

# CHATHAM BOROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

November 14, 2018

8:00 p.m.

Chairwoman Kate Murphy called this Regular Meeting of the Chatham Borough Environmental Commission to order at 8:00 p.m. in Room 212, middle level, Chatham Borough Hall. Chrmwn. Murphy announced that all legal notices had been posted for this meeting.

Name	Present	Absent
Kate Murphy, Chwmn.	X	
John Tancredi	X	
Ben Lampert	X	
John Dey	X	
Patricia Soteropoulos	X	
Kevin Murphy	X	
Torri Van Wie		X
Joseph Treloar	X	
Kyle Muir		X
Council Member Len Resto		X
Liz Holler, Minutes Secretary	X	

Also present:

Dr. Rozella Clyde, member of the Chatham Borough Green Team  
Sophia Poparo, a Girl Scout, and her mother, Heather Poparo

## Public Comments

Dr. Clyde congratulated the Commission on receiving their Silver Certification award at the Sustainable Jersey gathering. She was very happy about the photo taken of the Chatham Borough Commission at this event.

## Motion to Adopt Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the October 10, 2018 Commission meeting were approved as amended.

## Sustainable Jersey Conference

Chrmwn. Murphy reported that the Sustainable Jersey Conference was held yesterday. Mr. Murphy distributed information from the Conference to Commissioners. Included in this information was a report on how many Sustainable points were earned by other towns and cities. Also, information was given on possible grants that could be pursued. Mr. Murphy noted that 448 cities are trying to be certified. 210 cities received certification. Mr. Murphy reported that the Gold Star certification is a new award. Woodbridge received the Gold Star this year. Mr. Murphy reported that Chatham Borough, achieved the Silver Certification, in the middle division, and also was recognized as a champion award for the population group that Chatham Borough is in.

Mr. Murphy noted that Chatham Borough also received a collaboration award regarding Chatham Borough's work with Chatham Township and Madison.

### Girl Scout – Silver Award Project

Sophia Paparo, a Chatham 7<sup>th</sup> grader and Girl Scout, introduced herself to Commissioners.

Ms. Paparo explained that she and her fellow Troop members are working to obtain the Girl Scout's Silver Award. The project that the Troop will undertake has to benefit Chatham. Ms. Paparo has chosen the goal to eliminate plastic shopping bags from being given out to customers at local grocery stores & CVS. She asked if the Commission could give any advice on this project.

Chwmn. Murphy told Ms. Paparo that Mayor Harris had recently informed her that he really wanted to eliminate plastic bags in the Borough. Mayor Harris had suggested Commissioners approach local restaurants and asking them to eliminate plastic straws. Perhaps other scout troops could help with this initiative.

Mr. Treloar suggested the Scouts put together a list of businesses who are agreeable to eliminating plastic bags/straws. The Scouts could then present the list to the Borough Council for their consideration on a possible ordinance.

Mr. Tancredi pointed out that if voluntary support were to be given by these local businesses, an ordinance could then be more accepted without push-back. He suggested that the Scouts may want to see which businesses are actually using the plastic bags. Mr. Tancredi noted that 100% elimination of plastic of bags may not be achieved for all businesses, however an impact on one sector of local businesses could be made. That would be a step in the right direction.

Ms. Soteropoulos pointed out that 13 towns in New Jersey have abandoned plastic bags by ordinance. It's possible that number has increased to 16.

Commissioners noted that Council Member Resto had talked to Kings Supermarket about accepting plastic bags for recycling. Kings did not respond well.

Commissioners suggested Ms. Paparo consider revising her project into asking local business to eliminate plastic straws. Plastic straws are not recyclable. Castoff plastic straws eventually can harm the animal population. Ms. Soteropoulos suggested Ms. Paparo have some friends, even outside of her Girl Scout troop, accompany her when she visits the stores.

Mr. Tancredi suggested to Ms. Paparo that once she develops her project proposal and decides on focusing on something specific, she is welcome to return to the Commission. The Commission can vote to give official support to her project.

Chrwmm. Murphy confirmed Ms. Paparo's name and email to keep in touch.

On other matters, Mr. Murphy announced that tomorrow night, 7 p.m., there will be a meeting at Christ Church in Summit NJ regarding solar power. Also, on December 12<sup>th</sup>, a webinar will be held on community-based solar power options. Sometimes trees can block attempts at obtaining solar power. Further info on this webinar can be found on the Jersey Sustainable website. Mr. Murphy pointed out that participating in this program would help Chatham Borough earn points toward obtaining the Gold Star Award in the future.

### Planning Board – Liaison Report

Chwmn. Murphy reviewed a message sent to her by Mrs. Van Wie, the Commission's liaison to the Planning Board. The Planning Board is currently collecting survey feedback on potential Post Office Plaza designs. The survey is available on Planet Civic or on the Borough website.

### Borough Council – Liaison Report

Council Member Resto was not present to give this report.

### Organic Landscaping on Borough Property – Mr. Dey

Mr. Dey reported that at the Borough Council Meeting on November 26<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Soteropoulos will give a presentation on organic landscaping on Borough Property to the Mayor and Council.

Mr. Dey reported that Commissioners had walked the Borough fields to observe the growing conditions of the grass. The fields that were walked included those belonging to the Township and the School District. Mr. Dey noted that the School District does nothing to its fields, no treatments are done. There is little difference on the wear and tear side. The goal now is to remove the harmful fertilizers/pesticides from Borough properties. Mr. Dey said that the Commission will recommend a budgeted item of \$13,960 for next year.

Mr. Dey reported that soil testing has been done on the fields. The fields need heavy liming and some organic matter applied. That activity will cost \$3,000. Mr. Dey believed that the worn-out sections of the fields, like the area before the goal posts, need to be aerated. Seeding could be done to these worn areas in the fall. The Commission will also ask that Public Works do a soil testing on these fields every three years. The Commission will work with the DPW in putting together an RFP.

Summing up, Ms. Soteropoulos stated that the Commission's proposal is to eliminate all dangerous pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers, from Borough properties and use an organic approach instead. Ms. Soteropoulos noted that a full blown organic program is really outside of the Commission's budget. Possibly a happy medium approach could be done, doing a full-blown approach on how the School District handles its fields. Ms. Soteropoulos will call the head of the school maintenance department to see if seeding and aerating are being done on the school fields. She felt the school fields were in pretty good condition considering the heavy amount of activity they endure.

To help with Ms. Soteropoulos's presentation, Ms. Holler will locate the resolution regarding lawn care on Borough properties which was passed by the Commission in June.

After further discussion, Ms. Soteropoulos pointed out that doing totally nothing, chemical-wise, to the lawns may not be a good idea, because the soils have probably been totally depleted with chemicals already applied. However, the Commission can suggest a small amount be added to the Commission's budget and to do something healthy for the lawns – aerate them, seed them, whatever.

### Farm Bill

Mr. Treloar reported that this bill had initially been passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate. However, on further research, Mr. Treloar discovered that this bill has been tabled until the mid-terms.

Mr. Treloar explained that the Farm Bill contained a clause that states only the Federal Government, or a State government will be allowed to regulate use of rodenticides, herbicides, and fungicides. Mr. Treloar pointed out that over-riding rules can still interfere. He felt that the clause did not provide any benefit, other than trying to hold off any regulation promoting the sale of the chemicals. It seemed the clause only benefitted the companies making the pesticides.

Mr. Treloar noted that Council Member Resto had reported that information on the Farm Bill had been included in the packets for Council Members; however, was not included in the agenda for a recent Council Meeting.

Ms. Soteropoulos made a motion that the Environmental Commission oppose this clause and the Farm Bill. Mr. Dey seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken. All Commissioners present voted aye.

#### Electric Vehicle ChargePoint proposal – Mr. Treloar

Mr. Treloar noted that he had sent around an updated proposal asking that four parking spaces be blocked off in a municipal parking lot for electric vehicle chargers. He believed that JCP & L would have to bring in an electrical box at the ChargePoint location. Mr. Treloar wasn't sure how much this wiring work would cost; however, it would be a fixed amount per charging unit.

Mr. Treloar discussed how the charge points could be financed. He pointed out that this proposal is to have the Borough Council approve the designation of up to four spaces for the electric vehicle chargers. These spaces would be in the slightly elevated parking lot behind Rotary Park. Mr. Treloar noted that in order for Chatham Borough to obtain Gold Certification, the town would have to install these electric chargers.

Mr. Treloar felt the electric chargers were not really for Chatham cars; however, hopefully, these chargers will help promote in-town shopping.

Commissioners discussed which municipal parking lot would be the best location for the electric chargers.

Mr. Treloar and Mr. Tancredi discussed the grant amount. Mr. Tancredi felt that it would be more realistic to budget for two electric chargers, rather than four, given the size of our town.

Mr. Treloar explained the voltage that would be involved with the chargers. He felt that if only two chargers were installed, it would affect the grant.

Mr. Tancredi brought up the question of who would pay for the installation of the meter. For JCP & L to bring in the necessary line for the chargers, the installation of the meter would be an additional charge.

Mr. Treloar explained how the metered power of the chargers could be monitored day by day. He felt that the electric chargers would cost the Borough \$300 or less per year. The chargers could be monitored for any abuse.

After further discussion, Mr. Treloar made a motion that the Environmental Commission request that the Borough Council provisionally allocate up to four parking spaces in the municipal parking lot adjacent to Elmwood Avenue and Main Street for electric vehicle charging. Chrwmn. Murphy seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken. All Commissioners present voted aye on the motion, except for Mr. Dey who opposed it.

At 9:32 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

The next Environmental Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 12, 2018, 8 p.m., Room 212, middle level, Chatham Borough Hall.

Respectfully submitted:

Liz Holler  
Minutes Secretary

cc: Mayor Bruce Harris  
Chatham Township Environmental Commission