

**MINUTES
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMISSION
TOWNSHIP OF MONROE
FEBRUARY 23, 2021**

By way of electronic communication/live streaming, the Environmental Protection Commission Reorganization Meeting of the Township of Monroe was called to order at approximately 7:00 PM by Secretary, Jenn Harbison. Adequate notice of this meeting was given as required by the annual notice of meetings.

Secretary, Jenn Harbison led the Commission in the salute to our flag.

ROLL CALL

Present: Kate Flaherty, Jonathan Garbowski, Christine Gorham, Joseph Mahoney, Katie Seeley, Melissa Young, Darryl Hodges, Anthony Derieux and Cncl. Katherine Falcone.

NOMINATIONS AND LIAISONS

Joseph Mahoney made a motion to open the floor for nominations for the 2021 Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Environmental Protection Commission. The motion was seconded by Kate Flaherty and approved by all members of the Commission.

Melissa Young nominated Kate Flaherty as Chairperson. The nomination was seconded by Christine Gorham and approved by all members of the Committee. No other nominations were made.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON NOMINATION OF KATE FLAHERTY AS 2021 CHAIRPERSON OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMISSION - ALL AYES

Kate Flaherty was appointed as 2021 Chairperson to the Monroe Township Environmental Protection Commission.

Kate Flaherty nominated Melissa Young as Vice-Chairperson. The nomination was seconded by Christine Gorham and approved by all members of the Committee. No other nominations were made.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON NOMINATION OF MELISSA YOUNG AS 2021 VICE - CHAIRPERSON OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMISSION - ALL AYES

Melissa Young was appointed as 2021 Vice-Chairperson to the Monroe Township Environmental Protection Commission.

Jonathan Garbowski made a motion to close the floor for nominations. The motion was seconded by Joseph Mahoney and approved by all members of the Committee.

Kate Flaherty nominated Jonathon Garbowski as the Open Space Advisory Committee Liaison. The motion was seconded by Katie Seeley and approved by all members of the Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES/AGENDA

Kate Flaherty asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 16, 2020 meeting. Katie Seeley made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted of the Environmental Protection Commission Meeting of November 16, 2020. The motion was seconded by Joseph Mahoney and approved by all members of the Committee.

Kate Flaherty asked for a motion to approve the agenda for the February 23, 2021 meeting. Jonathan Garbowski made a motion to approve the agenda for the February 23, 2021 meeting. The motion was seconded by Christine Gorham.

CORRESPONDENCE, REPORTS AND OTHER MATTERS

- **Schedule of Meeting Dates for 2021**

Kaate Flaherty asked for a motion to approve the schedule of meeting dates for 2021. Christine Gorham made a motion to approve the schedule of meeting dates. The motion as seconded by Joseph Mahoney and approved by all members of the Commission.

- **Email Correspondence**

Kate discussed the emails that the Commission has received since the last meeting, noting a few are Pinelands approvals for the solar projects and a few are Wetlands enforcement items, none of which are action items for the Commission.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Brainstorming 2021 Goals**

Kate spoke regarding the goals of the Commission for 2021. She has distributed them via email to the members for review. She believes the list is both modest and achievable and asked for everyone's input. The goals are: the Native Plant Ordinance, the Basin Pamphlet and naturalizing or retrofitting a Basin within the Township. Melissa noted that she would like to add that the Commission will support the certification goals of Sustainable Monroe.

- **Native Plant Ordinance**

Kate asked Cncl. Falcone what Council's feeling is toward the Environmental Protection Commission and sustainability in the township and what is their philosophy about it. Cncl. Falcone spoke regarding the Native Plant Ordinance, expressing her concerns with how it may make it difficult for potential commercial developers. She noted that she had a landscaper review the draft Ordinance and explained his thoughts and recommendations. Melissa asked Jenn to redistribute the draft Native Plant Ordinance to the members of the Committee for review. Kate would like to place the Ordinance on the next meeting Agenda for review. Cncl. Falcone noted, she will bring the Ordinance up under Matters for Discussion at the next Council meeting to receive Council's feedback. A discussion ensued regarding the Native Plant Ordinance. Cncl. Falcone spoke in reference to new businesses coming into the town and the process related to same. Melissa spoke regarding what she feels the roll and position of the Environmental Protection Commission should be within the town.

- **Drainage Basin Project / Pamphlet**

Kate brought Cncl. Falcone up to speed on the drainage basin project and pamphlet. Kate shared her screen so that everyone could see the pamphlet, noting she will email it to everyone for further review. She explained, the Commission would like this pamphlet distributed to all of the residents to help educate them on basins and the benefits of a naturalized basin versus the way the basins are currently maintained. She noted that the Township would not necessarily have to retrofit a current basin but maybe start with a new basin located at a Township owned property, like the property designated for the Dog Park. This basin would be used as an example to the town and to help showcase sustainability and what can be done with basins. Melissa explained the importance of having naturalized basins. A discussion ensued regarding naturalizing the basins and the benefits. Cncl. Falcone believes, if the cost savings can be shown, that would be beneficial. Cncl. Falcone advised that there are 87 basins located in Monroe Township. She will gather the information on how long it takes to maintain the basins and the costs associated and report back to the Commission.

- **Bike Path Property**

Melissa advised that the Open Space Advisory Committee has purchased a property to be used for the Bike Path and that the Environmental Protection Commission along with Sustainable Monroe would like to be involved with any structures and development at the property.

• **Sustainable Monroe – Green Building Design Ordinance**

Melissa explained that Monroe is currently certified under Sustainable New Jersey as Bronze and there are different levels of certification. Sustainable Monroe is due for a recertification and they are hoping to increase a level as well as maintain the Bronze level. One of things they are exploring is to draft a Green Building Design Ordinance that would service as a checklist for potential builders and would have to be adopted by Council. Melissa further explained the Green Building Design Ordinance. She would like the Environmental Protection Commission to support and possibly join forces with Sustainable Monroe to bring the Ordinance to Council for adoption. Melissa will distribute the information regarding the Ordinance to all of the members for their review prior to the next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

• **Social Media**

Christine noted that there is nothing new to report at this time. Cncl. Falcone asked if the Commission will be doing anything for Earth Day, which is coming up on April 22, 2021. Melissa noted, the Commission has not done anything pertaining to Earth Day on social media in the past. Cncl. Falcone suggested possibly working with Sustainable Monroe to start a campaign awareness on social media for Earth Day and for Recycling. Melissa noted, at the 2019 Township Earth Day Event, the Commission did a recycling game with the kids and residents, which was very educational and received a lot of positive feedback. A discussion followed regarding recycling within the Township. Cncl. Falcone spoke regarding a new app called Recycle Coach that residents can download and provides trash pick-up information along with recycling tips among many other things. Joe agreed that the app was well created and very useful. Christine will share the link for the app on the Commission’s social media page.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION – None

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Anthony Derieux made a motion to adjourn the Monroe Township Environmental Protection Commission Meeting of February 23, 2021. The motion was seconded by Darryl Hodges and unanimously all in favor by all members of the Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenn Harbison, Secretary

The next scheduled Monroe Township Environmental Protection Commission meeting is Monday, March 15, 2021 at 7:00pm.

These minutes were prepared from excerpts of the tape-recorded proceedings of the Environmental Protection Commission Meeting of February 23, 2021 and serve as only a synopsis of the proceedings.

Approved as submitted _____ Date _____
Approved as corrected _____ Date _____