

MINUTES FROM EC JUNE 15, 2020

Mendham Township Environmental Commission On-line, Zoom Meeting, 7pm June 15, 2020

Member Attendees: Richard Cotter, Chair, Martin Slayne, Co-Chair, Brian Boden, Mary Calabro, Janet DeMeo, John Mallon, Heather Tobarz, Morse Wilkenfeld

Student Members: Ethan Posner, Lauren Shrem

Township Committee Representative: Amalia Duarte

1. Minutes from May 18 meeting approved

Action: Martin Slayne to assume EC Chair after June meeting. At the end of the meeting, members gave sincere thanks to Rich Cotter for his years of commitment and leadership chairing the EC, and well wishes for the future.

2. Discussion of ideas and suggestions with the incoming EC Chair.

Thoughts on ways to help prioritize, structure and manage workload were discussed.

Action: Martin will continue 1:1 discussions with members on roles and areas of momentum and interest. EC will align on key roles for priority areas. Martin will prepare a template standing agenda based on priorities. To help minute-taking, the EC will annotate the meeting agenda with key actions arising. Student representatives could take on the minute-writing using this simple format, serving as a development skill opportunity. Lauren and Ethan will develop newly-framed EC pages for the MT website.

3. Princeton Hydro nitrate and ground water report to the Master Plan Subcommittee

Janet reported back from the sub-committee.

Action: EC position to be shared with the Master Plan Sub-committee. The reported findings based on nitrate levels and ground water indicate the number of homes in the Township is just five homes short of capacity, and with five new homes being constructed in the Pitney project, this takes the Township to capacity. Based on these findings, under the EC accountability for protecting our community's environment, including avoiding future health risk from unsafe levels of ground water contamination, the data would not support further home developments. Differences in water consumption and home water-saving methods (e.g. bathroom flush systems) have influenced usage data since earlier comprehensive studies in the 1990s, although reasons for different calculated underground water capacities in underlying rocks were not clear. Knowledge of aquifers in the area, and how far they are shared with neighboring communities, would be additionally helpful. Janet will share these views with the Master Plan Subcommittee that meets twice monthly.

4. India Brook Environmental Violations Update

(See EC Notification 1. Below.)

5. Pitney Park Stakeholders Meeting

Action: Martin as new EC representative will report back from the next quarterly Pitney meeting scheduled for June 19.

6. Planning Board – Janet

Action: No meetings scheduled. Janet will advise as required.

7. Open Space Planning, Signs & Kiosks

Trails and open spaces are getting much high use. Need to ensure adequate signage, laminated maps, kiosks, in good condition. Brian and John have been actively supporting this progress. Opportunities for further kiosks, maintenance and parking. Buttermilk Falls was highlighted as a site with high volume visitors, for further support.

Action: Brian and John leading for EC, also teaming-up with scouts programs, plus will investigate Township funds set aside for this type of community facilities.

8. Update Eagle Scout & Gold Star programs, EC representative

Action: See 7. John Mallon kindly volunteered to take-on the EC scout liaison role, to replace the much-appreciated lead effort to date from Brian.

9. Audubon Webinar for both the Township and the Borough scheduling

Action: July 15, 16 were agreed as proposed date options to share with Chris Neff, NJ Audubon Communications Director, who has happily agreed to deliver a webinar on birding and wildlife insights for Mendham area. Martin will share back with Chris to plan details, plus with Borough colleague, Brennan Reilly. The webinar is planned as a Zoom event, 45 mins presentation followed by 15 mins time for questions (7pm – 8.15pm total slot, allowing usual transition eventualities and intros). Martin will link with Maria Coppinger on set-up practicalities and advertising the event.

10. Follow Up's

Recycling – further community education on recyclable materials in MT

Action: Brian reviewing library plan for education, possible July 14. Plus add to September meeting agenda.

Recycling of food packaging, industry perspectives.

Action: Martin will feedback from a large annual meeting of the IFT (Institute of Food Technologists) on food industry progress on recyclable packaging, linking ANJEC.

EC Notifications:

- 1) Thomas Cozza, 243 Mountainside Road Request to DEP

Action: Monitor any further notification.

- 2) Lots 49.01 & 49.02 / Calais Road, James Sagurton requests a 5 year extension

Action: Monitor any developments with Planning Board. EC is aware of pond and wildlife crossing nearby, ensure no developments cause adverse impact.

Future Programs & Issues:

Buck Hill and Leddell open space access and development – not covered at this meeting, although Martin reached out to Chris Neff, NJ Audubon for advice on making these bird-friendly sites, as discussed at May meeting. Martin will contact DPW to understand local constraints and practical possibilities for these sites.

The Next EC meeting will be September 21, 2020