

**STILLWATER TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

**June 8, 2026
Regular Meeting
In-Person/Zoom**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. Mattes, Ms. Kral

ALSO PRESENT: Committeewoman Chammings arrived at 7:38 p.m.

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 5/11/26, seconded by Mrs. Tracey.

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

There being no members of the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed at 7:06 p.m.

Correspondence:

-SC Open Space Committee Minutes – April 23, 2026

Old Business

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

The EC application for trail improvement at Veterans Memorial Park was submitted prior to the May 15th deadline and Ms. Coriston attended the SC Open Space Meeting on April 23rd to provide the presentation. Ms. Chammings stepped down from the Open Space Committee during the presentation, which she composed and Ms. Coriston added to. The total cost for the proposed work falls just under the bid threshold of \$18,447 by approximately \$1,000. The applications will be reviewed by the Open Space Committee for compliance with the required conditions and final decisions will be made. The grant is a reimbursement grant. Dr. Lippencott thanked both Ms. Chammings and Ms. Coriston for their work on the grant.

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 in the fall. Strike Team could do so in-person and Dark Sky would be offered through Zoom. She is in contact with both.

Dr. Lippencott will follow up with the Stockton University professors he has been in contact with regarding a Healthy Forest Initiative presentation. He reported that he had attended a couple of Forestry Association webinars that were very informative. The topic of the last one he attended was on a conservation easements program. The program offers a way for a property owner of a large tract of land to preserve the forest. An owner can receive up to 70 percent of the property value for an easement of forest in posterity. The easement must be maintained under the forest stewardship program and grants are available to cover the forester costs. He will speak with Rich Kelsky to obtain further information on the easement program. Dr. Lippencott felt it dovetailed nicely with the concerns the EC has with property owners who do not have the means to maintain the forests with respect to invasive species, deer overgrazing and the forest understory etc. This program may provide a path forward in conjunction with the Healthy Forest Initiative, township wide, similar to a Master Plan and consistent with the stewardship plans.

Cellco Verizon Wireless (Fredon) – L. Kral:

The application was carried to June 18, 2026. No correspondence was received back from the Fredon Land Use Board in response to the EC inquiry regarding an Environmental Impact Study.

40-Year Surface Water Quality Report (1984-2024) – Summer 2027

Mr. Szabo asked for clarification on the postponement of the water testing planned for this summer. He felt Dr. Lippencott may want to address the issue. Ms. Coriston stated that at the last EC meeting, Ms. Chammings explained she would like to continue to work through the stormwater permit process with the NJDEP which has been going smoothly. She does not want the focus redirected by adding the water testing aspect at this time and recommended at the last meeting that the testing be postponed to 2027. Dr. Lippencott stated that speaking with Ms. Chammings a few months ago, his understanding was that the samples could be collected this summer to assist with the MS4 Permit compliance. He indicated there would be no environmental impact if the testing is postponed to next summer. Dr. Lippencott further explained that he had attempted to hold meetings with the Engineer and Ms. Chammings, which were preliminarily agreed to, to discuss the value and advantages of taking the samples this summer to do the analysis he was suggesting to further the water quality study and address the concerns identified in the report recommendations, as well as dovetail with the stormwater permit compliance. He felt meetings were needed to work out the strategy on why the samples would be taken, how they were going to be used and how they would help with permit compliance. Dr. Lippencott stated he would defer to Ms. Chammings' judgement on the matter and add it to the EC agenda for 2027.

TREX Program Update:

Ms. Coriston reported she has disposed of the huge backlog and is finalizing the connection with a distribution center in Parsippany. She is scheduled to have a phone conference with them tomorrow and if all goes well the drop-off will be done once a month. She is currently working with Ms. Ciccolella at Stillwater School to continue with a smooth process. Close to 500 pounds have been collected for the year with a goal of 1,000 pounds. TREX is now requiring goals of 250 pounds to be met quarterly. Once a goal is met the school is entered into a lottery for many different giveaways including cash prizes. Stillwater School is consistently a top performer in the overall elementary school category in the nation.

Fishing Line Collection:

The EC discussed how to bring more attention to fishing opportunities in Stillwater. Mr. Szabo felt the public is not aware of the work the EC does, its accomplishments or the time the members contribute. He felt the minutes needed to be more detailed at certain times to help the public understand what is involved.

Mr. Branagan suggested drafting a flyer informing the public of the locations of the fishing receptacles throughout Stillwater.

Recycling Center:

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. He stated the sign at the Recycling Center does not include this information and it should be added.

Mrs. Emmetts stated she asked a worker at the Recycling Center where the TREX container was located and an employee indicated there was not one. Ms. Coriston noted the container has been there for three years. Mr. Szabo added that it is the same issue with the rain barrel located outside the Municipal Building, no one used it. Mrs. Emmetts asked for new pallets to be placed at the Recycling Center. Ms. Chammings stated she would follow-up on the concerns with the Recycling Center, noting she believes the TREX container is in the red shed. Ms. Coriston and Mrs. Emmetts stated that overall, the Recycling Center property looks good. Mr. Branagan stated he would update the sign. Ms. Chammings reported that recycling pamphlets were distributed in the past and Paige DeCaro, former Miss Stillwater, will be providing a recycling presentation at a Township Committee meeting in the near future.

Paulina Dam:

Mr. Branagan suggested EC members visit the area of the former Paulina Dam location. It looks great and the shad should be traveling upstream shortly.

New Business

Zoning Board Site Survey: Block 3602, Lot 13 – application to construct a stairwell off of an existing porch
Ms. Coriston 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, Ms. Coriston, yes

Dr. Lippencott referred to the prior discussion he and Mr. Szabo had regarding having young people involved with the site survey process to learn about environmental and digital tools and data resources for decision making while developing a flowchart/checklist for the inspections including work on the GeoWeb. They suggested looking for a high school or college student who is seeking 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. Chammings and Sam Wykoff to assist in the search for a student. Ms. Chammings stated the students most interested in participating are in college. Dr. Lippencott stated the search would continue and suggested reaching out to a home-schooled student. Dr. Lippencott stated the student could do the work virtually and not have to conduct the inspections.

Environmental Commission Volunteer Recognition:

- Ms. Coriston for the TREX program.
- EC members for checking the fishing receptacles.
- Dr. Mattes and Dr. Lippencott for conducting the site survey.

Endangered/Threatened Species Sightings: None reported.

Other sightings included baby catbirds, groundhog, weasel and a family of snakes.

At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 7:54 p.m.

There being no members of the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed at 7:54 p.m.

Planning Board (PB) Liaison Report: Dr. Lippencott

5/20/26

- There was a large public attendance at the last meeting regarding the proposed cannabis ordinance. The Planning Board rejected the ordinance in its current form and sent it back to the Township Committee. The next Township Committee meeting on this topic will be held on 6/16/26 for those interested in the topic; the next Planning Board meeting on the matter will be 6/17/26.
- The short-term rentals and Airbnb discussion was tabled.

Township Committee (TC) Liaison Report: Committeewoman Chammings

- A resolution of support for the funding of the Conservation School at Stokes will be considered at the 6/16/26 Township Committee meeting. There will also be continued discussion on a potential ordinance addressing data centers.
- A special meeting will be held on 6/9/26 for the hiring of a DPW employee.
- Sussex County Open Space Trail Grant – the Open Space Committee has listened to presentations for all applications and 12 will be moving forward in the process for review by the County Commissioners. Those approved will be sent back to the Open Space Committee for distribution of funding.
- Zoning Board – no new applications; two resolutions for prior approvals were passed; bills paid and escrow funds refunded.
- Scott Holzauer will be hired as the Township Tax Assessor to replace Penny Holenstein due to retirement.

July EC Meeting:

Mrs. Emmetts made a **motion** to cancel the July 13, 2026 EC meeting with appropriate notice being provided, seconded by Mr. Szabo.

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

With no further business to come before the Commission, Ms. Coriston made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m., seconded by Mr. Szabo. In a voice vote, all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Wunder, Secretary