

**Minutes of the Parks & Environment Advisory Board
Meeting September 6th , 2023 at the Canale Training Center**

In attendance:

Officers Present - Mike Hogan, Chairperson, Stephen Fiedler, Vice-Chairperson

Members Present - Dick Colby, Dan Crum, Belinda Chester, Emma Witt, Ken Sooy, Alex Perri

Members Absent - Lisa March

Commissioner Representative - Andrew Parker -absent

County Staff - Greg Brookins, D.H.P.W. - present

Secretary - Eric Husta, D.D.P.R. – present

Roundtable Discussion topics:

Dick Colby presented the first draft of a resolution he feels the group should send to the Commissioners urging them to proceed with supporting the development of proposed offshore wind farms. Lengthy discussion ensued regarding wind power and viable alternatives. The topic then shifted to the question of why this board wasn't consulted prior to the decision to extend the moratorium on wind farm development.

Dick also mentioned the North-South statewide trail and the desire to discuss the bridge over Mare's run at next month's meeting. Brief discussion was had on the County's emergency preparedness with regard to hurricanes.

Eric Husta reported on park attendance numbers. He was asked what could be done about the number of visitors, kayakers, and tubers swimming at Weymouth Furnace. A broader discussion ensued regarding enforcement of the county's no swimming policy.

Dan Crum reported on a raccoon that tested positive for rabies and a positive cat in Pleasantville. He also mentioned recent water sources testing positive for West Nile Virus and mosquitos carrying EEE.

Emma Witt noted classes have started at Stockton University. She also made mention of her conversation with the farm manager on campus and the open invitation to tour both the farm and areas of active forestry on site. The university's contracted forester can also be available for a tour if needed. She concluded her update with discussion on some high pH readings (9.0) from Hammonton Lake recently.

Belinda Chester reported her agency is gearing up for fall and volunteers were needed. The number of volunteers has not recovered from the drop they experienced due to Covid.

Steve Fiedler mentioned attending a recent talk by Doug Tallamy, a University of Delaware entomologist. Doug will be giving a lecture entitled "Nature's Best Hope" at Rowan University on October 10th, from 7:00 PM. - 8:30 PM. Steve also suggested the group invite a spokesperson from Atlantic Electric to talk about new smart meters and the company's plans for future energy balance.

Alex Perri suggested the County hire a Terrestrial Invasive Species Coordinator. The new employee would spend approximately 50% of their time on the management of county land with the remaining time being divided between municipalities and private property projects, coordinating and consulting with groups to manage or eradicate invasive species. He also revisited the possibility of pushing for the formation of an

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environmental commission. He suggested our group host a meeting and invite the municipalities within the county to attend. The focus of the meeting would be to encourage those municipalities which have not already formed an environmental commission to do so moving forward. Subsequent discussion took place regarding the group's advisory role and what types of projects we should be focusing on.

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 PM.

Our next meeting is currently scheduled for Wednesday, October 4th, at 7PM at the Canale Training Center in EHT.

cc: Dennis Levinson, County Executive
Jerry DelRosso, County Administrator
Diana Rutala, Deputy County Administrator
John W. Risley Jr., Chairperson - Board of County Commissioners
Andrew Parker, Board of County Commissioners – PEAB Representative
Greg Brookins, Department Head Public Works

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All Advisory Board Members