

CHATHAM BOROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
 July 14, 2021 8:00 p.m.

Chairman Torri Van Wie called this Regular Meeting of the Chatham Borough Environmental Commission to order at 8:00 p.m. Commissioners were present at this virtual meeting by way of Zoom. Chrmn. Van Wie read aloud the Statement of Adequate Notice. All legal notices have been posted for this meeting.

Name	Present	Absent
Torri Van Wie, Chrmn.	X	
Patricia Soteropoulos, Vice Chrmn.	X	
Benjamin Lampert		X
Joseph Treloar	X	
Yana Doyle	X	
Susie Robertson	X	
Rozella Clyde	X	
Ernest Dorflinger	X	
Council Member Jocelyn Mathiasen		X
Liz Holler, Recording Secretary	X	

Public Comments

There were none.

Motion to Adopt Meeting Minutes

Dr. Clyde made a motion to approve the June 9, 2021 EC Meeting minutes as submitted. Mr. Dorflinger seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken. The June 9, 2021 minutes were approved as submitted.

Borough Council Liaison Report

Council Member Mathiasen was not present to give this report.

Planning Board Liaison Report

Chrmn. Van Wie reported that the Board is looking into some of the peripheral areas of the Borough in regards to zoning. She wasn't sure how much progress this study will make during the summer months, probably more will be done in the fall.

Chrmn. Van Wie noted that new, revised plans are being considered for Post Office Plaza. Although, she has not seen any actual renderings of these new plans, she understands that these plans will be massively scaled back from what had been originally proposed. Chrmn. Van Wie will engage and encourage the types of green energy that could be installed in future buildings.

CB Constant Contact email list

Chrmn. Van Wie reported that Council Member Mathiasen has informed her that only 1200 people have registered for the Constant Contact email list. She felt this contact could be a better way of communicating with people, especially as the Commission starts to roll out energy efficiency initiatives.

Dr. Clyde suggested the Commission could ask Janice Piccolo to create a QR Code Sign that could be put in local store windows inviting people to join the Constant Contact List. Chrmn. Van Wie felt that was a good idea, especially if the QR Code could be put up in time for the Fishawack Festival timeframe. Ms. Soteropoulos suggested that a QR Code Sign also be put up at the Farmer's Market. Chrmn. Van Wie will contact Janice Piccolo tomorrow about these QR Code suggestions.

On other matters, Chrmn. Van Wie reported that she and Dr. Clyde had dropped by Borough Hall today to give Margie Lowe a thank you present for all her years of hard work, particularly on the Green Team, Sustainable Jersey and the Farmer's Market. Ms. Lowe is leaving to take a position with the Borough of Florham Park. Dr. Clyde noted that a replacement for Ms. Lowe has not been hired yet. Ms. Soteropoulos offered to reach out to Council Member Resto about hiring someone to fill Ms. Lowe's position, who is familiar with Sustainable Jersey.

Energy Aggregation

Chrmn. Van Wie noted that Concord Consultants had given an informational presentation at the last Borough Council meeting on what an energy co-op is and how this process works. It's an opt-out only program. Every resident will be opted in. There will be a call center established that will handle the opt-outs. Residents who don't live in MacMansions, could opt up to green energy for an extra \$5.

Chrmn. Van Wie felt a push could be made for energy co-op sign-ups next Fishawack. There may not be enough time for this coming Fishawack in September.

Mr. Dorflinger's Climate Action Resolution

Chrmn. Van Wie reported that attorney review on this resolution has been postponed because the attorney had a death in his family. This attorney will also review the proposed ordinance to engage the energy consultant for the aggregation for the co-op for whatever co-op the Borough may join.

Chrmn. Van Wie had mentioned to Mr. Williams, the Borough Administrator, it would be good to have these issues resolved before the August 9th Council meeting.

EV Charging Ordinance

Chrmn. Van Wie reported that nothing has been heard back about this ordinance. However, she pointed out that Governor Murphy, in the interim, has signed a bill which approves EV chargers as an accessory use. Nothing has to be specifically done, zoning-wise, to install an EV charger. Chrmn. Van Wie felt strongly that the EV Charging Ordinance is still needed. It should be tailored and stream-lined for the Borough. However, she would like to do a comparison of the bill that was passed and the proposed ordinance for the Borough.

Ms. Robertson had two questions regarding the Energy Aggregation presentation. Has a comparison been done with other towns, when it comes to comparing old and new bills? Ms. Robertson also asked if there could be a two sentence explanation of Energy Aggregation that Commissioners could give to their neighbors. The explanation should also include the benefits of Energy Aggregation.

Chrmn. Van Wie agreed that was a good idea. If the consulting group does not have such an explanation, the Commission will probably craft one themselves. Chrmn. Van Wie suggested the term “energy aggregation” not be used when discussing this arrangement with fellow residents. The term “energy co-op” should be used instead. Also, it should be mentioned that at least 40 to 50 other towns have already embarked on this co-op arrangement.

Dr. Clyde suggested that the list of talking points regarding the energy co-op be listed on the Commission’s web page on the Borough website. In the Community Forum a mention could be made that these talking points are available on the Commission’s web page for residents to consider. Dr. Clyde and Chrmn. Van Wie noted that the Borough will need to reconcile the energy aggregation ordinance to what the State mandates. Chrmn. Van Wie will select the most salient parts of the ordinance and share them with Mr. Treloar.

Chrmn. Van Wie felt that the goal is to get the Energy Aggregation ordinance adopted in the next few months so this project can move ahead. She felt the feedback from the Borough Council was positive.

Electric Lawn Care

Chrmn. Van Wie reported that a small group session was held with the Chatham Borough Board of Health and representatives from the Environmental Commission on this matter. It appears that there is a great deal of interest in electric lawn care; however, no one seemed to want a ban put in place or an ordinance controlling this type of lawn care. Those in the group session would give a more educational standpoint on this matter. Chrmn. Van Wie reported that a stand will be set up next to the Commission’s table to demonstrate electric lawn equipment. Hopefully posters and educational literature will be on hand for the public.

Chrmn. Van Wie pointed out that the electric lawn equipment is not silent; however, this equipment, especially the leaf blowers are significantly quieter than diesel equipment. She has reached out to the Bradley Beach DPW Director, Biagio Cofone, where she had observed an electric lawn care demonstration. She has set up a phone conference with the Director Cofone, Council Member Resto, Steve Williams, Council Member Mathiasen, and herself. It is hoped that Tony Torello, our Public Works Director, will be able to participate.

Dr. Clyde pointed out that the public should be made aware of the health benefits that electric lawn care will provide.

Mr. Treloar believed that the Chatham DPW’s main concern will be the actual power that will be needed for this equipment.

Commissioners discussed how to obtain true, factual information on this equipment in order to deal with any questions and concerns the public may raise.

Chrmn. Van Wie clarified that the intention is to investigate the road map for the Chatham Borough DPW to possibly use electric lawn care. This issue has nothing to do with the residents themselves and their person property. However, residents will be invited to watch demos on electric lawn care on Fishawack Day.

Creative Arts/Culture Assets Inventory

Dr. Clyde reported that a council of 12 interested people have been formed. They are committed to working on this inventory. There is a possibility that local businesses will be included. Cate Hackett, a member of the Green Team subcommittee, is willing to organize an annual bulletin detailing our Creative Assets inventory. This project will be done over the summer. Ms. Hackett is hoping to have this bulletin ready in print for Fishawack Day. Dr. Clyde noted that Sustainable Jersey approved enough points for Chatham Borough to obtain silver certification. Sustainable Jersey wants Chatham to identify some specific arts areas. Perhaps Stanley Hall could be designated as an art center. Letters will be written to the Borough Council asking that this particular building be identified as an arts center. Janice Piccolo's office will be handling the scheduling of any events in Stanley Hall. An annual print document regarding this building will be given out on Fishawack Day, and made available at the Chatham Library and Senior Center.

Dr. Clyde announced that the Green Team will meet next Tuesday. It will be a virtual meeting. New members are needed for the Green Team.

Ms. Soteropoulos suggested Dr. Clyde post these membership openings on some of the Community Forums. Chrmn. Van Wie suggested that she and Dr. Clyde will work on a list of skill sets or passions that are currently needed on the Green Team.

Chrmn. Van Wie pointed that there is currently an opening for a full membership on the Environmental Commission. She asked Ms. Robertson, who currently serves as a First Alternate, to consider applying for this opening.

Ms. Robertson indicated that she was definitely interested in applying for the full membership position.

Chrmn. Van Wie will invite Janice Piccolo to the October 13th EC meeting. That meeting will focus on energy.

Dr, Clyde noted that the Green Team will discuss Fishawack Day activities at their upcoming meeting.

Chrmn. Van Wie touched base with Ms. Doyle on the Chatham train station initiative that she had been working on. Ms. Doyle had been looking to install special receptacles for cigarette smokers on the train platform. More people are starting to take the trains again. This matter will be revisited in the fall.

Dr. Clyde suggested that a Natural Resources Inventory be worked on in the fall also. A committee could be formed for this project.

Having technical difficulties, Ms. Robertson sent a message through Vice Chrmn. Soteropoulos that she will send an email about a zero waste presentation on 7/29.

At 9:03 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

There will be no Commission meeting in August.

The next Chatham Borough Environmental Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 8, 2021, 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Liz Holler
Recording Secretary

cc: Mayor Thaddeus Kobylarz
Chatham Township Environmental Commission