

**MONMOUTH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD**  
ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL



JOSEPH BARRIS, PP, AICP, CFM  
*Director of Planning*

WILMA MORRISSEY  
*Council Chairman*

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Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the  
**MONMOUTH COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL**

**Thursday, April 1, 2021, 5:00 p.m.**  
Via Webex

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairwoman Morrissey called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL – ATTENDANCE**

Members Present: Wilma Morrissey, Paul Johnson, David Kostka, Scott Thompson, John Vig

Members Absent: Jennifer DiLorenzo, France Karras, Ashley Reese

Staff Present: Amber Mallm, Sean Pizzio, David Schmetterer, Bridget Neary

**3. PRESENTATION- Kristin Hock, NJ Audubon, How to Create a Certified Wildlife Habitat**

Ms. Hock, Habitat Outreach Coordinator at NJ Audubon, offered a presentation on the NJ Audubon Garden for Wildlife Program which is in partnership with the Wildlife Federation Certified Wildlife Habitat program. Ms. Hock offered statistics regarding threatened and endangered species. Ms. Hock explained that some species decline can be attributed to habitat fragmentation. For example monarch butterflies which rely on native milkweed have declined by 90%. By gardening with native plants you can introduce habitat to your property.

Ms. Hock explained that a Certified Wildlife Habitats should provide food, water, cover, places to raise young, and use sustainable practices. Food can be met through native plants that provide leaves, seeds, berries, nuts, fruits, nectar sap, or from a supplemental food source such as bird feeders. Plants are bottom of the food chain, by providing plants for insects to eat, you are supporting the birds that rely on insects. Ms. Hock explained that 96% of backyard birds need invertebrates to feed their young. For example, a pair of chickadees need between 6,000-9,000 insects to raise one nest of chicks. Water is another necessary resource in a certified wildlife habitat. To certify, you should provide one source of water such as a bird bath, pond, or natural water body. To offer cover, individuals should provide an area for wildlife to rest or hide from predators, or for predators to hide while hunting prey. Places to raise young should include two sources such as mature trees, nesting boxes, or host plants for caterpillars. Using sustainable include practices like mulching and using drip hoses to conserve and keeping cats indoors. If an area offers all 5 of these areas, it can be certified.

Ms. Hock explained there is a \$20 fee to certify. Any space can be certified such as patios, rooftops, yards, and public spaces. A community can become certified by obtaining points for certified homes, common areas and schools, and for education and outreach programs. There are 4 certified communities in New Jersey including Cape Island, Montclair, High Bridge, and Lambertville. There are 11 registered communities including Red Bank. Ms. Hock explained the goal is to reduce habitat fragmentation, she then shared success stories from around the U.S.

The Council thanked Ms. Hock for her presentation. Mr. Thompson asked for the contact of who is leading the certification in Red Bank, Mr. Thompson also expressed concern with hawks preying on birds at his feeder, they agreed that this at least feeds the predator. Mr. Johnson asked how to address people's concerns with attracting mosquitos. Ms. Hock recommended dumping and refilling bird baths every other day. She also explained that a Certified Wildlife Habitat may attract predators like dragonflies who will prey on mosquitoes. Ms. Morrissey asked if the gardens are validated after you certify online by a professional site visit, Ms. Hock said it is self-guided and an individual does not visit your garden. Mr. Vig said the certification is something to be proud of. He also asked if this program intersects with Sustainable Jersey Points. Ms. Hock said she has reviewed the Sustainable Jersey points and knows there is an overlap. Mr. Johnson said he has seen the bat population decrease, Ms. Hock said bat boxes are encouraged. Mr. Johnson then asked about decreasing populations of lightning bugs. Ms. Hock stressed that spraying for mosquitoes on your lawns does not only target mosquitoes, but it also impacts beneficial insects like lightning bugs. Mr. Pizzio thanked Ms. Hock for her presentation and appreciated learning about the benefits of certifying communities. Mr. Pizzio also said Monmouth County Parks are great at supporting wildlife. Ms. Hock said Manasquan Reservoir is a Certified Wildlife Habitat.

#### **4. REVIEW OF MINUTES**

The Council reviewed the March 2021 minutes. Mr. Kostka made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. With no objections the minutes were approved.

#### **5. REGULAR REPORTS**

A. **Chairman-** Ms. Morrissey shared multiple articles. She shared the first article titled, "EPA Strengthens Key Power Plant Rule to Reduce Smog this Summer and Improve Air Quality for Millions of Americans," power plants in 12 states will be required to cut emissions. She then shared an additional article "EPA to Request Additional Input on the Lead and Copper Rule," which seeks public comment and rules that regulate of lead in drinking water. The Ms. Morrissey noted a Rule Change Proposal on N.J.A.C. 7:25-6 the Fish Code. Then Ms. Morrissey shared an article titled, "California is First to Tackle Microplastics in Drinking Water," Mr. Johnson noted he has heard that as tires wear off on roadways, the fragments contribute to microplastic pollution in runoff. Mr. Thompson, stressed that we need to strike a balance in what we use, like tires and clothing, that both contribute to microplastics and its environmental impact. Mr. Schmetterer agreed that he has seen data that explains that microplastic fibers from nylon or polyester fabric enters

waterways through laundry water. Ms. Morrissey shared another article titled “Get Lucky with Energy Savings,” from New Jersey’s Clean Energy Program, promoting opportunities like rebates and heat pumps. Ms. Morrissey then shared the article “New Jersey, Your Tap Water may be Contaminated with Carcinogens” and “EPA Releases Testing Data Showing PFAS Contamination from Fluorinated Containers.” Ms. Morrissey then shared “Monmouth Co. Tap Water May Taste Different This Month. Here’s Why” which explains that areas served by NJ American Water may experience an increased taste of chlorine in water, as NJ American Water begins a new treatment process. She then shared, “Recycling is Power -Start at the Cart” which explains that changing behavior is important step in addressing environmental initiatives like recycling. The Council then discussed how they can try to address some of these issues on a local level. Ms. Morrissey shared, “Telsa Tells Two Stories about Self-Driving Vehicle Timeline” Mr. Vig said the Telsa website offers data that supports deadly accidents in self-driving cars are less common than in traditional cars.

**B. Planning Board-** As Ms. DiLorenzo is absent Ms. Mallm offered an update on the Planning Board meeting. Ms. Mallm stated there was an appeal on an application from the Development Review Committee, and 8 stormwater control ordinances were approved.

**C. Staff-** Ms. Mallm offered an update on the Stormwater Technical Advisory Committee. The Committee will review 25 ordinances at the next STAC meeting. Ms. Mallm shared the April Dates to Remember.

**D. Legislation-** Ms. Mallm provided an update on recent legislation. Ms. Mallm shared S1010 which permits counties and municipalities to bond for alternative fuel vehicles.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**A. JLUS III-** Ms. Mallm provided an update on the JLUS III study. Ms. Mallm said staff reviewed some maps prepared by the consulting team working on the Next Steps for Compatibility Study. Ms. Mallm said the RFP for the Coastal Resilience Design study was posted earlier today, April 1. She shared that RFP focused on two sites from the JLUS II plan including Whale Creek in Aberdeen, and Flat Creek in Union Beach.

**B. 2021 Goals-** Ms. Morrissey raised the question again on what the Council can do. Ms. Morrissey asked if she should defer to Ms. DiLorenzo to learn more about what that Planning Board may be interested in. Mr. Schmetterer said that yes the Council should work through their Planning Board liaison. Mr. Johnson he thinks it would be beneficial to be in communication with the Planning Board and learn what we can do for them. Ms. Mallm said she thought Ms. Hock’s presentation could act a source of inspiration for the Council. Ms. Morrissey asked how the topics discussed today could be used by the Council. Mr. Johnson asked if Certified Wildlife Habitats is a topic the Council could communicate to the municipalities. Mr. Vig asked if we could encourage the municipalities to certify as Certified Wildlife Communities. Ms. Mallm suggested starting

by holding a roundtable on the topic. Mr. Schmetterer said Sustainable Jersey is interested in encouraging more municipalities to create Green Teams.

**6. NEW BUSINESS**

A. **Jersey WaterCheck** – Ms. Mallm provided a brief demonstration of the Jersey Water Check webpage which is designed to help people understand which agencies provide their drinking water and process their wastewater.

**7. MEMBER REPORTS:**

- Ms. Morrissey said a local woman is interested installing bike servicing stations on Township property. The Rotary Club recently donated a bike repair station.
- Mr. Kostka said he and Mr. Vig have been working with their Colts Neck Environmental Commission to update the municipal ERI. The Green Team has been looking at activities to qualify for certification. Mr. Kostka stated COVID-19 has been restricting their activities.
- Mr. Vig suggested holding an outdoor meeting once Council members are fully vaccinated.
- Mr. Johnson said the Clean Ocean Action Beach sweeps are April 17 at 9 a.m., individuals can register at [Cleanoceanaction.org](http://Cleanoceanaction.org). Mr. Thompson noted that as more people are being more active it is important to be careful. He expressed his condolences to a man that recently drowned while kayaking in the Navesink River.
- Mr. Johnson had no report.
- Ms. Morrissey asked if any of the staff had anything to add. Mr. Schmetterer said to visit [MonmouthWithinReach.com](http://MonmouthWithinReach.com) to participate in a study the Division of Planning is working on focused on improving traffic related to tourism and events. Mr. Pizzio suggested that Council could also focus potential upcoming outreach on encouraging municipalities to certify with Tree City USA.

**8. PUBLIC COMMENT:** Ms. Morrissey opened for public comment; upon seeing no members of the public the public comment was closed.

**9. ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, Mr. Johnson made the motion to adjourn and Mr. Thompson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.