

**MINUTES  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMISSION  
TOWNSHIP OF MONROE  
SEPTEMBER 16, 2019**

The Regular Meeting of the Monroe Township Environmental Protection Commission was called to order by Chairperson Ryan Rebozo at 7:00pm in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Joe Pace Meeting Room of the Municipal Complex. Adequate notice of this meeting was given as required by the annual notice of meetings.

Chairperson Ryan Rebozo led the Commission in the salute to our flag.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Kathleen Flaherty, Christine Gorham, Ryan Rebozo, Matthew Scardino, Melissa Young and Cncl. Pat O'Reilly

Absent: Beth Davis and Christina Unipan

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES/AGENDA**

Ryan Rebozo asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the August 19, 2019 meeting. Matthew Scardino made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted of the Environmental Protection Commission Meeting of August 19, 2019. The motion was seconded by Kathleen Flaherty and approved by all members of the Committee in attendance.

Ryan Rebozo asked for a motion to approve the agenda with a change in order, moving Email Correspondence to the end. Kate Flaherty made a motion to approve the agenda with the change. The motion was seconded by Melissa Young and approved by all members of the Commission in attendance.

**CORRESPONDENCE, REPORTS AND OTHER MATTERS**

**NEW BUSINESS**

- **Tree and Native Plant Ordinance**

Ryan said, he is working on the Ordinance but he has nothing new to share or report at this time.

- **Environmental Commission Appointments**

Ryan has reached out to Alternate, Christine Unipan prior to the August meeting and Secretary, Jenn Harbison has sent her a certified letter on August 19<sup>th</sup> with a deadline of September 9<sup>th</sup> to respond, to advise her desire to either stay or resign from the Commission, to which she has not responded. Ryan stated that at this point we are going to move forward without her on the Commission and with that being said, the Commission has 4 openings altogether, 2 full member vacancies and 2 alternate member vacancies. Ryan feels it is in the best interest of the Commission to be fully staffed/appointed.

- **Bike Trail Acquisition**

Ryan corrected it is not the Bike Trail that is being acquired, it is a parking area lot for the bike trail. It is his understanding that it is ¾ of an acre to 1 acre in size. He said, Patrick from Sustainable Monroe has ideas for a bike repair station to be installed there. Ryan feels this would be a good opportunity for the Commission to get involved and do some type of native planting and education there. Ryan will reach out to Open Space Chairman, Len Fritz and Sustainable Monroe Chairman, Patrick McDevitt to schedule a meeting for all three commissions to be able to get together and brainstorm ideas for the property.

- **Detention Basins**

Melissa shared a letter she drafted that can be mailed to the residents in her neighborhood and possibly another neighborhood regarding the basins and explaining the Commission's idea of turning them into natural habitats. Kate said, she will work on creating a pamphlet that can be included with the letter and also used at tabling events. A discussion followed regarding the letter, the pamphlet and the information that should be included and how it could be presented.

Melissa suggested looking for another neighborhood that is similar in size to her neighborhood to propose transforming their basin also. Matt said, it should be in an area that people will be able to drive by and see. Cncl. O'Reilly said, another option could possibly be the basin that is in the back of Twelve Oaks, which is large and always filled with water. A discussion followed regarding the ways to bring the basins back into natural habitats and the process that entails. Kate suggested, transforming a high profile basin such as the basin at the ambulance hall. Cncl. O'Reilly said, the basin at the proposed Dog Park located on Clayton Road would be a great start once that project gets underway. Melissa said, since it is now fall and nothing is going to grow all winter, maybe the Commission could work on the basin plans during the winter months and then kick off the project in early spring. Cncl. O'Reilly agreed with taking the winter months to work on the plan and said he would like the first basin the Commission transfers to be able to set the tone for basin design in all future developments.

**OLD BUSINESS**

- **ERI Discussion**

Ryan is setting up a meeting with the Township Planner, Tim Kernan to see where there is overlap between the Commission's ideas of the ERI and what is already being compiled for the Master Plan.

- **Oldest Tree Competition**

Melissa created a google form with instructions about the contest that can be completed and turned in or directs contestants to a link online where the form can be completed and submitted. The guidelines include, applicants identifying a tree they think would qualify as the largest tree, measuring the circumference of that tree by using a string or rope around the tree, then submitting their name, the circumference of the tree and how the Commission can locate the tree to verify, by either GPS coordinates or closest intersection. Ryan suggested, once a winner is determined for the largest tree, the Commission will core that tree to find out how old it is and announce that as well. Melissa suggested, adding the flyer to the back of the application form and having them distributed within the schools. There was a discussion about possibly announcing the winner at the Tree Lighting on December 7<sup>th</sup> and Melissa put the deadline to receive applications as November 30<sup>th</sup>, to give the Commission time to meet, find the tree and verify the information. Kate suggested contacting the Williamstown Sun to have an article written promoting the competition. A discussion followed regarding possible prizes for the competition.

- **Green Fair**

Ryan asked for volunteers to attend the Green Fair on behalf of the Commission. He will not be able to attend due to work commitments. Kate and Melissa will be there for Sustainable Monroe already so they will represent the Environmental Protection Commission also. Ryan said that Patrick McDevitt has asked if we would want to use the Public Works interactive recycling display at our table, to which all the members agreed. Kate suggested coming up with a list of items that we would like to have on our table, the recycling display, the oldest tree flyer and possibly a basin drawing as "a what do you think" type of poster/education. A discussion followed regarding what should be on the Commission's table. Ryan will have a banner made up for the Commission's table. Melissa and Christine will clean up and complete the flyer and form and send it via email to everyone for approval prior to the fair and Kate will get tablecloths.

• Email Correspondence

Ryan mentioned, he had received some emails from the Pinelands, most of which were Certificate of Filings. The one email that stood out was a violation letter for a property that was in the process of applying for a land use change from residential to commercial and the process never happened. They are being sited for a violation for running a commercial business on a residential property and for clearing ¾ of an acre of wetlands. He asked Cncl. O'Reilly if he knew about this violation and what was being done. Matt brought Cncl. O'Reilly up to speed with where and what prompted the violation. Cncl. O'Reilly said, typically the property owned would be asked to come before the Zoning or Planning Board depending on the violation. Ryan said, according to the Land Management Ordinance, it is a fine of up to \$1,000 per day until the problem is resolved. He is interested to see how the Township takes on this violation because the Commission is talking about creating a tree clearing Ordinance and a native plant Ordinance, so if this violation is enforced then our Ordinances may be enforced. A discussion ensued regarding the violation and what enforcement the members thought to be appropriate.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Christine Gorham made a motion to open the Public Portion. The motion was seconded by Matthew Scardino and approved by all members of the Committee in attendance. With no one from the public present and/or wishing to speak, Christine Gorham made a motion to close the Public Portion. The motion was seconded by Matthew Scardino and approved by all members of the Committee in attendance.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Chairperson Ryan Rebozo asked for a motion to adjourn. Kathleen Flaherty made a motion to adjourn the Monroe Township Environmental Protection Commission Meeting of September 16, 2019. The motion was seconded by Matthew Scardino and unanimously all in favor by all members of the Commission in attendance.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenn Harbison, Secretary

The next scheduled Monroe Township Environmental Protection Commission meeting is Monday, October 21, 2019 at 7:00pm.

*These minutes were prepared from excerpts of the tape-recorded proceedings of the Environmental Protection Commission Meeting of September 16, 2019 and serve as only a synopsis of the proceedings.*

Approved as submitted \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Approved as corrected \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_