

CHATHAM BOROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
March 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 of Chatham Borough Hall. Chrwmn. Murphy announced that all legal notices had been posted for this meeting.

The roll call was taken:

| Name | Present | Absent |
|-------------------------------|---------|--------|
| Kate Murphy, Chrwmn. | X | |
| John Tancredi | X | |
| Ben Lampert | | X |
| Kevin Murphy | X | |
| John S. Dey | X | |
| Steve Cheng | | X |
| Kyle Muir | X | |
| Torri Van Wie | X | |
| Council Member Resto | X | |
| Liz Holler, Minutes Secretary | X | |

Kat Xikes, Pat Soteropoulos, daughter, attended as an interested observer

Public Comment

There was none.

Motion to Adopt Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes of February 14, 2018 were approved as amended.

Correspondence for the Commission

Chrwmn. Murphy reported a letter has been received from the Morris County Division of Mosquito Control about the clearing and cutting of trees.

Planning Board

Mrs. Van Wie reported that the Board listened to an applicant proposing to open a bagel shop at 260 Main Street. The Board had discussed garbage pick-up and recycling concerns for that store unit and the neighboring businesses.

Mrs. Van Wie asked Commissioners if a list of environmental-friendly items, like LED lights, could be given to new businesses coming into the Borough. Council Member Resto said for that process to work, the Planning Board would have to notify the EC Commission that such an application is coming up. Otherwise, the Commission would not be aware of these type applications preparing to be heard.

Mr. Tancredi agreed that some protocol could be put in place for the Commission to ask that environmental measures be taken in proposed plans. The Borough Council could introduce a resolution making such a recommendation.

Mrs. Van Wie asked where should she start to research pre-existing ordinances for LED items.

Council Member Resto said he will find the necessary Land Development Ordinance (LDO) link and send it to her.

Mrs. Van Wie asked how would the Commission approach the Borough Council about this LED matter.

Council Member Resto answered that the Commission should decide what they would like to see in such an ordinance and then arrange to be assigned as a discussion item for an upcoming Borough Council meeting.

Mr. Tancredi suggested that the Commission should just submit recommendations to applicants.

Council Member Resto suggested the Commission organize recommendations and rationale to be submitted as soon as possible to the Borough Council. He reminded Commissioners that Post Office Plaza is under discussion and environmental items should be recommended. He pointed out a public forum regarding the future of Post Office Plaza will be held on March 20th, 7 p.m., in the Council Chambers.

Council Member Resto noted that Commissioners also will want to make recommendations on an environmentally-safe fertilizer to use on Borough properties.

Borough Council

Council Member Resto reported that the recent snowstorms have delayed the work being done on the trails being constructed along the Passaic River. He noted that the DPW has been very busy picking up fallen tree limbs from the storms.

Meeting with Landscapers

Mr. Dey reported that on March 3rd this meeting was held. Fifteen landscapers had been invited. Three landscapers attended and two landscape designers. An organic landscaper in attendance had a great deal of information. George Sweetin, a local landscaper, was also at the meeting. In addition, Tony Torello and Leo Pietrantuono of DPW attended. Mr. Dey reported that different types of fertilizers had been discussed. It was brought up that organic lawns can be just as green as non-organic lawns; however, it just takes longer to achieve. Invasive species were also discussed at the meeting with landscapers. One of the landscapers had mentioned that invasive species, by legislation, is not allowed in Canada.

Mr. Dey noted that the landscapers felt that Chatham residents do too much watering on their properties.

Regarding the leaf-blower issue, it was pointed out at the meeting that the gas-powered blowers have more power than the electric blowers. The gas-powered blowers are more effective in cleaning up tons of wet leaves that fall. However, to clean up garden clippings, and smaller clean-ups, the battery-powered blowers can do the job well enough.

Mr. Dey reported that the Chatham DPW gave him the recommendation to purchase a leaf-blower, the Echo brand, for their department. The cost would be \$527. One battery would be included. Mr. Dey noted that eventually another battery will be needed. Mr. Torello, the DPW Director, indicated that the DPW is willing to pay for one when it's needed.

Council Member Resto brought a point made at the meeting. The landscapers charge by the hour, not by the amount of clippings, cuttings, etc. He also noted that most residents want exceptionally green lawns; however, very green lawns require heavy duty fertilizer.

Council Member Resto recommended that a comparison be made on the Borough Hall's front lawn. Half the lawn could be treated with the traditional fertilizer and the other half be treated with organic fertilizer. Council Member Resto said he understood that the grass treated with organic fertilizer, doesn't grow as tall. It also doesn't have to be cut as often.

Mr. Dey agreed with Council Member Resto's suggestion. However, Mr. Dey recommended that organic fertilizer be used on the entire Borough Hall lawn, not just half. Commissioners discussed the excessive watering that some residents apply to their lawns. Mr. Murphy pointed out that to measure how much water is applied by a sprinkler system to a lawn, an empty tuna can be put on the lawn. The empty tuna can, once filled, indicates that one inch of water has been applied to the lawn. Michael Kolenut of Lincoln Landscaping stated that lawns only need one inch of water per week. The vast majority of lawns are over-watered.

As a second idea, Mr. Dey discussed a certification program for landscapers on organic fertilizers. Perhaps the Borough Commission could come up with a pilot program that hopefully, other environmental commissions would be interested in. Mr. Dey suggested that perhaps Rutgers could structure such a program.

Commissioners discussed a post card from a landscaper "New Verdant". Council Member Resto had met him. New Verdant is just starting to consider the fertilizing aspect of landscaping.

Mr. Dey suggested the Commission could make a list of suggested measures that residents could do to make their lawns healthier.

Mrs. Van Wie suggested that neighbors who share the same landscaper, get together, purchase the same organic fertilizer, and ask the landscaper to use that, instead of the usual fertilizer.

Commissioners further discussed the idea of putting together a list/pamphlet of good lawn practices and non-toxic fertilizer/weed-killers for residents to consider. It could be distributed at the April Community Eco-Event and the upcoming Farmers' Markets in the Borough.

Dr. Clyde brought up that the County College of Morris has a horticulture department. Possibly they would have material for this list. Mr. Dey said he will give them a call. Perhaps articles on lawn care could also be put in the local

newspapers urging homeowners to have their landscapers follow certain practices and products.

Council Member Resto offered to ask a friend to film the Borough's lawn, this spring, as it progressed with an organic fertilizer application.

Mr. Dey asked how should the Commission move ahead with the pilot project.

Council Member Resto answered that the pilot project could be assigned as a discussion item for a future Borough Council meeting. He suggested one or two Commissioners prepare a presentation for the Council. Council Member Resto said he will speak with Mayor Harris to possibly have this topic as one of the discussion items for either the March 26th Council Meeting or early April.

Dr. Clyde asked about the time-frame for the experiment to be made on the Borough Hall's front lawn.

Council Member Resto suggested a name from Lincoln Landscaping. Mr. Dey will give this gentleman a call. Mr. Dey will also follow up with the certificate program.

Ms. Soteropoulos reported that she has reviewed the current contract for the fertilization of Borough grounds. Perhaps the Borough can extricate themselves from it and hire a landscaper who uses organic methods to fertilize. There are ways to control the grub situation without using toxic chemicals. Ms. Soteropoulos also reported on the harmful herbicides being used on the athletic fields. She strongly recommended that non-chemical methods be used to protect the Borough grounds and athletic fields. Weeds do not affect the children playing soccer on a Chatham field.

Ms. Soteropoulos summarized articles she had found regarding pesticides' harmful effect on children. She reported that Chatham Township is on the verge of contracting an organic landscaper for the Township fields and grounds. She asked Council Member Resto where the Commission should go from here.

Council Member Resto suggested that a report should be written giving the points that Ms. Soteropoulos has risen tonight. He recommended that the Commission could vote on a resolution recommending that the Borough switch to a landscaper who uses organic pesticides/fertilizers. Dr. Clyde suggested including the of which landscaper the Chatham School District uses for their fields.

Sustainable Jersey Silver Certification

Mrs. Murphy reported that work is going well for the certification. The Green Team will hold a meeting next week.

April Community Eco-Event

Mrs. Van Wie distributed a flier for this event which will be held Saturday, May 5th, 10 a.m. to 11, at the Library of the Chathams. A presentation will be given by representatives from the Board of Public Utilities. Commissioners suggested that the Chatham Township Environmental Commission be included in this event.

Pilgrim Pipeline

Council Member Resto had nothing current to report.

Boy Scouts

Mr. Tancredi reported that the Scouts are looking for projects to undertake. He asked if the trail work was ready for them to tackle. Council Member Resto said he will talk with Mr. DeNave, the Borough Engineer, about possible scout work on the trail. Also, the latest snow has to melt. Mr. Tancredi asked if Mr. DeNave could parcel out pieces of where benches, kiosks, trail markings, etc. could be installed along the trail. A standard design for these items could be established. Mr. Tancredi felt these items could be undertaken as a troop project, not an Eagle Scout project.

Dr. Clyde described the Trail Apps to be installed at certain Morris County parks. She had heard about this project at a Morris County Freeholder meeting she had attended today.

At 9:18 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

The next Environmental Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 11, 2018, 8 p.m., Room 212, middle level, Chatham Borough Hall.

Respectfully submitted:

Liz Holler
Recording Secretary

cc: Mayor Bruce Harris
Chatham Township Environmental Commission