

MONMOUTH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

FREEHOLD · NEW JERSEY

JAMES GIANNELL
Chairman



JOSEPH BARRIS, PP, AICP, CFM
Director of Planning

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the
MONMOUTH COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL
Thursday, September 7, 2023, 5:00 PM.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Karras called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

ROLL CALL – ATTENDANCE

Members present: France Karras, David Kostka, Ellen Smith, John Vig

Members absent: Paul Johnson, Ashley Reese, Scott Thompson

Staff present: Harriet Honigfeld

REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES: Mr. Kostka made a motion to approve the minutes for the June 1, 2023 meeting. Ms. Smith seconded and the motion carried.

REGULAR REPORTS

- A. Chairperson – No report.
- B. Planning Board – None.
- C. Staff / Legislative – Ms. Honigfeld discussed staffing and scheduling and noted that she had shared some information about new agriculture-related legislation and proposals. The next MCEC meeting will be held on November 2nd. At Mr. Kostka's request, Ms. Honigfeld discussed the wildlife observed on the August boat trip at the Manasquan Reservoir. Ms. Karras added that her family saw an otter after the tour and shared a video.

OLD BUSINESS

- A. Topics for Environmental Newsletter Articles.
Ms. Honigfeld shared that the Summer Environmental Newsletter was released at the end of August. She will provide information so that members who did not receive the document can sign up for future issues on GovDelivery. She mentioned plans for some upcoming articles and solicited additional ideas for topics as well as written submissions. One write up will cover a July climate/flood resilience workshop and mapping initiative hosted by the Planning Division. Members requested more information about the meeting and project. Members also discussed whether or not fee-based events and fundraisers would be appropriate to promote.

Mr. Vig shared an anecdote about a no mow milkweed area at the Colts Neck town hall. He will send photos and a short write up to staff. Another member suggested covering melting glaciers. Backyard wildlife habitat was proposed as another article idea.

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B. Topics for Roundtables.

Ms. Honigfeld gave an update on the new AmeriCorps Ambassador who may be able to assist with upcoming municipal clean ups and events and may be asked to assist with the organization of the roundtable.

Members fleshed out ideas for two viable roundtable topics: wildlife and renewable energy/EVs. Ms. Honigfeld mentioned that the Planning Division's development review process has started to take wildlife corridors into account and would provide an interesting angle for the panel. Ms. Karras recommended Jenna Reynolds as a potential speaker. Speaker on CHANJ and backyard habitats could round out the panel. Mr. Vig offered to reach out to a local Tesla dealer to see if they had ideas for possible panelists. Members and staff discussed EV trends and advancements with commercial vehicles and trucks.

Members would like to aim for a hybrid event in early February to mid-March. Ms. Honigfeld advised that both topics could be addressed in different forums. For example one could be the subject a larger roundtable and the other the subject of a joint meeting (open to the public) with the Monmouth County Transportation Council.

NEW BUSINESS

None

MEMBER REPORTS

Mr. Kotska shared the observations of a scuba-diving friend about the negative impacts of climate change on coral reefs and oceans.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Melissa Bezahler from the Monmouth County Park System suggested that Todd Pover from Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey would be a good speaker on piping plovers.

ADJOURNMENT – Mr. Vig made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Smith seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 6:00 PM.