

**Minutes of the Parks & Environment Advisory Board
Meeting September 5th, 2018 at the Canale Training Center**

In attendance:

Officers Present - Bill Reinert – Chairman

Members Present - Steve Fiedler, Dick Colby, Elmer Ripley, Ken Sooy, Heather Warburton, James Galvin, Jill Miles

Members Absent - Mike Hogan – Vice Chairman,

Freeholder Representative – James Bertino – absent

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

Secretary - Eric Husta – C.P.S. - present

The meeting opened with the flag salute.

Old Business:

June's field trip to the forestry sites of Stockton University was discussed. Discussion was also had regarding the meeting held at ACCC and the County Health Department's participation and focus on walking trails in Atlantic County.

New Business:

General discussion was had regarding plastic bag bans. Steve Fiedler mentioned the topic was voted on in Galloway Township and vetoed 4-3.

Roundtable Discussion topics:

Dick Colby gave the group an update on the recent planning board applications in EHC regarding hydroponics and Egg Harbor Yacht's (Dr. Trocki's) proposal to convert a portion of his yacht facility into a medical marijuana production facility. A brief summary of Vermont's state-wide trail was given as well. Dick would also like to see signage warning patrons of the slippery conditions which may exist on the boardwalk trail in Estell Manor Park. Eric Husta briefed the group on previous attempts to treat the boardwalk with an environmentally friendly cleaner and power broom to control the condition. Dick Colby also inquired into the ownership of the Mares Run bridge located over Mares Run just off of Weymouth Road north of the Lake Lenape West campground.

Elmer Ripley updated the group on an incident where a family was using the Gaskill Park gazebo as temporary living quarters. He also mentioned his correspondence with Wells Fargo bank in Mays Landing regarding the back side of the property which abuts the Great Egg Harbor River and his desire to see this area cleared and made into a municipal park.

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Steve Fiedler discussed his ongoing efforts to keep Clarks Landing clean. He also mentioned the Swan Bay WMA and his work with an invasive species grant. Discussion was had regarding Sustainable Jersey's "Combined Towns Grant" and his work on the Friends Along the Mullica group.

Ken Sooy updated the group on efforts to get Smithville to take over approximately 1,000 acres of open space. He also discussed the dike at Pickerel Pond saying there were concerns but the dike has held up well over past years. Ken also mentioned Smithville is leasing land for a solar farm as well as land for housing near Route 9.

Jim Galvin discussed the Environmental Commission in EHT and stated there is a strong parks and recreation presence in the municipality citing the recent success of the Nature Preserve development as a cooperative effort with NJ Fish and Wildlife.

Greg Brookins distributed copies of the 2018 Atlantic County information manual. Greg also discussed NJDEP's requirement of additional oversight and testing for fuel storage at underground tank sites.

Eric Husta mentioned several upcoming and currently underway expansion projects at Estell Manor Park, the Veterans Cemetery and Lake Lenape East.

Jill Miles reported an increase in special event applications particularly those with food trucks. She also reported five areas have tested positive for WNV, two in Hammonton, two in Linwood and one in Northfield at Birch Grove Park. Jill also reported very few cases of rabies this year.

Heather Warburton discussed the Off Fossil Fuels Act and mentioned Hammonton will be voting on it next week. She also mentioned New Brunswick has successfully voted to support it already. Heather also mentioned a recent talk hosted in Hammonton by representatives from Food and Water Watch. Discussion was also had regarding the County's open space tax and Heather pointed out that she would like the rate to be higher to collect additional funding.

Further discussion was had on off-shore wind and community solar initiatives as well as the Patcong Creek Foundation and the group's recent efforts.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.

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The next meeting will be held Wednesday, October 3rd 2018 , at 7 PM at the Canale Training Center in EHT.

cc: Dennis Levinson, County Executive
Jerry DelRosso, County Administrator
Diana Rutala, Dep. County Administrator
Frank D. Formica, Chairman - Board of Freeholders
James Bertino, Board of Freeholders – PEAB Representative
Greg Brookins, Dept. Head Public Works
All Advisory Board Members