

CHATHAM BOROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

March 11, 2020

8:00 p.m.

In Chairwoman Murphy's absence, Vice Chairwoman Pat Soteropoulos called this Regular Meeting of the Chatham Borough Environmental Commission to order at 8:00 p.m. in Room 212, middle level, Chatham Borough Municipal Building. Vice Chair Soteropoulos read aloud the Statement of Adequate Notice. All legal notices have been posted for this meeting.

Name	Present	Absent
Kate Murphy, Chair.		X
Ben Lampert	X – present on speakerphone	
Patricia Soteropoulos, Vice Chair	X	
Torri Van Wie		X
Rozella Clyde	X	
Joseph Treloar	X	
Philip Kagan		X
Yana Doyle	X	
Susie Robertson	X	
Len Resto, Council Liaison	X	
Jocelyn Mathiasen, Council Liaison	X – present on speakerphone	
Liz Holler, Recording Secretary	X	

Also present:

Maddie Kaplan, a CMS student

Public Comment

There was none.

Motion to Adopt Meeting Minutes

Vice Chairwoman Soteropoulos made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2020 Environmental Commission meeting. Dr. Clyde seconded the motion. The minutes of February 12, 2020 meeting were approved as submitted.

Planning Board Liaison Report

In Mrs. Van Wie's absence, Ms. Holler reported that no applications have been presented to the Board for a while. However, Mr. DeNave, the Zoning Officer, recently gave a presentation to Board members. He informed them that with the revisions made to the Borough's Floor Area Regulations, it has adversely spiked the amount of building coverage variances being submitted to the Zoning Bd. of Adjustment.

Borough Council Liaison Report

Council Member Resto commented that on March 1st the plastic bag ordinance went into effect. He felt that most residents are following through with bringing their own reusable bags to stores. Also, Council Member Resto reported that the Undergrounding Advisory Committee made a recommendation to the Planning Board to create a sub-committee consisting of some Planning Board members to push for an ordinance requiring any new construction or major renovation to underground their utilities.

Council Member Mathiasen reported that the financial model for the River Road Redevelopment Project had been discussed this week. This financial model will help clarify the financial impacts of this project. The Post Office Plaza Redevelopment has not been progressing as of late. A professional will be hired to survey the community and receive input from residents.

Council Member Mathiasen also reported that the Chatham Borough Health Department as well as the Borough Administrator, are working on the Coronavirus situation in the Borough. She noted that the Chatham Borough website currently has a Powerpoint providing information about the Coronavirus.

Climate Action Plan

Dr. Clyde reported on a sharette that she and Ms. Doyle had recently attended. Attendees were from Summit, Maplewood, and South Orange. The topic covered were ways to avoid putting further waste into area landfills. Dr. Clyde noted that Wayne DeFeo, the head of Essex County's MUA, was one of the speakers. Mr. DeFeo explained how single stream recycling was not really practical.

Dr. Clyde recommended that the Commission's Environmental Inventory for the Borough Master Plan be updated. She pointed out that the last Environmental Commission's Inventory Update was completed in 2012. It only addressed the Borough's flora and fauna.

Energy Aggregation

Council Member Resto noted that Amy Mason is spearheading the energy aggregation in Chatham Township. Ms. Mason is a member of the Chatham Township Environmental Commission. A mutual meeting date will be arranged between Chatham Borough and Chatham Township to explore this project.

Sustainable Housing

Ms. Soteropoulos gave Mrs. Van Wie's report on this matter. An effort was made to hold a follow-up meeting to the Affordable Housing meeting that was held in January in Madison. A meeting date in March has now been postponed because of COVID-19.

Commissioners discussed the recycling of debris from demolished homes. Ms. Robertson suggested perhaps a checklist could be created to track the debris that was recycled so that a homeowner can get some escrow back.

Dr. Clyde felt that commercial building could also be included in sustainable measures.

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Ms. Soteropoulos noted that the Borough Administrator Williams will touch base with Mrs. Van Wie regarding a convenient time to present the Commission's ideas at a Borough Council Meeting.

Terracycle

Council Member Resto will put a slide collection together for the Borough Council packets. He will include a draft resolution he has written, giving the Council's approval for the Terracycle and request to be made of NJ and applying for the "Keep America Beautiful" grant to fund the project."

Dr. Clyde and Ms. Doyle suggested, when the Terracycle containers are installed, Commissioners should check every quarter to see if the bins are full.

Earth Week 2020

Ms. Soteropoulos asked what if Earth Week cannot be observed with possible restrictions due to the Covid-19 situation.

Dr. Clyde noted that the focus could then be put on social media. The only public gathering scheduled right now is for Saturday, April 18th. The idea came up that a

demonstration could be held on how to make bags out of used T-shirts. Also, Dr. Clyde reported that she has asked Janice Piccolo for a list of all local lawn services. On that Saturday morning, a speaker could give a presentation to them on the hazards of lawn pesticides. The public could also be invited to this workshop.

Also, for Earth Week, students from different Chatham schools have been asked to create art objects out of trash. A display of these art objects can be set up at the Library.

Ms. Kaplan discussed posters that could be created proclaiming “Happy 50th Birthday, Mother Earth” or words to that **effect**. The posters could be put on display at the Library.

Ms. Doyle and Dr. Clyde discussed the Google spreadsheets that are being organized for Earth Day activities. Dr. Clyde felt everything should be finalized at the next Green Team meeting.

Ms. Doyle brought up the idea of the Environmental Commission reaching out to the public on a much broader scale. Social media could be used.

Ms. Soteropoulos asked Mr. Lampert to talk about the Commission’s Facebook page.

Mr. Lampert reviewed what he had posted on Facebook for last year’s Earth Day.

Ms. Soteropoulos asked Mr. Lampert if he could set up an Instagram account for the Commission. Material from the Commission could be posted on Instagram and Facebook at the same time. Mr. Lampert agreed to set up an Instagram account. Dr. Clyde will send Mr. Lampert information on Earth Week activities, events, and projects.

Ms. Soteropoulos reviewed Mrs. Van Wie’s report. Among the recent Chatham High School activities, Mrs. Van Wie had recently taken a group of students to Columbia University for the Youth Climate Summit.

On other matters, Mrs. Robertson discussed the Repair Café, which is an international movement, which began in Amsterdam. Mrs. Robertson explained how the café would operate. Residents could bring items to be repaired by

volunteers. Summit, NJ is holding a Repair Café at the end of March. Summit is actually constructing a building for their café.

Council Member Resto suggested this concept be brought up to the Senior Citizen Advisory Committee, because some seniors just don't have the skill sets or manual dexterity to repair items in their homes.

Dr. Clyde suggested a data-base could be organized listing handy-people who do certain repairs.

The Commission felt that the Repair Café idea could be introduced at the Sustainability Fair in the fall.

At 9:10 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

The next Chatham Borough Environmental Commission Meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 15, 2020, at 8 p.m., Room 212, middle level, Chatham Borough Municipal Building.

Respectfully submitted:

Liz Holler
Minutes Secretary

cc: Mayor Thaddeus J. Kobylarz
Chatham Township Environmental Commission

