

**Minutes of the Parks & Environment Advisory Board
Meeting February 7th, 2024 at the Canale Training Center**

In attendance:

Officers Present - Stephen Fiedler, Co-Chairperson Alex Perri, Co-Chairperson

Members Present - Dick Colby, Dan Crum, Emma Witt

Members Absent - Mike Hogan, Belinda Chester, Lisa March, Ken Sooy

Commissioner Representative - Andrew Parker -present

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

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

Guests: John Peterson, SJTPO, Brett Noll, Town Administrator, Hamilton Township, Carl Pitale, Committeeperson, Hamilton Township

Old Business: None

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 PM and a flag salute was conducted.

Presentations:

John Peterson made a presentation on SJTPO's feasibility study on Bikeway West as well as the history behind the planning that led to the study. The feasibility study was part of a larger effort to connect multiple portions of bike routes through several counties to create a larger, Camden County to the shore connection. There were three possible routes explored through Atlantic County, each with its own challenges. The suggested route utilizes an old rail right-of-way extending from the downtown area of Mays Landing to Route 54 in Hammonton and then moves onto a second railway before turning west through Folsom and connecting to the terminal point of the existing bikeway in Camden County.

There was considerable discussion regarding the trestle bridge over the Great Egg Harbor River and connecting the new bikeway to the existing portions of Bikeway East. There were notable hurdles to overcome when attempting to navigate from the County-owned side of the trestle bridge to the beginning of Bikeway East at ACIT.

General Discussion topics:

Steve Fiedler updated the group on the status of the Smithville pit currently being converted into a park. He also made note of an upcoming appearance by Doug Tallamy at Stockton University's Atlantic City campus on March 3rd.

Dan Crum's office received reports of a rabid raccoon. Discussion was also had regarding plastic bag bans and the use and discarding of reusable bags.

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Dick Colby mentioned his work on a virtual tour of historic Egg Harbor City buildings utilizing QR codes to convey pertinent information on the sites.

Alex Perri noted the Absecon Green Team has asked ANJEC representatives from various municipalities to make a presentation to Absecon about the benefits of forming an Environmental Commission. He also noted his work on building community gardens in Absecon. He is in the process of raising approximately \$7,000 to build 15 beds, for which, fencing has already been donated.

Commissioner Parker was pleased to see progress being made on building the Hamilton Township bike path. Discussion was had on Egg Harbor Township economic development and redevelopment. EHT is in the process of asking the State for money to repair tennis courts.

Eric Husta updated the group on the replacement of floating docks at Lake Lenape West.

Brett Noll reported on the status of a design assistance grant Hamilton Township has received. They are working on a \$2.1 million dollar budget and 3-year design timeframe. Bridge construction should begin within 3 years. Details of the project include proposed bump outs for fishing from the bridge. He noted the entire project needs a lead, or someone to manage the bike path construction in its entirety.

SJTPO wants to connect the counties of Atlantic, Cumberland, Salem, and Cape May through the southern portion of the project. Further discussion was had regarding the connections to Taylor Avenue and navigating the Sugar Hill area.

The evening's discussion concluded with updates on the intersection of Route 30 and Cologne Avenue along with various other intersection improvements.

The meeting adjourned at 9:12 PM.

Our next meeting is currently scheduled for March 6th, 2024 at 7PM at the Canale Training Center in EHT.

cc: Dennis Levinson, County Executive
Jerry DelRosso, County Administrator
Diana Rutala, Deputy County Administrator
Maureen Kern, Chairperson - Board of County Commissioners
Andrew Parker, Board of County Commissioners – PEAB Representative
Greg Brookins, Department Head Public Works
All Advisory Board Members