

**STILLWATER TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

**May 11, 2026
Regular Meeting
In-Person/Zoom**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. Lippencott, Mrs. Emmetts

ALSO PRESENT: Committeewoman Chamblings

Ms. 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. 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 Middletown, New Jersey. The flag was saluted and roll call taken.

Minutes

Ms. Coriston made a **motion** to approve the minutes of 4/13/26, seconded by Mrs. Tracey.

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

Bills

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

Secretary: \$274.00

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Branagan, 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 7:06 p.m.

Mr. Branagan mentioned that Greg Dvorsky had contacted him regarding an ordinance proposed by the Township Committee for the manufacturing and cultivation of cannabis. The ordinance was introduced at the April 21st Township Committee meeting. Ms. Chamblings stated the public should attend the Township Committee meeting for more information. Ms. Coriston asked for the discussion to be moved to Ms. Chamblings' report as the public session was not the appropriate forum.

There being no members of the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed at 7:12 p.m.

Correspondence:

-4/23/26 Email L. Chamblings – SC Open Space Meeting (Zoom) – EC Trail Grant Presentation by M. Coriston

-4/23/26 Email V. Ingles – Township Committee Resolution of Support for the Trail Grant application

-4/28/26 Email Tara Mezzanotte – Establishment of Knowlton EC and Green Team

-5/9/26 Email Tara Mezzanotte – Knowlton EC Re-Establishment Committee meeting agenda for 5/19/26

-5/11/26 CFO – Approved 2026 EC Budget

Old Business

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

Ms. Coriston reported she provided the EC trail grant presentation at the last SC Open Space Committee meeting. It began with a few technical difficulties but went very smoothly after that. There were no questions from the Committee following the presentation. Ms. Chamblings had stepped down from the Open Space Committee during the presentation, which she composed and Ms. Coriston added to. The application deadline is May 15, 2026 and was submitted through the Municipal Clerk, who will be contacted should the Open Space Committee have any questions following their review. The next Open Space meeting is May 21st and Engineering/Planning will review the application for completeness. The application will then be reviewed for compliance with the five conditions and final decisions will be made. The total cost of the proposed EC trail project is \$18,447. Dr. Mattes offered his mulching machine as needed for invasive removal.

EC Discussion - Future guest speakers/presentations:

Ms. Coriston reported that both Steve Mariconda/Dark Sky and Mike VanClef/Strike Team are interested in scheduling a presentation. Strike Team could do so in-person and Dark Sky would be offered through Zoom.

Email Report from Dr. Lippencott:

Surface water sampling this fall as noted in the minutes is not recommended. Our window of opportunity for the recommended sampling we had discussed for July to align with storm water permitting requirements is fast evaporating. We may be able to salvage if we can meet with the engineer in May. If that doesn't happen we should explore other options for 2027, but waiting a year may weaken our negotiating position regarding the NJDEP stormwater permit. He is available anytime to discuss further if needed.

Ms. Chammings stated the NJDEP has been working very well with the town and they inspected the DPW yard in April. There are a few requirements that need to be addressed including inlet and outlet mapping, all storm drain covers need to be replaced and made bicycle safe, and the fuel tanks at the DPW need to be replaced at a cost of \$100,000. The Engineer would like to continue to work with the NJDEP at this point to comply with the mandates. She suggested waiting until 2027 to hold a meeting with the Engineer.

Mr. Szabo asked about acquiring insurance to protect the township should the NJDEP change its requirements in the future. He spoke about his experience with his underground oil tank abandonment and he offered the information he has available to those interested. Dr. Mattes mentioned his experience with the rehabilitation of a dam located on his property and strict regulations imposed by the NJDEP with lack of support.

Ms. Chammings noted the township will be cautious as they proceed. She felt the timing was not right for a discussion with the NJDEP at this time and she would like to continue moving forward with the process. She suggested holding off the stream water testing until 2027 in conjunction with a stormwater discussion at that time.

Cellco Verizon Wireless (Fredon) – L. Kral:

The application was carried to June 18, 2026.

TREX Program Update: Ms. Coriston

Ms. Coriston reported she met with Ms. Ciccolella and School Superintendent Dr. Papa to discuss the discontinued acceptance of plastic film at Weis. Over 330 pounds were dropped off at Kohls, which will also be stopping collection in the near future. TREX provided a list of direct distribution centers for disposal. Parsippany is the closest and may be an option for long-term. If a good relationship can be built with them, drop-off may only be required once monthly. Four hundred and six pounds have been collected through April.

Fishing Line Collection:

Mr. Szabo reported the Trout stocking at Swartswood Lake has been completed.

Mr. Branagan provided his line collection and noted he trimmed the area around his receptacles.

Dr. Mattes reinstalled the receptacle and tag box at Veterans Memorial Park.

Miscellaneous:

Mr. Branagan referenced the SCMUA flyer and noted plastic containers to be recycled include #1, #2 and #5, all others are considered trash. Bottle caps and rings are to be removed.

Ms. Kral reported Andover Township is very close to blocking the proposed data center. Ms. Chammings stated their Committee introduced an ordinance to do so, and it must be voted on again to become final.

Ms. Kral noted the noise issue generated by the data centers as well as a cell tower generator.

New Business

Environmental Commission Volunteer Recognition:

-Ms. Coriston and Ms. Chammings for the TREX program.

-EC members for checking the fishing receptacles, Mr. Branagan for trimming around the receptacles and Dr. Mattes for reinstalling the receptacle and tag box at VMP.

Endangered/Threatened Species Sightings: None reported.

Other sightings: Bear, fox and eagle

Rutgers Climate Change Symposium:

Ms. Coriston requested to attend the symposium on June 10th in Piscataway at a cost of \$100. She noted they do not accept purchase orders so she will pay for the program and ask to be reimbursed along with mileage.

The symposium is a one-day conference with keynote speakers and research presented by Rutgers to address climate change and includes four workshops.

Mr. Szabo asked if both sides of the climate change debate would be presented. If so, he asked that Ms. Coriston bring that information back to the EC.

Dr. Mattes asked the EC to be cautious and not let our guard down with respect to climate change.

Ms. Kral stated she would be interested in any information provided on reforestation.

At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 7:57 p.m.

There being no members of the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed at 7:57 p.m.

Planning Board (PB) Liaison Report:

-Ms. Chamblings reported a lot line adjustment application for Ridge Road was approved.

Township Committee (TC) Liaison Report: Committeewoman Chamblings

-The Zoning Board meeting had quite a crowd attend their April meeting expressing their concerns with an Airbnb located in the Plymouth Lake Community. Plymouth Lake will need to address the matter by adjusting their by-laws.

-Tammie Horsefield, President of the Sussex County Chamber of Commerce, attended the Planning Board and Zoning Board meetings to discuss an Airbnb ordinance and to provide direction.

-The Township Committee discussed a cannabis ordinance that will be site specific for a potential Class I and Class II manufacturer/cultivator. Only one license can be issued in the municipality to a microbusiness no larger than 2500 square feet with no more than 10 employees. The ordinance was introduced by the Township Committee and may be up for public hearing/2nd reading at their meeting on 5/19/26, following Planning Board review.

She noted the ordinance would permit an existing medical marijuana business that has been in Stillwater for seven years to expand. At this point, Dr. Mattes stated the business is located on his property and he is licensed by the State to grow CBD. He would like to expand the business to sell to local shops and needs township approval to do so due to a change in the State law. Ms. Chamblings noted the CBD is medical and not recreational. She briefly reviewed the proposed ordinance stating there is a \$5,000 application fee and Planning Board and Zoning Board approval is required, bringing \$10,000 in revenue to the township. Two percent of the sales revenue would return to the township. The ordinance was introduced and passed with a 3-2 vote.

-The 2026 Municipal Budget was adopted on 5/5/26 with a \$63 municipal tax increase per \$200,000 assessment and overall tax increase of \$214 per \$200,000 assessment.

-Tax Assessor Penny Holenstein is retiring. Interviews were held and a replacement will be hired shortly.

-Electrical Inspector Andy Simonis has retired and Justin Ott was hired to replace him.

-DPW worker Nick Sugar has resigned.

-A new DPW mechanic/truck driver will be hired.

-A land sale of 40 properties will be held for contiguous owners. Three properties were removed from the list as they are buildable lots.

-A flyer from the Historical Society will be included in the tax bill mailing. They are in need of donations to repair the Grist Mill and assist the State.

-Phase 4 & 5 road improvements to Mt. Benevolence Road will be completed by the end of the summer.

-\$96,000 discharge grant was awarded for 992 Fairview Lake Road property.

-Sheriff's Department patrols were approved for Stillwater.

-Biggest budget costs are health benefits which increased 38 percent; DPW roads and vehicles; and employee salaries.

-Arbor Day was 4/24/26 – Ms. Chamblings will provide a survey link for anyone interested. Complete the survey and receive 10 trees.

With no further business to come before the Commission, Mr. Szabo made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 p.m., seconded by Ms. Coriston. In a voice vote, all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Wunder, Secretary