

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, December 2, 2021, 5:00 p.m.
Via Webex

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL – ATTENDANCE

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

Members Absent: Paul Johnson, France Karras

Staff Present: Amber Mallm, Harriet Honigfeld

Public Present: Paul Rinear

2. **REVIEW OF MINUTES-** The Council reviewed the November 2021 minutes. Ms. Reese made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Vig seconded the motion. With no objections the minutes were approved.
3. **PRESENTATION- Naval Weapons Station Earle Nature Based Shoreline Protection- Meredith Comi, NY/NJ Baykeeper-** Ms. Comi introduced herself and her role leading the restoration program at NY/NJ Baykeeper. Ms. Comi explained that NY/NJ Baykeeper serves the 5 boroughs of NYC and northern and central NJ including the Shrewsbury Navesink Rivers. The restoration program began in 1989 and started with the oyster program. However, in 2010 NJDEP banned projects with oysters, over concerns that the public could poach oysters living in water with poor water quality. But NY/NJ Baykeeper proposed placing oysters at NWS waters to protect oysters from poaching.

Mr. Thompson asked where oyster castles are located at Earle. Ms. Comi shared a map, showing existing areas and areas identified for future restoration. Ms. Comi explained that oyster castles reduce wave energy hitting shore, but they cannot stop a Superstorm Sandy event. Ms. Comi described the process, they acquire larvae from labs, add to castles in setting tanks, then divers place the castles in the bay. Then they perform visual assessments to monitor the results.

In 2021 NY/NJ Baykeeper completed a site assessment and preliminary design project at Ware Creek and shoreline near the NWS Earle pier. The shoreline vegetation analysis confirmed erosion and digital assessments using historic aerials show how the mouth of the creek has changed over time. Ultimately, design elements may include offshore breakwaters, nearshore breakwater, marsh restoration, dune/beach restoration and

vegetated revetments. The organization recently received an additional \$1,743,625 in funding for final design and permitting. They are aiming for implementation in 2024.

Mr. Thompson asked if there is any public access to the work. Ms. Comi said no because work is limited to the NWS Earle property. Ms. DiLorenzo asked if there is evidence of water quality improvements, such as reduced sedimentation, and water clarity. Ms. Comi said it is hard to detect by looking at the water, but sediment traps show sediment is accreting where it should.

4. **REGULAR REPORTS**

A. **Chairman-** Ms. Morrissey recalled a recent Sustainable Jersey meeting focused on electric vehicles. The Council then discussed their experiences and knowledge regarding electric vehicles. The Council discussed maintenance costs, electricity costs, charging equipment and compatibility between manufacturers. The Council also discussed the longevity and repair costs of electric vehicle batteries and the driving range per charge. Mr. Rinear, a member of the public, added that there are level 1 and level 2 chargers. Ms. Morrissey then recalled articles she shared with the Council via email, focused on making environmentally friendly choices for the holidays, rebates for heat pumps, DEP funding for dam safety projects, the NFWF Emergency Coastal Resilience Fund, DEP studies on rainfall and climate change, training for managing HABs, and FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program.

B. **Planning Board-** Ms. DiLorenzo provided an update on the November Planning Board meeting. Ms. DiLorenzo said the Planning Board received a presentation on FEMA's risk rating 2.0, which was developed an effort to make the National Flood Insurance Program more equitable, easier to understand and to provide a more accurate evaluation property's flood risk. Ms. DiLorenzo said they also received a presentation the Development Review Committee's 3rd quarter development trends.

C. **Staff-** Ms. Mallm shared the Dates to Remember.

D. **Legislation-** Ms. Mallm reported on A-4676 which would require that disposable materials are made with recycled material, this includes rigid plastic containers, glass containers, and paper and plastic carryout bag. The bill also would prohibit the sale of polystyrene loose fill packaging. Ms. Mallm also described A-6051 which would require producers of packaging products sold in New Jersey to adopt and implement a packaging product stewardship plan. The Council then discussed their experiences with the recent straw ban implemented as part of the Plastic Pollution Reduction Act.

OLD BUSINESS

JLUS III Update/REPI Update- Ms. Mallm provided an update on the Next Steps to Compatibility Study, focused on land use surrounding NWS Earle in Howell, Wall, Tinton Falls, Colts Neck, and Middletown. Ms. Mallm said the consultant has been working on the draft report that will suggest tools to limit less compatible development in the areas

immediately surrounding the Navy base and the project team will be meeting with the subject town to discuss the draft plan.

Ms. Mallm provided an update on the Coastal Resilience Study. The project consultant is still collecting data from monitoring wells in Whale Creek in Aberdeen and Flat Creek in Union Beach and should be retrieving the data loggers soon.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Morrissey shared an article focused on the efforts of the Avon-by-the-Sea Environmental Commission. The Environmental Commission has been selling reusable bags door to door. Ms. Morrissey wondering if the Council could pursue a similar project. Ms. Morrissey said the Clean Communities Program may have reusable bags, perhaps the Council could organize an event to give away reusable bags. Ms. Mallm said other County entities may have bags already made and that she would need to inquire. Mr. Thompson suggested partnering with Economic Development to hold a roundtable and distribute bags and suggested naming the initiative Reuse in Monmouth. Ms. DiLorenzo suggested a virtual platform. Ms. Mallm suggested holding a clean-up at a County Park with a table to giveaway bags and distribute educational materials. This would use resources the Council already has such the AmeriCorps program or the Park System. Ms. Reese said she likes the idea of collaborating with Grown in Monmouth. Ms. Reese suggested getting information out to business associations throughout the County. Mr. Kostka asked about putting educational materials in the bag. Ms. Morrissey suggested a brochure or looking for existing educational materials.

The Council then discussed that the public is still confused over what can and cannot be recycled. Different recycling companies that serve different towns recycle different items, difficult to educate as it can change from town to town. Ms. Reese said she wonders what kind of accountability will be in place when the law takes effect. She suggested a brochure with a checklist for businesses to send to business associations.

The Council agreed to continue to assembling ideas.

MEMBER REPORTS:

- Ms. DiLorenzo said her daughter is studying sustainability at her college. The students are working on improving recycling in the football stadium. They are also donating unused sports equipment to communities in need. Ms. DiLorenzo also reported Monmouth Beach will be installing 2 more rain gardens. One garden will be by the school for students to observe.
- Mr. Thompson said his son completed Master's degree in sustainable engineering.
- Ms. Reese said she is working with Middletown High School North. She helped the school secure a grant to install solar heat and pump system for year-round use of the green house. Work is underway but they have encountered pipes in courtyard will need to reconfigure their design.

- Mr. Kostka said Red Bank launched a program to collect plastic film at curbside in partnership with S.E. Johnson. He reported Bradley Beach and Matawan are also launching a program. Mr. Kostka explained that once the material is collected, it is processed into pellets and reused to create new products. He is going to keep researching the initiative.

He said he is also learning about Freehold Borough's participatory budgeting program. The Borough set aside funds then solicited suggestions for projects. The projects must benefit entire the community, serve the public for 5 years and must involve property owned by the municipality. Then a committee reviews ideas and mails alternatives for citizens to vote, then the top three are selected for implementation.

Mr. Kosta reported that Colts Neck is also updating the Environmental Resource Inventory and pursuing Sustainable Jersey Certification. They are also brainstorming potential field trips for the EC to increase their knowledge.

- Ms. Morrissey said the Coast Star reported that Lake Como planted 10 native trees along the lake front. She also mentioned a bike repair station created by a local girl scout. Finally, she said the Wall Township Environmental Advisory Committee is working on potential bag collection bins at dry cleaners.
 - Mr. Thompson recommended touring the Mazza facility which recycles a wide variety of materials.
5. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** Ms. Morrissey opened for public comment. Mr. Rinear thanked the Council for the meeting. He said his town uses Mazza Recycling.
 6. **ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, Ms. Kostka made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Thompson seconded the motioned meeting was adjourned at 6:26 p.m.