

**Minutes of the Parks & Environment Advisory Board  
Meeting February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 at the Canale Training Center**

In attendance:

**Officers Present** - Stephen Fiedler, Vice-Chairperson

**Members Present** - Lisa March, Dick Colby,

**Members Absent** - Mike Hogan- Chairperson, Belinda Chester, Dan Crum, 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**- Alex Perri, member of the public, Erin Crean, Economic Development Coordinator for Hamilton Township, Richard Cheek, Deputy Mayor, Hamilton Township Committee, Watershed Ambassadors Katherine Dollman and Melissa Belen-Gonzalez, Steve Jasiocki, Chairperson Sustainable Margate, and Barbara Fiedler, member of the public.

The meeting was called to order at 7:13 PM and a flag salute was conducted.

**Guest Presentation:**

Ms. Crean and Deputy Mayor Cheek gave the group an update on the status of Hamilton Township's efforts to acquiring funding for Bikeway West. The town has applied for a TA (Transportation Alternatives) Funding Grant for \$1.5 million to aid in creating a new connector bridge over the Great Egg Harbor River at the site of the old railroad trestle which passes by the Taylor Avenue train station in Mays Landing. This connection will aid in the completion of a new bikeway extension from Camden County through Atlantic County which in turn is part of an overall state plan for connectivity between the city of Philadelphia and the NJ shore.

Discussion was had regarding the old rail lines in the area and the tragic trainwreck of 1880 that took place on the trestle bridge over the river. Talk ensued regarding potential shared services between the Township and County with mention being made of the Township pursuing alternate sources of funding in the event they aren't awarded the grant.

**Roundtable Discussion topics:**

Alex Perri provided a status update on the formation of an Absecon Green Team. He also mentioned the possibility of Absecon hiring him as a part time environmental steward. Discussion was had on the need for invasive species management as well as active forest management.

Lisa March talked about her experience singing with a local choir and provided the group with an update on a proposed development on the Patcong Farms property in EHT.

Dick Colby mentioned frequent articles in the papers regarding offshore wind and questioned the most effective way for the group to weigh in on the topic. He also recounted a call he received from an Atlantic City Electric representative asking his opinion on the company. He relayed his disapproval of the company to the representative due to the lack of support for community solar. Dick also voiced his desire to see the group call for more comprehensive forest management.

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Eric Husta discussed the status of new docks at Lake Lenape West and mentioned the recently completed public hearing for the funding. He also mentioned the expansion underway at Estell Manor park and the ongoing renovation work at the Nature Center.

Steve Fiedler updated the group on the invasive species management at the Glen By the Bay property in Galloway. Steve's wife, Barbara, is seeking a grant for funding to continue moving forward with native replanting efforts.

Steve Jasiocki, Chairperson of Sustainable Margate, related issues of microplastic pollution in waterways from contractors cutting plastic lumber and creating large quantities of plastic sawdust that is not cleaned up but rather blown offsite at the completion of a job. He is looking for ways to hold local contractors accountable.

Commissioner Parker discussed the concept of shared services and the potential cost savings resulting from such agreements. Discussion was had regarding how the County and local municipalities continue looking for ways to avoid duplicating efforts with the Commissioner citing the new County-wide municipal court system as an example.

The evening concluded with both Watershed Ambassadors providing overviews of the types of activities and services they provide in their current positions. Mention was made of school outreach, stream assessments, and various partnership programs.

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 PM.

**Our next meeting is currently scheduled for Wednesday, March 1st, 2023, at 7 PM at the Canale Training Center.**

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  
All Advisory Board Members