

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 3, 2020 5:00 p.m.
Via Webex

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairwoman France Karras called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL – ATTENDANCE

Members Present: Wilma Morrissey, France Karras, John Vig, Jennifer DiLorenzo, David Kostka, Scott Thompson, Paul Johnson

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Amber Mallm, Linda Brennen, David Schmetterer

- 3. REVIEW OF MINUTES:** The Council reviewed the November minutes. Mr. Vig made a motion to approve the November minutes and Ms. DiLorenzo seconded. With no objections, the November minutes were adopted.

4. REGULAR REPORTS

A. Chairman- Ms. Morrissey recalled recent Sustainable Jersey presentation focused on community solar. Ms. Morrissey said community solar allows individuals to use solar energy without the need to place solar panels on their own property. The solar energy is generated at facilities like solar fields at landfills, or as panel canopies in parking lots. The power generated by these solar panels is credited to the subscriber's electric bills. Subscribers will receive two bills. The resident's electricity bill will have credit from the solar generation. Then there is a separate bill for the cost of the subscription. The community solar bill credit minus the community solar subscription bill equals the total savings for the billing period. Most community solar subscriptions are structured to result in 5-20% savings. The Sustainable Jersey presentation outlined how municipalities can bring community solar to their town and how they can receive Sustainable Jersey points. Ms. Morrissey prepared an article on community solar and the Sustainable Jersey presentation for the Wall Township Living newsletter.

Ms. Morrissey also brought an article for discussion, "7 Ways to Make Remote Work Successful." The article focused on tips for agencies making remote work a permanent arrangement. The key ideas include improving employee software and security, improving social engagement, it spoke of the benefits of no commute. The Council discussed the future of permanent remote work. Mr. Vig said he has heard that many individuals are more productive working at home. The Council discussed that commercial real estate is down however there is an influx of individuals leaving cities and

coming to the suburbs and more individuals are using personal vehicles. Mr. Johnson said there is a benefit to fewer emissions, he pointed that there may be a need to build more schools. The water is cleaner and air is cleaner. Mr. Schmetterer said increasing the amount of time individuals work from home could reduce traffic and improve air quality. Ms. DiLorenzo agreed that it would environmentally beneficial for individuals to work from home and people are getting used to the online meeting platforms. Ms. Karras agreed there is a learning curve for the technology but working from home can be more efficient and eliminates long commutes. Mr. Thompson said that restaurant industry and entertainment industry will continue to struggle. The Council discussed the COVID-19 vaccines and cold storage/transportation requirements. The Council then discussed the production of plastics like to-go containers and plexiglass partitions or other single use supplies, like masks have increased.

Ms. Morrissey then introduced an article from EPA focused on avoiding food waste, "EPA Encourages Americans to Avoid Food Waste Over the Holidays," see attached. According to the article over 70 billion pounds of food waste is brought to landfills each year. This contributes to methane emissions and wastes energy and resources across the food supply chain. Tips include sticking to the shopping list, eating from your pantry and refrigerator before you shop to avoid over buying and throwing away food, and donating to food banks. The Council discussed the need to donate to local food banks and hunger issues. Mr. Schmetterer discussed food supplied to students in public schools and current efforts to provide meals to students participating in remote learning. Mr. Johnson expressed that the discussion of hunger is a social issue and less of an environmental issue.

Ms. Morrissey introduced the last article "Pandemic May Cause Backwards Progress for Gender Pay Gap," see attached. Ms. Morrissey explained that the article says women are more likely to need to provide care to their children. The article explains that many women are out of work or struggling to work while caring for their children in remote education.

B. Planning Board- Ms. DiLorenzo said the Planning Board met in November and conducted its standard business. She recommended that the Council should visit the Planning Board's website to view the Monmouth County Profile Report.

C. Staff- Ms. Mallm described the December Dates to Remember. Ms. Mallm said that Dave Schmetterer prepared a survey to gather information on Trex plastic bag collection bins throughout the county. With the data, staff plan to prepare a map with the collection bin sites.

Ms. Brennen announced that she will be retiring February 1, 2021. Ms. Morrissey and the other members congratulated Ms. Brennen. Ms. Morrissey offered her congratulations and appreciation of Ms. Brennen's contributions to the MCEC. On behalf of the Council Ms. Mallm presented Ms. Brennen with a framed congratulatory photo remembrance. Ms. Morrissey made a motion to prepare a resolution memorializing Linda's contributions to the County, Mr. Vig seconded the motion. Mr. Kostka thanked her for her support

knowledge and will miss her as a person and tremendous source of information. Ms. Karras congratulated her and expressed she will be missed for always being helpful. Ms. DiLorenzo expressed she is happy for Ms. Brennen but will miss her as a tremendous asset to the County and congratulated her on her efforts and appreciated her contributions to the County. Mr. Vig wished Linda happy and fun retirement, expressed he will miss her, and thanked her for her competence. Mr. Johnson congratulated Linda and commended her humble help. Mr. Thompson thanked Linda and congratulated her on her service and contributions to the county and integral to the MCEC. Ms. Brennen thanked the Council for their kind words.

Ms. Brennen provided an update on the draft Resource Inventory, she hopes to offer a draft of the plan to the Council and place the draft on the January Planning Board agenda.

D. Legislation- Ms. Mallm and Ms. Brennen provided an update on recent legislation. Assembly Bill 4525 which removes time restrictions for structures like tents to remain on commercial farms during the COVID-19 emergency; Assembly Bill 485, the Home Based Jobs Creation Act, which would let certain family based home businesses be classified as a permitted accessory use throughout all of NJ. Assembly Bill 4982 which outlines ways municipalities can get credit for the COAH housing requirements. Assembly Bill 4981 would provide procedures for crediting certain agricultural working dwellings in determination of municipality's fair share housing obligation.

OLD BUSINESS

A. JLUS III- Ms. Brennen and Ms. Mallm provided an update on the JLUS III study which includes two different projects. Ms. Brennen describe the status of project 2, which advances compatible land use goals within the military influence area of NWS Earle as identified in JLUS I. This study will work with the 5 Earle municipalities: Colts Neck, Howell, Wall, Tinton Falls, and Middletown to modify/enhance their zoning to encourage compatible use and reduce less compatible use. The Division of planning Published a request for proposals for this project and hopes to select a proposal by the end of the month. Ms. Mallm reported that project 1 is a direct follow up to JLUS II and will develop further engineering and design for 2-5 projects identified in JLUS II. Ms. Mallm said the bid opening is December 8. Ms. Karras asked who are the contacts for the 5 Earle municipalities, Ms. Brennen explained these points of contact are typically administrators and directors of planning. Representatives from the municipalities were present on the JLUS I policy committee and technical advisory committee.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. NJ Global Warming Response Act 80x50 Report- Ms. Mallm said this report summarizes the current state of greenhouse gas emissions across different sectors which include transportation, commercial and residential buildings, electric generation, industrial, waste and agriculture, short lived climate pollutants. It also discusses the role natural spaces play in carbon sequestration. Ms. Karras noted there is a recorded webinar summarizing the report that is posted online. Mr. Vig said it was interesting the report recommends electric heating in buildings, Ms. Karras explained that the report

aims to outline goals for the next several decades and techniques to rely on carbon neutral electricity.

6. MEMBER REPORTS:

- Ms. Morrissey said Wall Township is focused on its affordable housing requirements
- Mr. Kostka said Colts Neck is working on its Natural Resource Inventory. Mr. Kostka said they are also developing a program to educate horse farmers to follow proper equine management. Ms. Morrissey asked if there is large amount of bicycling traffic in Colts Neck. Mr. Kostka said for the most part no, there are not many bicyclists and the roads are narrow. The town is still working on recruiting members for its green team.
- Ms. Karras said she sat in on an open house with a presentation from a developer that has proposed residential and commercial rental properties at Fort Hancock Sandy Hook, in the buildings on Officers Row. Ms. Karras also noted her attendance at a webinar focused on offshore wind development offshore of Atlantic County. Ms. Karras also shared a photo of an eastern screech owl that can often be seen resting in cavity of a tree in the residential area in Atlantic Highlands.
- Ms. DiLorenzo said there have been many whales off the coast of Monmouth Beach and shared a photo of a new rain garden installed in Monmouth Beach.
- Mr. Johnson noted the increase in demand in the housing market and increase in individuals purchasing homes in the suburbs. In his town of Sea Girt, he has noticed some homes which are typically winter homes, were purchased by year-round residents. He expects that this trend is occurring up the coast as well and suspects that this may result in an increase in traffic.
- Mr. Thompson agreed with Mr. Johnson and noted that an increase in population will impact traffic, infrastructure, and increase demand on water treatment. Mr. Thompson noted beach replenishment and recent storms that have eroded the replenishment. Mr. Thompson said that Fort Hancock is in a poor state.

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

8. ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, Mr. Thompson made the motion to adjourn and Ms. Karras seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

7 Ways to Make Remote Work Successful Beyond COVID-19

Work from home was at first a temporary pandemic solution, but as public and private organizations alike make remote work permanent, they'll need to make adjustments to more than just where staffs are located.

BY DANIEL CASTRO / DECEMBER 2020

This spring, as businesses began closing their doors and state and local governments issued stay-at-home orders in response to the start of the coronavirus pandemic, many organizations began allowing their staff to work remotely. While these changes were born out of necessity, teleworking has long had appeal for its **many benefits, such as lower turnover, reduced relocation costs and positive environmental impact**. Months into the pandemic, it is clear that the massive teleworking experiment has largely been a success, with a number of organizations announcing plans to **extend this option permanently** to their staff, but making this change sustainable over the long term will require additional adjustments.

For many people, teleworking during the pandemic was a significant change. **In May, approximately 35 percent of employed Americans worked from home, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)**. Women were more likely to telework, with approximately 41 percent of female workers teleworking compared to 31 percent of males. And those holding college degrees teleworked the most — nearly 54 percent of workers with a bachelor's degree teleworked, and 69 percent of those holding advanced degrees did so.

The number of teleworkers has since dropped. In September, BLS reported 33.5 million Americans teleworking because of the pandemic, approximately 23 percent of the U.S. workforce. But this still reflects a significant increase, since only a few years ago between 4 million and 5 million Americans worked remote. As both employers and workers have gained experience with teleworking, and as the technology has proven its reliability and convenience, many workers will likely continue to telecommute, at least part time, even after the pandemic.

To ensure this transition to telework is effective over the long term, both public- and private-sector organizations should focus on the “**seven C's**”:

Cloud: Organizations that have adopted cloud-first strategies are well-positioned for telework because their services are accessible remotely. Organizations should use the shift to telework to expedite their migration of services to the cloud.

Collaboration: Working from home is not productive without the right tools for collaboration. While video conferencing tools are a must, so are other collaboration tools, such as project management and whiteboarding tools. Organizations will need to make sure their employees have the software they need to work effectively from home.

Cybersecurity: Teleworkers face unique cybersecurity risks, especially if they are using their own devices, which may not have proper security controls to prevent intrusions. Organizations

need to continue providing security awareness training and move quickly to adopt multifactor authentication across all services.

Culture: One of the biggest barriers to telework adoption is organizational culture. Employees are often concerned that if they are not in the office they will lose out on important opportunities for face-to-face interactions with their managers or that their peers may consider those working remotely to be making less valuable contributions to the team, potentially hurting their opportunities for professional advancement. Organizations that want to make telework a success will need to embrace it from the top down.

Camaraderie: Most people have experienced how email and text communications can quickly devolve into a series of hostile, or even toxic, interactions that might not otherwise occur face-to-face. However, a variety of new AI-based tools can monitor these electronic exchanges to perform sentiment analysis and help managers respond to employee concerns.

Community: With employees working remotely, many lose out on opportunities for the type of water cooler conversations that help build community within an organization. Organizations will need to dedicate time and resources to building their own virtual community and encouraging social interaction that fosters strong working relationships.

Commute: One of the benefits of teleworking is no commute, which can save hours of travel each week, not to mention the associated costs. But commuting offers some upsides, such as an opportunity to disconnect from work, listen to a podcast, or go for a walk or bike ride, that may fall by the wayside. Indeed, Microsoft has proposed a “virtual commute” tool to help workers plan time for reflection and establish a boundary between work and home.

Daniel Castro Contributing Writer

Daniel Castro is the vice president of the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation (ITIF) and director of the Center for Data Innovation. Before joining ITIF, he worked at the Government Accountability Office where he audited IT security and management controls.

EPA Encourages Americans to Avoid Food Waste Over the Holidays

NEW YORK (November 25, 2020) – As America celebrates Thanksgiving this week, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Andrew Wheeler reminds families and communities to consider the environment when planning their annual dinner and be mindful about wasting food.

"Over 70 billion pounds of food waste reaches our landfills every year, contributing to methane emissions and wasting energy and resources across the food supply chain," **said EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler.** "This holiday season, we must all do our part to help people and the environment by preparing only what we need, cutting down our food waste, and sharing or donating what we can to feed others."

EPA estimates that more food reaches landfills than any other material in everyday trash, constituting 24% of municipal solid waste. This wasted food contributes to landfills being the third largest source of human-related methane emissions in the United States. Reducing food waste and redirecting excess food to people, animals, or energy production provide immediate benefits to public health and the environment, including:

- **Reducing methane emissions** from landfills.
- **Saving money** through thoughtful planning, shopping and storage.
- **Supporting your community** by donating untouched food that would have otherwise gone to waste.
- **Conserving energy and resources**, preventing pollution involved in the growing, manufacturing, transporting and selling of food.

EPA works with federal partners, non-profits, public and private organizations to reduce wasted food across the food system. This past year, EPA and USDA welcomed four new members to the [U.S. Food Loss and Waste 2030 Champions](#) group. The 2030 Champions are businesses and organizations that have made a public commitment to reduce food loss and waste in their own operations in the United States by 50% by the year 2030. EPA's [Food Recovery Challenge](#) works with over 1,000 business and organizations to set data-driven goals, implement targeted strategies to reduce food waste in their operations and report results to compete for annual recognition.

As part of our efforts to reduce food waste, EPA supports and encourages our partners to recover and distribute excess food to the more than 35 million Americans who lived in food-insecure households in 2019, and in 2020, Americans are going to food banks for their groceries in record numbers. By reducing the amount of food wasted, together we can protect human health and the environment.

Thanksgiving Food Waste Reduction Tips

- Create and stick to shopping lists, since this year a smaller number of people will likely share the meal.

- “Shop” the refrigerator and pantry first, so that food does not go to waste and shopping needs are reduced.
- Plan an "eat the leftovers" night as a great way to use Thanksgiving ingredients and leftovers.
- “Befriend” the freezer. Freeze extra food such as side dishes or meat.
- Consider safely sharing extra food with family or donating unopened, non-perishable food items to a local charity. (*Always contact food rescue organizations in advance of a drop off.*)

Food Rescue Organizations

For organizations hosting events that might have excess prepared but unserved food, consider partnering with food rescue organizations. ***Remember to make arrangements in advance for potential drop-offs or pick-ups of excess food.*** Also, remember to only donate food if this can be done safely. The following sites contain tools that allow users to search for food banks, pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters that may be interested in accepting wholesome, excess food:

- Feeding America's [Find Your Local Foodbank](#) has a map of member food banks.
- Sustainable America's [Food Rescue Locator](#) is a directory of organizations that rescue, glean, transport, prepare, and distribute food to those who need it in their communities.
- [AmpleHarvest.org](#) allows users to search food pantries by ZIP code and shows the search results on an interactive map.

For more tips on how to reduce food waste, see EPA's website: www.epa.gov/recycle/reducing-wasted-food-home

Follow EPA Region 2 on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/eparegion2> and visit our Facebook page, <http://facebook.com/eparegion2>

Pandemic May Cause Backwards Progress for Gender Pay Gap

Women continue to leave the workforce to meet childcare needs at a disproportionate rate compared to men. Experts are worried this could create greater challenges in finding work and increasing wages in the future.

NUSHRAT RAHMAN, DETROIT FREE PRESS | NOVEMBER 24, 2020 | ANALYSIS

(TNS) — Tanisha Loyd, a Detroit mom of two, has been on leave from her job in customer service since mid-September, without pay or benefits.

Loyd, 29, remains at home full time with her children — keeping her kindergartner on track with online school and caring for her 1-year-old. She doesn't have the option to work from home and doesn't expect to return to work until Jan. 4. But even that depends on if her child's school is in person or remains virtual.

Loyd says the pandemic is a "battle" for working moms, forcing her to choose between a job to help sustain her household or being there for her children. Child care is not easy to come by either and even when it is available, it can be expensive, she said.

"I had to take a step back in my job, my career, just so I can make sure that the family is good. That's just how life goes," she said. Loyd is not alone. The pandemic's economic upheaval has been especially tough for working moms. Across the country, more than 800,000 women left the workforce in September, compared with 216,000 men.

Last month, the unemployment rate for women dropped, but there are still nearly 2.2 million fewer women in the workforce than in February. Black and Latina women have disproportionately faced the brunt of job losses.

In Michigan, labor force participation among women fell nearly 6 percent, compared with a drop of less than 1 percent among men, according to unpublished data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

After decades of strides in employment, women are making a staggering exit from the workforce due to the pandemic. Experts say the shift may lead to challenges for women finding work and they may face lower wages in the future.

"Overall, the labor force today paints a picture of a slowing recovery — one where women are struggling to get a foothold back in the economy," Betsey Stevenson, professor of public policy and economics at the University of Michigan, said. "And that is likely to cause permanent labor market scarring more among women than among men, and as a result the effects of this could linger with us for years, if not decades to come."

A Gendered Shutdown

Shardaya Fuquay, 30, is juggling the demands of being a stay-at-home parent and running a local nonprofit.

After the pandemic hit Michigan in March, Fuquay's organization Journey to Healing, which offers resources for families and children experiencing grief and trauma, came up short on its budget this year — about \$25,000 — because it wasn't able to secure as many grants and contracts due to COVID-19.

The organization is also adjusting to providing services — like art therapy — to clients online.

Fuquay is a mother of two and expecting a third child. The pandemic has forced her to make time for meetings to run her nonprofit, all while helping her 2- and 3-year-old children with online classes and preparing meals for them.

"They can't go over to grandma or a cousin's house because it's just dangerous," Fuquay said, noting how that limits the time she can spend on her nonprofit.

"It's just nonstop balancing, nonstop stress," she said.

About 76 percent of mothers with children under age 10 said child care is one of their top three challenges during the pandemic, according to a September report by McKinsey & Co.

Across metro Detroit, parents have had trouble accessing child care because of health risks, work-from-home routines and the challenge of finding day care employees. That's the case nationally, too.

"The Detroit metro area — certainly in Detroit proper — (was) a child care desert prior to COVID-19. Then, with COVID-19, we saw the child care sector and the child care market in Michigan suffer tremendously," Eboni Taylor, executive director of Mothering Justice in Michigan, said.

Business sectors that tend to employ women are suffering. The pandemic spurred a "gendered shutdown," Stevenson said. Women made up 53 percent of workers in the leisure and hospitality sector in February but they accounted for 57 percent of the initial jobs cut in March. By April, nearly half the jobs in the sector had disappeared from payrolls and women once again made up a disproportionate share of the jobs cut.

The economic fallout has been particularly hard on women of color. About 57 percent Latina women and 53 percent of Black women said they lost income since March, compared with 40 percent of white women, according to an October report from the National Women's Law Center. About one in 11 Black women and Latinas remained unemployed.

Female-owned small businesses are suffering, too.

"Prior to the pandemic I think we were making real progress, we were seeing our numbers go up every year — more women were starting businesses, more women were getting better jobs,"

Carolyn Cassin, president and CEO of Michigan Women Forward, said. "We were seeing that they were able to advance in a way that they hadn't in the past. But the pandemic brought all of that to a screeching halt."

About 90 percent of the 196 businesses Michigan Women Forward invests in closed their doors, at least temporarily, during the early days of the pandemic.

Mai Xiong is a small-business owner and mom who started Mai & Co., in 2018 to sell clothing and home decor featuring traditional Hmong prints. Xiong, a recently elected Macomb County commissioner, opened her first brick-and-mortar store in Warren last year.

Xiong had to close her storefront in March and reopened in June. The store is open three days a week now, as Xiong juggled her business, her children's online schooling and running for local office.

Xiong, 35, has seen a 90 percent dip in foot traffic but she has kept her business afloat by selling thousands of hand-sewn masks and relying on grants and loans. Sales have started to pick back up online, too. A \$5,000 grant and \$10,000 loan, where half is forgiven, from Michigan Women Forward will help cover expenses like rent through the end of this year for Xiong.

Still, she worries about January. "My kids come first, before the business. ... They're my No. 1 priority and so we have to kind of prioritize our responsibilities," Xiong said.

How to Keep Women in the Workforce

By the end of 2019, women achieved a milestone in the labor market. They held more nonfarm payroll jobs than men in December 2019, Stevenson said. But pandemic job losses rapidly undid that progress. It could have long-lasting effects.

"What we know is that when people take time out of the labor force or face long-term unemployment — so more than six months — they're unlikely to go back to wages that are similar to what they were earning before. They tend to be on a lower earnings trajectory," she said.

Michigan Women Forward put together a \$1.5 million "resilience fund" for women business owners to weather the pandemic. It helped 200 businesses but there are still 900 women who submitted applications that the fund wasn't able to support, Cassin said in September.

"It's definitely going to take change at a policy level, at an institutional workplace level, at a cultural level to address all of these issues," said Maya Raghu, director of workplace equality at the National Women's Law Center.

What does policy change look like? Raghu said government should invest in an accessible and affordable child care system. Michigan's new budget includes more funding for child care providers and working parents in the state, though advocates have said it's a temporary measure and not the long-term overhaul of the child care system they want to see.

Change in policy also includes offering paid family and sick leave, experts say. Some states like Michigan now have sick leave rules in place but advocacy groups like Mothering Justice are pushing for expansions like requiring businesses with fewer than 10 employees to offer paid leave and businesses providing workers one hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked.

The federal government's COVID-19 response includes paid leave of up to 80 hours, for companies with fewer than 500 employees. Advocates have said that this leaves some employees out and ends in December, unless Congress agrees on another relief bill.

Employers should be more flexible with scheduling and remote options, and be more mindful of the disparate ways the pandemic has affected both women and men who are caregivers, Raghu said.

"Culturally we have to move beyond this notion of women having to be the primary caregivers, and making sure that those responsibilities are distributed," she said.

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