

**Minutes of the Parks & Environment Advisory Board
Meeting November 2nd, 2022 at the Canale Training Center**

In attendance:

Officers Present - Mike Hogan-Vice Chairman

Members Present - Dan Crum, Stephen Fielder, Dick Colby, Lisa March, Belinda Chester,

Members Absent - Heather Warburton, 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- Cathy Skinner from Friends of the Parks, Fred Akers from the Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association, two Stockton University students Rebecca and Austin were present as well as a member of the public, Alex Perri.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM and a flag salute was conducted. The minutes from our October 5th, 2022 meeting were approved as well.

Guests Speaker

Julie Akers from Friends of the Parks made a presentation showcasing the history of the Friends of the Parks organization. The non-profit organization was created in 1985 to, among other things, help raise funds to aid the county park system. She briefly discussed the funding history and implementation of the Atlantic County Bikeway East project and went on to present an overview of the history of the parkland acquisitions in the county.

The remainder of the presentation focused on past programs the organization has provided and what types of programs are currently being presented. These included a variety of events from Pinelands Folk Festivals and site cleanups, to activities such as a Plein Air Art Event, a blue bird monitoring program, orienteering courses, frog walks, and trail installation and demarcation. Julie also discussed the group's efforts in assisting with various landscaping projects, as well as ongoing work with the Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association presenting and administering their environmental outreach programs.

Roundtable Discussion topics:

Belinda Chester updated the group on the Master Gardener speaker program. She also mentioned they are always looking for possible speaking partnerships. Mike Hogan noted the Watershed Ambassador program is always looking as well and suggested Belinda reach out to them to gauge potential interest. There was considerable discussion on the idea of collaboration.

Eric Husta mentioned the park system is actively looking to fill a new position relating to environmental coordination/outreach. He discussed what the new role would entail including park programming and program coordination as well.

Commissioner Parker provided an update on the two resolutions the group submitted for Commissioner consideration. He indicated he would follow up with Sonya Harris for additional information and provide it for

**Minutes of the Parks & Environment Advisory Board
Meeting November 2nd, 2022 at the Canale Training Center**

the group. He then updated the group on the ongoing efforts for McKee City betterment. He discussed recent improvements including a very popular pickleball court. This led to considerable discussion regarding the need/advantage of interconnectedness. He also provided the group with an overview of the history of McKee City and a brief summary of the Law Enforcement Activities Program (LEAP).

No further round table discussion was had and it was decided that reorganization would take place at the January 4th, 2023 meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:32 PM.

Our next meeting is currently scheduled for Wednesday, January 4th, 2023, at 7 PM at the Canale Training Center.

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