

**MINUTES
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMISSION
TOWNSHIP OF MONROE
FEBRUARY 27, 2023**

The Regular Meeting of the Monroe Township Environmental Protection Commission was called to order by Chairperson Dan Kozak at 6:35pm in the 2nd 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 Dan Kozak led the Commission in the salute to the flag.

ROLL CALL

Present: Anthony Bundi (zoom), Crystal Fox, Dan Kozak, Patricia Purdy (zoom), Matthew Urquhart, and Carl Wise

Absent: Cncl. Steve McKinney

Guest: Matt Rosenfeld

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Crystal Fox made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted of the Environmental Protection Commission meeting of January 23, 2023. The motion was seconded by Carl Wise.

CORRESPONDENCE, REPORTS AND OTHER MATTERS

- Email Correspondence – None

NEW BUSINESS

- Planting around basins

Dan advised that he has contacted Home Depot and Lowes to see what they may be able to do for the Commission as far as plants and both were very receptive to helping the Commission. Dan spoke with Public Works and they suggested that the Commission pick two (2) basins that are township owned, maybe one (1) of the basins should be located in a member's neighborhood along with possibly the island located at the Municipal Building under the solar panels and pick two (2) corners (10X10) of each basin to plant wildflowers. He also contacted Rutgers Master Gardeners and they said as far as planting, they will not be able to help the Commission because they will not have their plant sale until the end of May, beginning of June and they felt that was too late to put planting in that would survive through the summer. Dan stated, the Master Gardener suggested planting black eyed susans at the basins and explained the planting process that the Master Gardener suggested. Dan spoke regarding the drainage and some watering system ideas for the island area located at the municipal building. He stated that one of the Commission members will have to take the lead on the project. Pat spoke regarding black eyed susans and the conditions they do best in. Dan suggested once the flowers are planted, maybe having a sign installing that states "compliments of the Environmental Protection Commission".

- Tomato plants from Rutgers

Dan said that Rutgers charges \$1.00 a piece per plant and with their plant sale not being held until the end of May, beginning of June, it may be too late. He noted, in years past the quantity of plants that were given out at the township events was large. He expressed his concerns with purchasing the plants at \$1.00 a piece for an event that could potentially be cancelled. A discussion followed regarding the plants and ways to possibly acquire them at a lesser price so that the Commission will be able to hand them out at Music Festival, should they decide to host a table at the event. Jenn said, she will place the Music Festival on the next meeting's agenda, to provide time for the members to think about and decide whether they would like to commit to hosting a table at the event. Dan spoke in reference to the various items that the Commission has given out in the past. Matt suggested possibly handing out seed packets at the Music Festival as opposed to a live plant, to which Pat expressed her concerns with the certain types of seeds that can be deadly to animals and noted which seeds that should be purchased if the Commission chooses to hand out seed packets. Pat stated, she is willing to lead the project of hosting a table at the Music Festival. She asked how many members would be willing to help at the event, to which all of the members agreed. A discussion followed regarding what is involved in hosting a table at the Music Festival.

- Community Clean-Up Day

Dan explained, he followed up with the CFO and she explained that since the Commission is part of the Township, they are not able to collect the \$500.00 for participating in the event. Dan suggested that if members would still like to participate, that they join other groups to help with the event. Dan advised that the Commission has an annual budget of \$2,000.00. Jenn spoke in reference to the various township-sponsored events that take place during the year where the Commission can participate.

OLD BUSINESS

Anthony spoke regarding a discussion from the Open Space Advisory Committee in reference to acquiring and installing signs for the wildflower planters at the Sykes Lane Lot. A discussion followed regarding the planting of the wildflowers at the Sykes Lane Lot, the types of signs that can be installed along with ways the signs can offer information to the public.

Anthony spoke regarding a request of the Open Space Advisory Committee in reference to having the Commission plant trees along the bike trail. Crystal, who also serves on the Open Space Advisory Committee, clarified that Open Space is not looking to have the Environmental Commission plant the trees, but to help identify the trees for additional signage to provide education to the residents using the bike trail. A discussion followed regarding possible signage ideas for the trees.

With regards to the Community Gardens, Dan noted that he contacted Mr. Gerstein to see when the applications will be ready and will be due for this year and he is waiting for him to respond.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Patricia Purdy made a motion to open the Public Portion. The motion was seconded by Carl Wise.

Matt Rosenfeld spoke in reference to the discussions about all of the efforts to try and inspire the public to get involved, asking what does the public do once they are involved. Dan explained that the Environmental Protection Commission is an advisory board who works alongside the Planning Board,

Zoning Board and Council, noting the various events the Commission has participated in the past. Matt expressed his interest in becoming involved and what he can offer to the Commission.

Carl suggested when planting the black eyed susans at the basins, maybe incorporating milkweed which attracts the monarch butterflies, as they are beginning to near extinction. Dan suggested that the Commission take small steps and see how it is accepted by the residents and if the project goes over well, then maybe plant the milkweed and other plants on the opposite corners of the basins. He expressed his concerns with the fact that the milkweeds could be seen as “weeds” and the Commission will not receive positive feedback, whereas the black eyed susans are flowers. Matt spoke regarding the need to educate the public on the benefits of the various plantings at the basins and the various other projects the Commission will be working on. A discussion followed regarding the plantings at the basins and ways to educate the public with signs and/or QR codes.

Matt Rosenfeld asked if the Commission had an incentive relating to the spotted lateran flies, to which Secretary Jenn Harbison advised the County Board of Health had previously provided literature to be displayed and given out to the public, however it was not something that the Commission had created or distributed.

With no one else from the public present and/or wishing to speak, Crystal Fox made a motion to close the Public Portion. The motion was seconded by Patricia Purdy and approved by all members of Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Anthony Bundi made a motion to adjourn the Monroe Township Environmental Protection Commission Meeting of February 27, 2023. The motion was seconded by Carl Wise and approved by all members of Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Harbison, Secretary

The next scheduled Monroe Township Environmental Protection Commission meeting is Monday, March 20, 2023 at 6:30pm.

These minutes were prepared from excerpts of the tape-recorded proceedings of the Environmental Protection Commission Meeting of February 27, 2023 and serve as only a synopsis of the proceedings.

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