintaining a line item for the water testing in the budget in the future. Dr. Lippencott stated it will take a four-to-six-week program with multiple samplings to complete a data set.

Dr. Lippencott, Mr. Szabo and Mr. Branagan will meet before the April meeting to work on parameters, outline a sampling plan and obtain a quote from the lab.

TREX Program Update: Ms. Coriston

There are two additional large collections that still need to be weighed.

Fishing Line Collection: Opening day is April 11th.

New Business

Planning Board Site Survey:

-Ridge Road, Block 4003, Lots 14.01, 14.02 & 14.03, Minor Subdivision

Mrs. Tracey made a **motion** to accept the site survey, seconded by Mrs. Emmetts.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Branagan, yes, Mrs. Emmetts, yes, Dr. Lippencott, yes, Mr. Szabo, yes, Mrs. Tracey, yes
Mr. Szabo and Dr. Lippencott discussed getting young people involved with the site survey process to learn about environmental and digital tools and data resources for decision making. They suggested looking for a high school or college student who is in need of a project and assisting them with developing a standard procedure. They can learn how to use and interpret active data available on the internet. Mr. Szabo stated he had contacted Ms. Chamblings who is a retired teacher and Sam Wykoff, a current teacher, to assist in the search for a student. Ms. Chamblings is in favor of bringing young people in and will contact Mr. Wykoff to discuss further. Dr.

Lippencott explained the person will develop a “cheat sheet” for conducting site inspections and should be a self-starter, AP Science or college student.

Environmental Commission Volunteer Recognition:

- Ms. Coriston for the TREX program.
- Ms. Coriston for drafting the Swartswood State Park letter to the NJDEP.
- Dr. Lippencott and Mr. Szabo for conducting the site survey inspection.

Endangered/Threatened Species Sightings: None reported.

At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 8:27 p.m. 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: Dr. Lippencott

2/18/26 Meeting:

- Approved bill list
- Discussed under Old Business – short-term rentals and Air BNB ordinance, updating the current ordinance to cover such rentals.
- Fair Share Housing ordinance was introduced by the Township Committee on 2/17/26; approved by the Planning Board on 2/18/26.

Township Committee (TC) Liaison Report: Committeewoman Chamblings

- Habitat for Humanity will provide a presentation to the Township Committee in the near future. Currently searching for a suitable township property.
- The Committee continues to move forward with stormwater management requirements.
- Purchased the IWork Management System for the DPW to promote better efficiency.
- Township Engineer met with the DPW to prepare for the future NJDEP inspection of the property.
- A contracted shared service for a Certified Public Works Manager was approved with Frankford. The CPWM will work with our DPW one day per week.
- Ms. Chamblings attended a JCP&L presentation on 2/10/26 at the Community Center.
- Ms. Chamblings met with JCP&L at the Municipal Building to identify areas that continue to have issues. She added 430 roads will be trimmed this year with 97 trees in Stillwater. She provided a handout “NJ Reliability Improvement Plan” from JCP&L – Blairstown. JCP&L will upgrade a circuit out of the Blairstown substation extending to Frankford, modernizing the grid, supporting its growing needs, and ensuring sustainability and a reliable energy future for residents and less outages.
- Zoning Board meeting 2/23/26: Two variances were approved. The Zoning Board required the applicant for 923 Saddleback Road to provide the proper documentation to the Zoning Officer for the driveway. The application for Morningside Drive was approved. The Board Attorney is working on the Annual Zoning Board Report for 2025.
- Three members of the Township Committee including Ms. Chamblings attended the Barnlight Productions presentation at SCCC to certify Stillwater Township film ready.
- The Dot Book Mobile will be at the Community Center on 3/10/26.
- Ms. Chamblings will provide a presentation on solar generators at the Community Center on 2/10/26 at 1 p.m..
- Fees at the Community Center have been decreased.
- An ordinance regarding mailboxes that have been damaged during snow removal was voted down.
- Heather Falotico resigned from the Recreation Commission. She was commended for her service.
- Stillwater Day will be held on 6/6/26 at VMP.
- 250th Sussex County Celebration will be held at the Fairgrounds on 6/7/26.
- Clean Up Day and Shred It event will be held on 4/25/26.
- Garage Sale Days will be held on 5/16/26 and 5/17/26.
- Ms. Chamblings spoke with Barefoot University and their students will assist with removing the tree shelters at VMP. Chris Dunbar will also meet with the boy scouts to assist as well.

Healthy Forest Initiative:

Dr. Lippencott reported that he had contacted Dr. Matthew Olson and Dr. Min Kim of Stockton University. They will hold a phone conference regarding their expertise in satellite imagery, invasive species, and parameters indicative of healthy or unhealthy forests.

Newspaper Articles:

Mr. Szabo displayed a full-page article written by Ms. Coriston entitled, "As cannabis shops multiply, some towns say enough is enough," from the Township Journal, dated 2/5/26. He thought it was great to have a member of the EC doing this and commended Ms. Coriston on her work. He also came across a reprint of an article entitled, "Low-Lying Lands Could Be Submerged By Climatic Disaster," indicating that within 50 years of the date of the article (2/2/78 WSJ) several low-lying areas would be submerged. He noted it has been 48 years with no change. A copy of the articles will be emailed to the EC.

With no further business to come before the Commission, Mr. Szabo made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 p.m., seconded by Mrs. Emmetts. In a voice vote, all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Wunder, Secretary