

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, June 3, 2021, 5:00 p.m.
Via Webex

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Morrissey called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL – ATTENDANCE

Members Present: Wilma Morrissey, David Kostka, John Vig, Jennifer DiLorenzo, Ashley Reese, Scott Thompson

Members Absent: France Karras, Paul Johnson

Staff Present: Amber Mallm, Harriet Honigfeld, Sean Pizzio, Michael Popovech, David Schmetterer

3. REVIEW OF MINUTES

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

4. REGULAR REPORTS

A. **Chairman-** As more Monmouth County Division of Planning staff have been attending the MCEC meetings, Ms. Morrissey asked the staff to introduce themselves and describe their responsibilities. Mr. Pizzio explained his role in the Environmental and Sustainability Planning section where he focuses on the farmland preservation program. Ms. Honigfeld explained her role at the County and provided more details on the Farmland Preservation program. She explained that the County Farmland Preservation Program preserves agricultural easements which retire development rights and ensure that farms remain in agricultural use. There are about 15,600 acres of preserved farmland, at a total of about 220 farms. They also focus on Right to Farm matters which is a state law designed to support farmers and requires input from the County Agricultural Development Board. Recently Ms. Honigfeld has been covering more aspects in the environmental planning section.

Mr. Schmetterer explained his role as Assistant Director of Planning. Mr. Schmetterer originally held a role of principal planner focused on transportation planning. Mr. Schmetterer explained that the Division of Planning is divided into two sections: Integrated Strategic Planning and Environmental Sustainability Planning. Ms. Reese thanked Mr. Schmetterer for the work he is doing with Eastmont Orchards. Mr.

Schmetterer thanked Ms. Reese for her involvement in the Moving Mindfully Study. Ms. Reese then asked Ms. Honigfeld about the Right to Farm program. Ms. Reese explained that new homeowners neighboring their property and can be concerned about farm activities and asked if Ms. Honigfeld for suggestions on interacting with neighbors. Ms. Honigfeld suggested perhaps realtors can provide homeowners information on right to farm, or citizens can learn how to handle questions or complaints. Ms. Honigfeld explained that there are ways to educate citizens. For example, Upper Freehold has a country code. Ms. Honigfeld said new homeowners receive the country code which let's them know to be mindful about existing farms and some information on what that might use it may entail. Ms. Honigfeld suggested that Ms. Reese's town could provide educational documents when citizens are filing their new tax records. Towns can have notification clauses you might get some information if your property is within a certain distance. She suggested you may need to get to know local relators, various guidance documents can be shared.

Mr. Popovech introduced himself and his position in the Strategic and Integrated Planning section with a focus on transportation planning. Mr. Schmetterer asked Ms. Mallm to explain her responsibilities. Mr. Thompson thanked Mr. Pizzio and Ms. Honigfeld for their work on the farmland preservation program. Ms. Mallm explained her responsibilities performing environmental reviews required by the Housing and Urban Development grants administered by the Department of Community Development. She also described her role in wastewater management and stormwater planning, the Joint Land Use Study, and her role as supervisor to the AmeriCorps ambassador. Ms. Morrissey thanked the staff for sharing.

Ms. Morrissey then updated the Council on efforts in Wall Township and described various environmental articles. Ms. Morrissey reported that the Wall Township Environmental Advisory Committee registered the Allenwood Native Garden as a Certified Wildlife Habitat. Mr. Kostka reported that the Colts Neck Environmental Commission is hosting a webinar with Ms. Hock from NJ Audubon to explain Certified Wildlife Habitats to Colts Neck citizens. Ms. Morrissey called attention to a Pennsylvania article, focused on efforts to speed up transition from gas to electric cars. Mr. Popovech noted that power plants will need to generate power for vehicles. Ms. Morrissey then noted an article about an electric bus pilot programs in cities such as Camden and Newark. The article noted battery range can be an issue. Mr. Vig commented that the range on trucks and other vehicles can be very good, for example Amazon has electric vehicles with good range. Ms. Morrissey recalled a news release promoting air quality awareness week and outlines how consumers can improve air quality. Mr. Vig asked if we could not discuss articles. Ms. Morrissey asked how he would like to spend our time. Mr. Vig said that he would like to make a difference, for example put up bird houses at county parks. Ms. Morrissey then explained DEP news releases.

B. Planning Board- Ms. DiLorenzo reported that the Planning Board approved several stormwater control ordinances. Ms. Morrissey asked how many towns have not yet submitted a revised stormwater control ordinance to the County. Ms. Mallm 3 towns remain have not yet submitted. Ms. Morrissey asked if the Planning Board has any ideas

for MCEC projects, Ms. DiLorenzo said the Planning Board relies on the MCEC to bring areas of concern to their attention.

C. **Staff-** Ms. Mallm said Ms. Hock from NJ Audubon the Council to know that you can get 20% off when you register a Certified Wildlife Habitat. Ms. Mallm said Rutgers is offering climate academy webinars.

D. **Legislation-** Ms. Mallm reported that A3352 was passed in the assembly and would require newly constructed warehouse to be solar ready buildings. Ms. Mallm also noted A5797 which would require state and county mitigation plans to include threat assessments.

OLD BUSINESS

A. **JLUS III-** JLUS update. Ms. Mallm provided an update on the Bayshore Coastal Resilience Design study. She reported that Commissions passed resolution to award the job to Princeton Hydro. She believes they may begin field work in about one month at Whale Creek in Aberdeen and Flat Creek in Union Beach. Ms. Honigfeld further explained that the scope has been modified to place greater emphasis on data collection. Ms. Honigfeld then provided an update on the Next Steps to Compatibility Study. The study focuses the 5 towns surrounding NWS Earle and identify changes in land use since the 2017 JLUS. Ultimately the study will offer a toolbox to encourage compatible development near the NWS Earle base.

B. **2021 Goals-** Ms. Mallm then discussed other opportunities for outreach. Ms. Mallm said the council could pursue a webinar focused on certified wildlife habitats or promoting county parks. Mr. Thompson agreed a webinar promoting County Parks would be useful. Mr. Vig said an inventory of current charging stations in the County would be useful. Mr. Schmetterer said that the County staff have started a project like this, Mr. Schmetterer said the Council can promote a form to collect the data. Ms. DiLorenzo said certified wildlife habitats would be a good webinar; or hurricane preparedness with a special concern on how hurricanes can wash away areas like garages lead to pollution of substances like paint. Mr. Kostka, said they can showcase County parks. Ms. Morrissey agreed. Mr. Kostka said farmland preservation could also be a webinar topic to educate residents on the good work of farmland preservation and the benefits of preserved farms. Ms. Morrissey asked about other potential outreach events. Ms. Mallm suggested partnering with the WMA12 Watershed Ambassador to hold a trash clean up in the fall. Ms. Mallm said the Council could select the site and the ambassador can help coordinate the logistics of the cleanup. The Council members could attend and spread awareness to the community. Mr. Kostka noted the importance of coordinating with the town prior to any event ensure we would not be repeating efforts. Ms. Morrissey asked if we would coordinate a group outing this year, Ms. Honigfeld said that due to COVID-19 guidelines and other constraints we would not be holding an outing this summer.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. Enabling Resolution/By Laws Discussion- Ms. Morrissey then began a discussion on the enabling resolution of the MCEC and the by-laws. Mr. Schmetterer explained that the MCEC was created by a resolution by the BOF in 1972 and it includes the purposes of the MCEC. Ms. Mallm explained that the resolution and the by-laws lay out the duties of the Council. The MCEC was created to provide assistance and advice to the Monmouth County Planning Board. Ms. Mallm explained some areas that may be inaccurate. For example, the documents state it is the MCEC's duty to maintain files and that is not an activity that the Council performs. Mr. Schmetterer suggested that the by-laws can be revised however we would need. Mr. Thompson what are the identified conflicts Mr. Schmetterer said that there is a different number of activities, listed on the resolution and by laws. Mr. Vig said the list of duties and functions is useful to give the Council direction. Mr. Kostka asked if 2016 By-Law document was the most up to date document, the staff explained that the resolution may supersede the enabling resolution. Mr. Kostka asked if the by-laws were approved by the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners, the staff expressed they were unsure how the by-laws are amended and approved and will investigate if the by-laws need to be approved by the Commissioners. Ms. DiLorenzo said it may be useful to update the by-laws. Mr. Schmetterer emphasized that the activities of the MCEC reflect the Planning Board and Commissioners. Mr. Vig asked if we can continue a discussion of the MCEC's duties, specifically the item that is says the council is the liaison to municipal environmental commissions. Ms. Mallm wondered what the intention of that duty is, she thought that the Council does perform this duty through its outreach activities. Mr. Vig suggested that if the Planning Board is aware of a project with environmental impact then the MCEC could share the information with the appropriate municipalities. Mr. Schmetterer suggested that issues could also be brought to the MCEC's attention then brought to the Planning Board's attention. Mr. Vig asked if we can continue to discuss the MCEC's purposes and functions at the next meeting.

B. EPA Climate Indicators Website- Ms. Morrissey discussed a press release from EPA on the updated climate indicators website. Ms. Mallm shared the website on the screen and shows how data and photos can be accessed on the EPA climate indicator's website.

6. MEMBER REPORTS:

- Ms. Morrissey said Wall Township had a cleanup on May 15 and partnered with volunteer groups like a local church group and boy scouts and girl scouts. Ms. Morrissey reported that West Belmar Elementary school received a grant for an aquaponics system. Ms. Morrissey also shared that a local artist who installed dinosaur sculptures at Allaire park created a dragon sculpture for the Wall Township self-guided trail.
- Mr. Kostka said the Colts Neck Environmental Commission has been promoting the Certified Wildlife Habitat webinar. The Green Team is completing its Sustainable Jersey certification application.
- Mr. Thompson said the two rivers group held a zoom meeting to discuss the menhaden fish kills. There is an eco-fest this Saturday at victory park in Rumson sponsored by the Rumson Environmental Commission.

- Ms. Reese shared that the Monmouth County Fair will be held this year. She noted that she helped the Middletown High School North Ag Program apply for a White Reinhart grant through Farm Bureau for a solar powered heating element in their green house. Ms. Morrissey asked if the MCEC could table at the fair, the staff will inquire with the park system
- Ms. DiLorenzo recalled the fish kill Long Branch and Monmouth Beach partnered to clean up the menhaden. Ms. DiLorenzo noted beaches reopening and municipalities are educating residents on keeping beaches clean. Ms. Dilorenzo also noted increased bicycle use.
- Ms. Morrissey asked that the members to let her know what topics they would like to discuss so they can be placed on future agendas.

7. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

8. **ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, Mr. Thompson made a motion to adjourn and Ms. Thompson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.