

CHATHAM BOROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
February 13, 2019

8:00 p.m.

Chairman Len Resto called this Regular Meeting of the Chatham Borough Environmental Commission to order at 8:00 p.m. in Room 212, middle level, Chatham Borough Hall. Chrnm. Resto announced that all legal notices had been posted for this meeting.

Name	Present	Absent
Chrmn. Len Resto	X	
Vice Chwmn. Kate Murphy	X	
Patricia Soteropoulos	X	
Kevin Murphy	X	
Torri Van Wie	X – arrived at 8:07 p.m.	
Joseph Treloar	X – arrived at 8:03 p.m.	
Kyle Muir		X
Ben Lampert		X
Council Member Jocelyn Mathiasen	X	
Liz Holler – Minutes Secretary		X – at a Zoning Bd. meeting

Mrs. Murphy kindly took the meeting minutes of tonight’s meeting in Ms. Holler’s absence.

Motion to Adopt Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes of January 9, 2019 were approved as submitted after Mrs. Murphy made a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Murphy.

Reports/Pending Business

Borough Council

Council Member Mathiasen reported that the Borough Council is considering some changes in communications and technology. The idea of having a Chatham Borough Facebook page has been approved and a page will be created soon. The Environmental Commission agreed that more communications with our citizens is a good thing. Also, there is an initiative to reduce paper use by the Borough. Agendas will not be printed in the future, but will instead be posted online.

Planning Board

Mrs. Van Wie is composing a letter to be distributed to Planning Board members which outlines environmentally-sustainable recommendations from the Environmental Commission. Such items as employing LEED standards, using solar technology, encouraging recycling, making spaces pedestrian-friendly and artistically-pleasing, and using sustainable landscaping should be recommended for future building projects. Mrs. Van Wie also mentioned that there is a possibility of a new building being built on Main Street, where the Sherwin Williams store currently sits.

Organic Fields

Before the meeting, Mr. John Dey dropped off the results of a Rutgers Soil Testing Lab. Samples taken from Borough property indicate that the soil is slightly alkaline, but generally in good condition. Fertilizer recommendations were given. The Borough Council has prioritized keeping our playing fields and municipal lawns as safe as possible. Money is in the budget to hire a landscaper who will use only the safest products. There was a suggestion made that personnel from the Borough, the Township, and the School District of the Chathams should meet and discuss the best landscaping practices for the area. On February 21st, Rutgers is offering a course for Parks and Recreation landscaping which Public Works Director Tony Torello will attend.

Ms. Soteropoulos shared an article about insects. Their diversity and biomass is in decline. Education is needed, as many people are unaware of the negative impacts of pesticide spraying.

Plastic Initiative

Three Commissioners – Kate Murphy, Len Resto, and Torri Van Wie met with members of the Chatham Township, Madison, and Summit Environmental Commissions on February 2nd to discuss what can be done about single-use plastic pollution. Chatham Borough and Madison are hosting an ANJEC seminar on May 16th in Madison about this problem. We hope to encourage people and businesses to use fewer plastic bags, plastic straws, and other plastic disposables. We will meet again on March 2nd.

Green Team Activities

Mr. Treloar spoke of his research into installing electric vehicle charging stations in Chatham. He is specifically looking at the parking lot behind the Drip Coffee Shop parking lot – Center Street West. There is a program called “It Pays to Plug In”, which is offering substantial grant money for new charging stations. The Commission should be ready to take advantage of that when the money becomes available.

Recycling Education

On February 19th, Chatham Township and Chatham Borough are offering a presentation that will be given by a representative from MCMUA at the Chatham Library at 6:30 p.m. People need to be aware that putting plastic bags in the single-stream recycling is causing our recycling to be sent to the landfill, which is costing our town money. Also, only plastics labeled #1, #2, and #5 are accepted now. The Recycling Coach App should be a good resource for people; however, it is not quite accurate and is being refined as we work with the MCMUA. Commissioners thought our school children should be educated about recycling so that they might influence their parents.

Mr. Murphy brought up the use of plastic on our Riverside Trail. Newly-planted trees last spring were encased in plastic tubes with plastic netting on top. Some of the netting has come loose and some of the tubes have fallen over. Mr. Murphy was concerned that this plastic could easily be swept into the river.

Community Solar

Mr. Murphy described the pilot program which the NJ Board of Public Utilities has undertaken. Communities will have the opportunity of installing a solar array which citizens can opt into.

Solar power will be sent directly into the grid and subscribers will benefit. There was a discussion about possible locations for these panels. More information should be forthcoming about the program.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

The next Environmental Commission Meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 13, 2019, 8 p.m., Room 212, middle level, Chatham Borough Hall.

Respectfully submitted:

Commissioner Kate Murphy
Minutes Secretary Liz Holler