

**MINUTES
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMISSION
TOWNSHIP OF MONROE
MARCH 15, 2021**

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

Chairperson, Kate Flaherty led the Commission in the salute to our flag.

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Christine Gorham and Anthony Derieux.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES/AGENDA

Darryl Hodges made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted of the Environmental Protection Commission Meeting of February 23, 2021. The motion was seconded by Jonathan Garbowski and approved by all members of the Commission in attendance.

CORRESPONDENCE, REPORTS AND OTHER MATTERS

- **Email Correspondence**

Kate reported there is nothing new to share at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Review of Native Plant Ordinance**

Kate noted she reviewed the Ordinance and had received comments from Darryl after his review. She believes some of the language in the Ordinance needs to be worked on. Cncl. Falcone reported that she shared the Draft Ordinance with Council at the last Ordinance Committee Meeting. She advised, the Draft Ordinance will be incorporated with the Master Plan which is currently under review, noting there are a lot of things that are listed in the Draft Ordinance that are already in place within the current Master Plan. Cncl. Falcone spoke regarding her concerns with the Draft Ordinance. Kate stated, the goal of the Ordinance is to promote native plants within the Township and to have some enforcement around that idea. A discussion followed with regards to addressing the different concerns and restrictions within the Ordinance. Cncl. Falcone said the review of the Master Plan is going to take some time and she will keep the Commission informed as to its progress. She reported, after discussion with Council, they would like to make sure that nothing is going to prohibit any developers from looking at Monroe Township as too difficult as far as requirements of coming into the town and Council wants to make sure that the Township is business friendly.

Darryl asked what general direction the Council would like to see the Commission going, to which Cncl. Falcone advised that was not discussed, but she will present any ideas the Commission has to Council. Kate asked Cncl. Falcone if she can find out what the Council's commitment is to environmental issues in the town and how the Commission can be a part of that.

- **Drainage Basin Project / Pamphlet**

Cncl. Falcone advised that she spoke with Mike Calvello, Public Works Director about the basins and having a test basin to show the residents the benefits and cost savings of a natural basin. They identified the small basin located near the hockey rink at Owens Park which is not fenced in, as the basin they feel would make a good test basin. She explained, they thought this basin would be environmentally respective, where the results can be seen. Cncl. Falcone feels the pamphlet will be beneficial to promoting the basin project and getting more people involved.

Kate said she will find out if Owens Park was listed in the Rutgers Grant letter for help with the funding of the project.

Kate mentioned that Christine had sent her information on a grant for environmental signage, noting she will look into it further and report back.

Kate asked Cncl. Falcone what the Commission needs to do in order to get the basin project moving. Cncl. Falcone suggested meeting with Mike Calvello and Nicholas Mercado from Public Works. She advised that she is currently researching all of the basins in town in order to price out how much it costs to maintain them as opposed to leaving them natural. Kate said she will reach out to Patrick McDevitt from Sustainable Monroe and Rutgers for help with the design work on what needs to be done to the basins.

Kate shared her screen to show the members present the pamphlet that she has been working on, which she had emailed to everyone prior to the meeting. She said, Darryl had reached out to her prior to the meeting with some suggestions and reformatting ideas for the pamphlet. A discussion followed regarding the pamphlet and the Commission's logo. Kate will work on finalizing the pamphlet so that Cncl. Falcone can present it to Council for their feedback.

- **Earth Day / Recycling Campaign**

Kate asked the members present for any suggestions on how the Commission can promote Earth Day. Cncl. Falcone suggested, hosting a walk at Owens Park and charging a participant fee, which can be used towards the basin project. Kate noted, she would like to see something that would help boost the Commission's social media presence. Darryl said, he would like to see something that would involve the community, specifically the children. Cncl. Falcone suggested, possibly a poster contest held through the schools, to help involve the children.

- **Bike Path Property**

Kate reported, she received an update on the property and she believes that things will start moving soon. Cncl. Falcone suggested contacting Cncl. O'Reilly for further updates on the plans for the property.

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

Melissa noted, she will send out a list that has been included in other towns' Green Building Design Ordinances for the Commission members to review before the next meeting. Cncl. Falcone said, she will have the information included with the Master Plan review.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Social Media**

Christine is not in attendance tonight, so there is nothing new to report at this time.

Darryl asked about the Commission’s social media platforms. He noted, the Commission should have a presence on Instagram and Snapchat, to help engage a younger audience. Kate suggested that Darryl touch base with Christine to work together on the Commission’s social media presence. A discussion followed regarding various content to post and help boost awareness for the Commission.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Darryl Hodges made a motion to open the Public Portion. The motion was seconded by Melissa Young and unanimously approved by all members of the Commission in attendance. With no one wishing to speak and no public comment received, Joe Mahoney made a motion to close the Public Portion. The motion was seconded by Jon Garbowski and unanimously approved by all members of Commission in attendance.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Darryl Hodges made a motion to adjourn the Monroe Township Environmental Protection Commission Meeting of March 15, 2021. The motion was seconded by Joe Mahoney 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, April 19, 2021 at 7:00pm.

These minutes were prepared from excerpts of the tape-recorded proceedings of the Environmental Protection Commission Meeting of March 15, 2021 and serve as only a synopsis of the proceedings.

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