

**MORRIS TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
August 12, 2021**

The meeting of the Township of Morris Environmental Commission was called to order by Buz Kenney on Thursday, August 12, 2021 at 7 PM via Zoom webinar.

Statement of Adequate Notice

Chairman Buz Kenney issued the following statement of Adequate Notice:

“Adequate Notice” of this meeting of the Environmental Commission of the Township of Morris was given as required and defined by the Open Public Meetings Act as follows:

Written Notice was given to the official newspaper, Daily Record, by email on August 1, 2021 which was at least 48 hours prior to the date of this meeting, and a copy of the notice was posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building of the Township of Morris on August 1, 2021 by the Secretary of this board and a copy of the notice was likewise filed in the Township Clerk’s office and in the Secretary’s office on August 1, 2021 and copies of this notice were mailed by certified mail to all persons who requested individual notices, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-19, all of which notices were given at least 48 hours prior to this meeting, and I hereby hand to the Secretary of this board for the purpose of incorporating into minutes of this meeting , a copy of this notice which was given as above set forth for appropriate retention in the “Municipal Files”.

Pledge of Allegiance led by Chairperson Buz Kenney

Roll Call

Members Present

Tilly Jo Emerson
Siva Jonnada
Daniel ‘Buz’ Kenney
Cecile Kent
Brian Morgan
Joshua Saks
Mary Ellen Murray Alt. 1
Barbara Buda Alt. 2

Members Absent

Jennifer Carcich

Associate Members Present

Leslie Jones-Wentz
John Landau
Charlie Schachter

Associate Members Absent

Ned Gardner
Steve Tractenberg
Sanjiv Sharma

Also Present

James R. Slate, Township Engineer
Cathy Wilson, Township Committee
William Ravitz, Township Committee
Timothy Quinn, Township Administrator

Approval of Minutes

Cece Kent moved to approve the July 8, 2021 meeting minutes. Approved

New application referred from the Planning Board

Anna Management wants to convert an existing building at 222 Madison Avenue (formerly the TD Bank) into a Dunkin Donuts. This building has been empty for some time and the application is fairly straight forward according to James Slate. As far as we know, there will not be a Tesla EV charging station connection as Dunkin Donuts has been doing in New England. Joushus Saks and James Slate will do the site review for this application.

New application referred from the Board of Adjustment:

No new applications

Correspondence:

No New Correspondence

EC Report Review:

No site review reports pending for review

Community Solar Presentation:

- There was a presentation by Neighborhood Sun. Sheri Robinson and Randi Orlow who are part of the community outreach and education arms of Blue Army Solar Farm explained how the solar credits work on a resident's JCP&L electricity bill. The existing program is primarily to help LMI (low and moderate income)

households. There is a need to make people more aware of how this program works and to gain the trust of residents especially in the LMI areas. There have been deceptive third party energy organizations that have made people reluctant to utilize this environmentally beneficial resource. There was time for some questions by members of the EC. Is this only for LMI households? Are there other communities using community solar energy? Yes, Franklin Township is one. Are there references? Yes, on the Board of Public Utilities Website. Any other questions should be directed to the Solar Sub-Committee. Buz Kenney thanked the presenters.

General Business:

A. Chairperson Remarks:

- Buz Kenney thanked Siva Jonnada for all of his work in getting the dumpster out of the Whippany River. Siva explained how all of his efforts finally came together to get the dumpster removed. The big event was also on Channel 12 News.
- A last call for ordering EC polo shirts was made. Each shirt will be approximately \$25.00. The shirts will be here in time for the Festival on the Green
- Buz Kenney has been in communication with the organizers of the festival. With Township help we will be able to pay for a 10x10 tent. We will have tables and a banner. We hope to have reusable bags to hand out. Both our shirts and the bags will have the EC logo on them. There are other plans for our booth at the festival as well.

B. Subcommittee Reports:

i. Composting- Brian Morgan said there will be another composter sale the week after the Festival on the Green. There will be information on composting at the Festival on the Green. The committee is looking into services to help the home composter i.e. Java Composting.

ii. Conservation- John Landau presented in Ned Gardner's absence. He submitted the resolution for a "Plants to avoid and plants to use" list which includes information and help for any landscape work being done in the Township. He mentioned that the NJFoHV (NJ Friends of Hopewell Valley) Strike Team will hold their annual conference at Foote's Pond in Morristown on September 12. There will be guided walks on the trails. The "do not plant" list and draft resolution document is done. It is believed that we can only strongly encourage landscapers to follow these guidelines.

However, any land use board should have the information as soon as possible.

The document offers important information as to what and why certain plants should be planted instead of the invasive plants currently in use. The resolution needs to go to the environmental standing committee next. The EC voted to support this resolution.

Tim Quinn wanted to know if we should get Township input? Should we get input from Parks and Recreation? Buz Kenney expressed the sentiment that a great deal of work has already gone into this resolution. As it is only a “strongly recommends” and not a directive, it should be moved forward now. John Landau is willing to address any questions that may come up as this goes to the standing committee.

A survey may be used to assess the feelings of residents as to the benefits of a Township-wide tree ordinance.

Please see the documents already sent prior to the meeting.

Cathy Wilson asked for a copy of the presentation John Landau did on invasives because it was so helpful.

Discussion followed about the invasive tree of heaven plant being a host to the invasive spotted lantern fly. How can we eradicate it without killing beneficial and native insects? This kind of information could go into the EC Newsletter.

iii. Energy Aggregation- See presentation notes from Neighborhood Sun.

iv. Energy Efficiency- Nothing new

v. Green Vehicles- Nothing new

vi. Master Plan- No Updates

vii. Outreach- Charlie Schacter presented. Please see his documents already sent out to EC members. The website is up to date. We should remove Jen Mantek’s name as she is no longer here.

We still need to work out the details for the Festival on the Green. There should be a schedule for signing up to volunteer. We need to set-up and break down and fill the hours in between. We should all be thinking about the hours we could work. We have several ideas for activities and for information i.e. native plants, energy efficiency and solar energy that will be available at the festival. There may be the need for a separate sub-committee to handle all of the details. Signage will be discussed off-line. We do not know where the EC will be at the festival. This is the first year the EC will be participating.

viii. Solar- Nothing new

- ix. Sustainable Jersey- No updates although the question arose as to whether or not we have made any progress in establishing a separate and dedicated google site for all of the documentation needed for certification. Brian Morgan set up a test site. Organizing all of our information and documentation is crucial. We also need to establish a green team for Sustainable Jersey certification. This will need to be done with a written resolution that will then go to the Township Committee for approval.

C. Regional Reports:

- Buz Kenney has been reading several new reports including the NJDEP climate report on the dismal status of climate change. We have obviously reached a tipping point. There are reports directly from New Jersey scientists such as Rutgers' State Climate Report and the Northern Jersey Municipal Alliance. A subcommittee of the Northern Jersey Sustainable Municipal Alliance is drafting a climate action plan template for use by New Jersey municipalities in satisfying the state local climate action plan mandate.

Public Comment

No comment by members of the public

Commentary by Committee Members:

- Brian Morgan brought up the upcoming ANJEC awards. Should we be recognized for some of the projects done by the EC?
- John Landau raised the fact that we could be leaders in the fight against invasive plants. Buz Kenney agreed and stated that we are recognized for being strong in other areas too.
- Tilly Jo Emerson sadly reported that she will be moving to Maplewood sometime soon. We will miss you Tilly Jo! There is an active EC in Maplewood that will be lucky to have you!

Commentary by Commission Members:

- Cathy Wilson is excited that we will be part of this year's Morristown Festival on the Green. She is happy to see the direction of the EC and the progress we are making.
- Bud Ravitz echoed Cathy Wilson's sentiments. He also thanked Siva Jonnada for all of his work in getting the dumpster removed from the Whippany River. He commented on what may be the new normal due to climate change. He wondered if we should be endorsing any particular company in light of the solar energy presentation heard earlier this evening.

Adjournment

The Environmental Commission meeting was adjourned at 9 PM in the Municipal Building, 50 Woodland Avenue, Township of Morris.

Leslie L. Jones-Wentz 8/12/2021

Respectively Submitted by:

Township of Morris Environmental Commission