

MONMOUTH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL



JOSEPH BARRIS, PP, AICP, CFM
Director of Planning

WILMA MORRISSEY
Council Chairman

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the MONMOUTH COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

Thursday, May 7, 5:00 p.m.
Via Webex

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Wilma Morrissey called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL – ATTENDANCE

Members Present: Wilma Morrissey, France Karras, Jennifer DiLorenzo, David Kostka, John Vig

Members Absent: Scott Thompson, Paul Johnson

Staff Present: Amber Mallm, Linda Brennen

- 3. REVIEW OF MINUTES:** The Council was supposed to review the February minutes, however Ms. Mallm enclosed the March notes which were reviewed by the Council. As the notes are not eligible for adoption, the Council will need to formally adopt the February minutes at the next meeting with a quorum.

4. REGULAR REPORTS

A. **Chairman-** Ms. Morrissey noted her attendance at the May Monmouth County Stormwater Technical Advisory Committee. She also summarized several articles. One article discussed facial recognition technology amidst facial coverings. Another claimed more sanitary wipes are being inappropriately flushed due to COVID-19 and harming the wastewater management processes. The next article addressed COVID-19's impacts on the economy. The Council then discussed that when the economy is reopened, it must be done safely. The Council agreed decisions need to be made based on science for the best interest of the health of the public.

B. **Planning Board-** The Planning Board did not meet in March or April. Ms. DiLorenzo mentioned that the Planning Board will meet for a virtual meeting in May. Ms. Brennen said that she plans to provide an update on a new grant application intended to complete a Joint Land Use Phase (JLUS) III study which will include land use planning to follow up on a recommendation of JLUS Phase I, and planning and design for some of the resilience concepts introduced in JLUS Phase II.

C. **Staff-** Ms. Mallm described the May Dates to Remember and noted other virtual events available including GIS training.

D. **Legislation-** No report.

OLD BUSINESS

A. **Spring Roundtable Planning-** Ms. Mallm recalled the Council's decision to postpone the spring roundtable. The Council spoke about holding a roundtable as a webinar. Ms. Brennen commented that a future roundtable topic could be the newly amended Stormwater Management Rules.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. **NESE Pipeline Update-** Ms. Mallm reminded the Council that the County Administrator issued a comment letter to NJDEP and Governor Murphy, calling attention to a Board of Chosen Freeholder's 2019 resolution that expressed opposition to the project. Ms. Mallm reported that according to Clean Ocean Action's website, Governor Murphy is set to make his decision on the NESE permits by June 12.

B. NJ Climate Resilience Virtual Info session-

Ms. Mallm summarized her attendance at the virtual information session this afternoon on 5/7/20. NJDEP provided an update on the Climate Resilience Strategy and a Scientific Report on Climate Change as required by Executive Order 89. The strategy and report are due September 2020. NJDEP explained that the Scientific Report generally finds climate change would result in: increase in temperatures, increase in precipitation (with rain events happening infrequently but being more severe), and sea level rise. The Scientific Report is also planned to discuss other specific impacts such as heatwaves, health impacts, loss of wetlands, wildlife impacts, loss of crops, specifically poorer conditions for NJ blueberries and cranberries.

NJDEP offered overview of the Climate Resilience Strategy, which includes the Coastal Resilience Plan. NJDEP offered an outline of what NJ and NJDEP is currently doing to meet goals and offered draft ideas of could be done under the strategy. NJDEP is launched a survey on its website to gain feedback on how to achieve goals of the Resilience Plan.

C. NJDEP Draft 2021-2026 Section 309 Assessment and Strategy-

Ms. Mallm noted NJDEP has released its Draft 2021-2026 Section 309 Assessment and Strategy. The Section 309 program is a grant program through NOAA to help states improve their Coastal Management Programs in 9 enhancement areas. Every 5 years NJDEP creates a 5 year enhancement strategy and selects which enhancement areas to focus on. According to the 2019 stakeholder process, the following areas are high priority: wetlands, coastal hazards, public access, and ocean & great lakes resources. Medium priority areas are: marine debris, cumulative/secondary impacts, aquaculture energy & government facility siting. Low priority areas are special area management planning. NJDEP submitted its Draft strategy to NOAA on May 1. Comments are accepted until June 1. Final document will be submitted to NOAA in September 2020.

6. MEMBER REPORTS:

- Ms. Morrissey provided her attached April & May report and called special attention to a grant the Belmar Blvd School is seeking for aquaponics technology.
- Ms. Karras expressed her concern with the high foot traffic along the Henry Hudson trail and lack of social distancing.

- Ms. DiLorenzo reported fewer meetings due to COVID-19. However, she noted articles reporting improvements in air quality due to reduced use of fossil fuels. Ms. DiLorenzo and the Council expressed their hope that the reduced consumption of resources will result in permanent environmental benefits and society will continue to practice better environmental behaviors after COVID-19 related restrictions are lifted.
 - Mr. Kostka reported Colts Neck Planning Board held its latest meeting on a virtual platform.
 - Mr. Vig had no report
 - Ms. Brennen reminded the Council to support local farmers, businesses, and restaurants during this time.
7. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** Ms. Morrissey opened for public comment, upon seeing no members of the public, it was closed.
8. **ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, Mr. Kostka made the motion to adjourn and Ms. Karras seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPx1yqvJgf4&feature=youtu.be>

Facial Recognition Is Increasing and Masks Won't Stop It

Masks are commonplace due to COVID-19 so companies are expanding their facial recognition capacity to recognize the masked faces. Privacy concerns are more pressing than ever as the pandemic could increase society surveillance.

WOODROW HARTZOG AND EVAN SELINGER, NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, APRIL 8, 2020, OPINION

(TNS) — Facial recognition surveillance systems are ominous. People see how these tools threaten privacy and civil liberties and consider ways they might resist being tracked and profiled everywhere they go. One option that is regularly tossed around is the idea of frustrating identification systems with clothing and accessories that obscure and distort our appearance.

Until now, it's mostly been art installations and academic projects experimenting with face-jamming. But with the spread of COVID-19 fueling expanded surveillance as well as the number of people who are wearing face masks, scarves and bandanas, there's a flicker of hope that masks will make face recognition harder and harder to implement.

Wouldn't it be nice to be able to opt-out so easily?

Unfortunately, more people covering their faces won't meaningfully thwart face recognition technology, or make it any less urgent to grapple with the threats that go along with it.

Face coverings are important for public health. But they are just a speed bump for facial recognition. These systems are still flawed and they still present huge problems for privacy and civil rights. If anything, COVID-19 is likely to spur more, not less, facial surveillance.

In the U.S., the controversial facial recognition startup company Clearview AI is said to be talking with state agencies about using its technology to "track patients infected by the coronavirus"; in China, facial recognition software is linked to a phone app that codes "people based on their contagion risk" and determines when they're cleared to enter an array of public spaces; and, in Russia, facial recognition technology is being deployed to track people who violate quarantine orders.

Since every crisis gets exploited, companies have seized on the narrative that government investment in facial recognition technology during a pandemic is a win-win. They are promising benefits that go beyond immediate health concerns, such as upgraded transportation and crowd management systems.

Adopted 09/03/2020

In some contexts, it's harder for technology to identify a half-covered face. But companies are already creating workarounds that make educated guesses about what masked faces look like. Even if these adaptations turn out to be less effective than advertised, masks still won't protect us from the oppressive and harmful effects of face surveillance.

We can expect government and private sector companies to keep using the technology, even if face masks around every corner start to render results more flawed. People don't have the power to resist facial surveillance at scale. Technological cat-and-mouse games are exhausting and favor players with the most resources.

As before the pandemic hit, people of color and other marginalized populations will continue to bear the brunt of surveillance hardest. In the long run, everyone can be worn down and overwhelmed by what it takes to be hypervigilant.

Finally, it's wrong to place all the burden of privacy and civil liberties protections on individuals. The very idea that our rights need to be safeguarded through guerilla warfare gives lawmakers a pass from upholding their part of the social contract.

Now more than ever, they need to be vigilant. Surveillance powers that are given now won't be easy to rollback. Instead, they'll be used to expand surveillance infrastructure and further the expectation that being watched everywhere is a normal part of life rather than something that we should tolerate only when completely necessary and justified. That's why organizations like the Electronic Frontier Foundation feel the need to craft statements like, "Face Surveillance Is Not the Solution to the COVID-19 Crisis."

It's natural to feel conflicted about surveillance in times of crisis. But as lawmakers ponder how best to ensure public health while maintaining our civil rights, we should advocate for deeper and structural protections, revitalize our commitments to both public health and human rights and take little comfort in coincidental windfalls like obfuscation through covering our face.

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Critical Need for Clean Water

With a network of more than 250 miles of sewer lines and 31 pump stations, the Western Monmouth Utilities Authority (WMAU), located in Monmouth, N.J., provides wastewater treatment service to more than 25,000 customers.

“When you talk about sectors that are part of the national security infrastructure, water and wastewater are right up there with the power grid and law enforcement,” said Brian J. Valentino, chief executive officer of WMAU. “None of the sectors can survive and succeed without clean water.”

WMAU has to maintain a workforce that is healthy and able to work during the pandemic. That’s a challenge, according to Valentino, who says only licensed operators are allowed to maintain WMAU facilities. “We’re in the New York City area, so we’re in a hot spot of the whole world right now,” he pointed out.

“I have to keep enough people healthy to be able to conduct our operations. I’ve got to keep enough people in reserve in case the numbers get worse.”

Meanwhile, a best practice for preventing contagion is causing headaches for WMAU. “One of the things that we always struggle with is non-flushable rags being put into the sewer system,” said Valentino. “Everyone is cleaning with them now and instead of throwing them into a garbage can, they’re flushing them down the toilet.”

What is normally a big problem has grown exponentially worse, Valentino said. “The rags get caught in our pumps and in our pipes and they have to be removed by mechanical means at multiple steps along the treatment train. That is manpower intensive.”

WMAU staff are collaborating remotely to meet these challenges. “Two or three years ago, we decided that we were going to transition all our key financial systems to the cloud,” said Valentino. “We transitioned from a desktop computer to a laptop computer for everybody in authority, the idea being that in a snowstorm — or God forbid, a fire — we could just pick and go anywhere and be ready to go to work.”

But the special district never foresaw the need for so many of its workers to be out at the same time. “While we’ve been served very well by going to all those online systems, we didn’t have enough laptops — but we’re making do with desktop computers,” said Valentino.

“One thing we didn’t envision was the need to have to deliver or process paper from one person in the office to another — we assumed we’d all move to a different location

together and work as a group," he said. "Now we get mail from our headquarters, process it, break it up into pieces and have a courier drop it on people's front porches."

Valentino runs a training academy for New Jersey's Association of Environmental Authorities, and emphasizes the need for colleagues to imagine worst-case scenarios. "It's a pretty humdrum existence most of the time, but when we have an emergency, it's a major urgency," he said. "Nobody wants raw sewage running down the street."

"The tabletop drill where we envisioned our administration building getting washed away in a hurricane, and not having access to our regular systems, drove us to be prepared for this emergency," said Valentino. "If there was one piece of advice I have for my colleagues, it's that there is no such thing as a crazy drill."

Carl Smith *Senior Staff Writer*
carl.smith@governing.com

Reopening the Economy Under COVID-19: States Plot a Way Back

Governing is building a 50-state map to visualize the changes underway to declare states “Open for Business” even as the coronavirus remains at large across the country.

CARL SMITH, BEN MILLER AND PAUL W. TAYLOR, APRIL 24, 2020, FEATURES
Governing is keeping a running tally of coronavirus news and impacts at the intersection of the health and economic crises in the states and localities. Here is what you need to know.

Update: April 23, 2020

- *Georgia* – Although its shelter-in-place order remains in effect until April 30, the governor of Georgia announced that businesses including gyms, barbers, cosmetologists and massage therapists would be allowed to reopen Friday, April 24, with theatres and restaurants following on April 27.
- *Oklahoma* – The governor of Oklahoma announced that personal care businesses will be allowed to reopen on April 24, with allowances for other businesses on May 1. Parks and recreation areas will reopen on the 24th.
- Unemployment applications [may have reached their peak](#). Last week, [4.4 million](#) Americans filed for unemployment, down from 5.2 million the week before. In previous weeks, claims had topped 6 million.

The Policymakers’ Dilemma

State leaders are under pressure to cancel or revise shelter-in-place orders and allow businesses to reopen, workers to return to their jobs and customers to return to shops. Despite issuing [guidelines](#) for reopening the economy and admitting that each governor does have the final say, President Trump has not been critical of social media-inspired protestors defying distancing orders and seeking to “liberate” their states. Attorney General William Barr has said he would [consider suing states](#) if he feels that their stay-at-home guidelines infringe on civil rights.

There are no “sides” in this controversy. Public health and the economy are intertwined, and the best solutions support both. For health officials, the current challenge is to set the right course when so much remains unknown, from testing and infection rates to antibody and immunity issues.

The long-term course of the pandemic remains unclear. Dr. Robert Redfield, the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has warned that a [resurgence is possible](#) in the fall. A vaccine is 12 to 18 months away at best, and the alternative of fostering herd immunity by allowing millions to become ill is hard to embrace.

Even so, change is coming soon. Twenty states have stay-at-home orders that will expire at the end of April. The governors of Tennessee, Ohio and Colorado [have already indicated](#) that they do not plan to extend their orders. Another 14 states have orders that will expire by mid-May. California, Maryland, New Jersey and Oregon have not yet announced end dates for their restrictions.

Guidelines from each state will be announced over the coming months, and this page will provide a running account of them. Over time, our plan is to track how specific policies and their timing influence the containment of the virus and the economic recovery of states, including changes that become necessary if new outbreaks occur.

Context: Considerations and Choices in the States and Localities

A recent survey found that 80 percent of Americans say they [will stay at home](#) even if restrictions are lifted, at least until they are convinced that it's safe to go out. Ninety percent do not support recent protests against stay-at-home guidelines.

Similarly, a [number of mayors](#) in states poised to reopen have pushed back against any rapid lifting of restrictions. This mirrors the aversion [that governors expressed](#) to the suggestion that they should move at a pace set by the federal government.

Testing is the only way for citizens or government officials to really know what they are facing. The guidelines for the first phase of the White House "Opening up America" plan [include a two-week downward](#) trajectories in flu-like illnesses, documented COVID-19 cases and a percentage of positive tests. Nothing is specified regarding the quantity of tests, though a "robust testing program for at-risk healthcare workers" is mentioned.

A [report](#) produced by 45 cross-disciplinary experts, just released by Harvard University's Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics, says that in order to reopen its economy by the summer, the U.S. would need to be doing 5 million tests a day by early June and 20 million by midsummer. This, they say, would be sufficient to identify those who are infected, locate their contacts and test them and isolate persons who test positive. They estimate 100,000 workers would be needed for this task.

Sufficient testing would open the door to truly effective contact tracing, which has played a [significant role](#) in South Korea's [uniquely effective response](#) to the pandemic. These efforts will be greatly enhanced by [software](#) that Apple and Google are currently

developing for iPhones and Android devices. Policymakers will need to be prepared to respond to those who see contact tracing as government intrusion in their personal lives.

Awareness of the true size of the contagion and its spread is also relevant to projecting whether proposals for easing restrictions could cost more than the potential economic gains. If coming back without a detailed plan means illness rates surge again, that means more shutdowns, more lost work, more medical costs and less productivity and spending. A new [analysis](#) from economists at the University of Wyoming estimated that the value of lives saved through distancing was almost \$3.4 trillion greater than the GDP lost by implementing such measures.

Although there have been suggestions that the economic downturn is itself a health risk, [researchers](#) who studied previous economic disasters discovered, to their surprise, that death rates have decreased during economic catastrophes such as the Great Depression. In fact, life expectancy increased in Greece and Spain during the recession following the 2008 economic collapse, even though the two country's economies had been devastated. All in all, the researchers found that it is prosperity that increases death rates.

Some guidelines may have broad appeal, but are limited in value. Taking temperatures has the potential to prevent some infected persons from coming into contact with others, but according to CDC Director Redfield [as many as 25 percent](#) of persons infected with the coronavirus are asymptomatic. Guidelines that limit special protections for "at risk" populations to senior citizens do not protect smokers, or those with asthma, heart disease, diabetes and [other high-risk conditions](#).

The interplay between constitutional rights, public health and internationally accepted human rights standards also deserves attention. An individual citizen's decision to opt out of a public health best practice during a pandemic does not fit easily with fundamental human rights or religious concepts. Such a choice could never be forbidden, but it might not deserve to be elevated above other social or policy considerations.

Window on Reopening: A 50-State View

Governing has begun mapping the states that are reopening for business.

[A Flourish map](#)

No matter where they stand regarding deadlines, and specific practices, virtually all policymakers understand that the road back will be gradual. Some recent developments:

South Carolina

In an [Executive Order](#) on April 20, South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster amended his earlier order to allow certain non-essential businesses to reopen at 5 p.m. that day. These include furniture stores, clothing stores, department stores and sporting goods stores. Businesses are required to limit customers to 20 percent of their occupancy limit or five per 1,000 square feet of retail space, whichever is less. Business owners are asked to follow sanitation guidelines and to ensure that customers remain six feet apart. Masks are not mentioned.

The order rescinds the closure of public beach access points and related facilities, but authorizes those responsible for them to take any steps “necessary to preserve or protect public health,” including closure.

Oklahoma

At a press conference on April 22, Gov. Kevin Stitt revealed his [Open Up and Recover Safely \(OURS\)](#) plan. “As we begin to responsibly implement this measured response, we will continue to prioritize the safety of Oklahomans and base all decisions on the data in our state,” he said in making the announcement.

As of April 24, personal care businesses will be allowed to reopen, as will state parks and outdoor recreation areas. Oklahoma City, the state’s largest city and its capital, has a [shelter-in-place order](#) that is in effect until April 30. Restaurants, gyms, movie theatres, places of worship and other facilities will be allowed to reopen on May 1.

Persons over 65 and other at-risk populations are advised to continue to follow “safer at home” guidelines during the first phase of the three-phase OURS plan. Individuals are advised to “maximize social distance from others” in public and to avoid socializing in groups or facilities

“that do not readily allow for appropriate social distancing.” The plan does not include detailed guidelines for employers.

The target goal for Phase 3 of the plan, and meeting its criteria for fully reopening the state, is June 1. At present, Oklahoma [does appear](#) to have a two-week downward trajectory of new cases, though the trend is not steep and new cases on April 21 were greater than seen a week earlier.

Georgia

Georgia was the first state to reverse its shelter-in-place order. [Gov. Brian Kemp announced on April 20](#) that he would allow “gyms, fitness centers, bowling alleys, body art studios, barbers, cosmetologists, hair designers, nail care artists, estheticians, their respective schools, and massage therapists” to reopen on Friday, April 24. Theatres, restaurants and private social clubs would be allowed to reopen on April 27, while bars, amusement parks and live performance venues would remain closed. His announcement included a reminder that the state’s shelter-at-home order would remain in effect until April 30.

“The entities that I am reopening are not reopening for 'business as usual,'" he said. The businesses would be subject to minimum basic operations restrictions, including social distancing, sanitation, screening workers and “masks and gloves if appropriate.” The governor’s plans have been criticized by the White House, [Dr. Anthony Fauci](#) and [mayors](#) in the state. The concerns raised by mayors are exacerbated by the governor’s assertion that local standards cannot be implemented that are more restrictive than the ones established at the state level.

The state [has not met](#) the benchmark of two weeks of downward trajectory of new cases.

Moreover, the state’s action came amid mixed messages from President Donald Trump. On the eve of the [official reopening in Georgia](#), Trump heaped both praise and blame on the governor.

"I told the governor of Georgia, Brian Kemp, that I disagree strongly with his decision to open certain facilities which are in violation of the phase one guidelines for the incredible people of Georgia. They're incredible people. I love those people. They are -- they're great. They've been strong, resolute.

But, at the same time, he must do what he thinks is right. I want him to do what he thinks is right, but I disagree with him on what he's doing. But I want to let the governors do -- now, if I see something totally egregious, totally out of line, I'll do. But I think spas and beauty salons and tattoo parlors and barbershops in phase one -- we're going to have phase two very soon -- is just too soon. I think it's too soon.

"And I love the people. I love -- I love those people that use all of those things: the spas and the beauty parlors and barbershops, tattoo parlors. I love them. But they can wait a little bit longer. Just a little bit. Not -- not much. Because safety has to predominate. We have to have that. So I told the governor, very simply, that I disagree with his decision, but he has to do what he thinks is right."

Carl Smith *Senior Staff Writer*

carl.smith@governing.com

Ben Miller *Associate Editor of GT Data and Business*

bmiller@govtech.com | [@BenArnoldMiller](https://twitter.com/BenArnoldMiller)

Paul W. Taylor *Editor*

ptaylor@governing.com | [@pwtaylor](https://twitter.com/pwtaylor)

Why State Legislatures Should Go Virtual in a Time of Crisis

When an emergency like the coronavirus makes it too dangerous for lawmakers to convene in person, they should be allowed to meet, debate and vote remotely. The technology is readily available.

EMILY MOONEY AND ANTHONY MARCUM, R STREET INSTITUTE, APRIL 8, 2020, OPINION

Many state legislatures are rushing to close their doors in an effort to prevent the spread of the coronavirus among their members, staffs and families. Well over half of the lawmaking bodies have adjourned early or postponed their sessions in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some legislatures are planning to return soon, but as more lawmakers and staff test positive for the virus, it is uncertain when many statehouses will resume normal business.

Pandemics, or any disaster, have the potential to devastate legislatures. Making the matter more complex, several states, such as [Ohio](#) and [Minnesota](#), require legislators to meet in person; if lawmakers in these states cannot meet face to face, they cannot legislate. These restrictions make little sense in an increasingly digital world and less sense during true emergencies.

Instead of ad hoc legislating, states should adopt rules, procedures and technology that will allow lawmakers to meet and vote remotely, particularly in times of crises. Policies that require legislators to meet in person should be reconsidered.

Public health concerns aside, simply closing or postponing legislative session should never be the first and only option. When this occurs, states handicap legislative priorities and are forced to push vital policy items to the wayside. In Maine, for example, lawmakers were poised to significantly reform the state's juvenile-justice system, but [abruptly ended their session in mid-March](#) due to coronavirus fears.

Many other states are considering ending their sessions early as well. These shortened timelines may push legislators and other public officials to try to solve problems without knowing all the facts. Worse, it potentially cuts residents of their states off from critical state-government assistance. In trying to cope with the immediate effects of the pandemic, states continue to plead and scramble for virus test kits, medical supplies and paid-leave assistance. But what about next week or next month? What additional emergency assistance will constituents, businesses and health-care workers need while their legislatures are closed for business?

A closed legislature cannot participate in meeting those demands. And that reality incentivizes the expansion — or abuse — of the executive branch's emergency powers. Without legislative oversight, these powers may long outlast the current crisis.

There also are democratic norms that must also be upheld by lawmakers, especially in an election year. To protect poll workers and avoid large gatherings, governors in several states are postponing primary elections. As of now, it is uncertain whether COVID-19 will interfere with the general election in the fall. If it does, lawmakers may need to consider reforms such as solely vote-by mail elections, a herculean policy change in most states. Adjourned legislatures may not be able to meet these challenges in time.

Fortunately, the technology to keep legislatures legislating is widely available and budget-friendly. Nearly every industry routinely uses tools like teleconferencing to meet when unable to do so in person. Lawmakers could employ that kind of technology to confer, debate and vote on legislation. There is little security risk, as these deliberations are already done in public. In addition, with longer-term investment, state legislatures could confidently use more-secure systems to hold private briefings and other meetings remotely during times of crisis.

Some states are beginning to move in that direction. In New Jersey, one of the states hardest-hit by the pandemic, lawmakers [voted by phone last month](#) to pass legislation providing financial assistance for workers impacted by the pandemic. The remote voting was the first in the state's history, and came a week after legislation allowing the practice was enacted. A Pennsylvania House committee [met remotely](#) to debate postponing the state's primary. Other states, including [Oklahoma](#) and [New York](#), have adopted measures allowing legislatures to meet and vote remotely, and lawmakers in other states have begun to introduce and debate similar plans.

Today, instead of closing up shop, lawmakers should consider these and similar proposals. The reasoning is simple: It is better for a legislature to exist virtually than not at all.

Governing's opinion columns reflect the views of their authors and not necessarily those of Governing editors or management.

Emily Mooney Contributor
emooney@rstreet.org | [@emilymmooney](https://twitter.com/emilymmooney)

April/May 2020

South Coast Region Report

Wilma Morrissey

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, environmental news and events have been cancelled due to those working from home and by following health guidelines. In person meetings have been cancelled. The Monmouth County Environmental Council meetings are being video-taped by a Cisco WebEx application. Until further notice, the South Coast Regional Report is being suspended until some normalcy has been restored. At our May 7 meeting, rather than our South Coast Regional Report, aquaponics was briefly discussed as a topic of interest.

Lake Como-Students from the Williamsburg High School for Architecture and Design in Brooklyn New York, are helping Lake Como to fulfill **its future vision as a destination town with an environmental approach**. In the second year of the innovative partnership, the Brooklyn students have been preparing to present their plans for the Lake Como community at a meeting of the borough council, scheduled for March 24 at 7 p.m.

POINT PLEASANT BEACH-The borough is moving forward with a **proposed plan to free up parking for visitors shopping and dining in the downtown district, perhaps starting in May. An ordinance introduced Tuesday, March 3, would issue 120 parking passes for the railroad parking lot on Arnold Avenue, just east of Route 35 North, to employees of businesses around Arnold Avenue**. The passes will be designated specifically for businesses primarily east of Route 35 South. Borough Council President Tom Migut, who created the plan, said the hope is to free up 60 spots, both day and night, for shoppers and restaurant-goers in the downtown district.

The ordinance allows businesses to apply for the permits for the lot and hopes they will jump on board. Mr. Migut invited business owners to the parking authority meeting Thursday night to discuss the proposal.

The railroad lot has a total of 186 spaces, currently offering metered and commuter pass parking; however, only one pass was sold last year. Mr. Migut said the lot is rarely filled except on some Fridays and Saturdays during July and August. The proposed ordinance would change the current metered charge in the lot from \$1 an hour to \$1.50 an hour. "We can do this without the loss of revenue from the railroad lot because the rates are currently dreadfully low there," said Mr. Migut. "By raising the parking rate by 50 cents an hour in the remaining spots, we can derive the same amount of revenue from the parking lot as we did last year," he said. He said officials hope to move forward with the plan, see how it goes and adjust accordingly for the following year.

Sea Girt- The Sea Girt Elementary Patriot Helping Hands group was visited on March 12 by Allaire Community Farm founders, JoAnne and Sean Burney, who received thanks for the money received by the school group to help the nonprofit organization in Wall Township. The school's group will be visiting the farm for the day on April 23, to learn about the daily operations at the farm, which has the motto "Nurture through Nature"

Adopted 09/03/2020

Excerpts from the Coast Star