

CHATHAM BOROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

October 13, 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	

Also present:

Lisa Allocco, an interested resident

Public Comment

Mrs. Allocco noted that she is present tonight to see how she could fit in and possibly contribute to the Commission. Chrmn. Van Wie asked Mrs. Allocco to feel free to offer any comments during tonight's meeting.

Motion to Adopt Meeting Minutes

The September 9, 2021 EC meeting minutes were not voted on. They will be reviewed at the November meeting.

Reports/Pending Business

Fishawack success stories

Dr. Clyde discussed the Sustainability Fair which took place on the Saturday of the weekend-long Fishawack Festival. Dr. Clyde stated she would like to give special

thanks to Alison Slater, a member of the Green Team, for all her hard work for the Sustainability Fair. Ms. Slater had brought in Java Composting, which was stationed right next to Ms. Slater's Dish Company table. Dr. Clyde explained a QR game created by Ms. Slater for Festival attendees. Ms. Slater had also organized a gift basket for the game's winner. Dr. Clyde reported that Susie Robertson had worked hard to organize the EV display for the Sustainability Fair.

Dr. Clyde discussed the attractive Cultural Assets brochure created by Cate Hackett, illustrating the information collected by Owen Truppo last May for the Sustainable Jersey application.

Mr. Lampert discussed the electric leaf blower exhibit at the Quiet Communities exhibit he had participated in for the Fair. He felt that most people at the Fair were receptive to the message on these leaf-blowers given by the exhibit.

Chrmn. Van Wie and Mr. Treloar discussed how to further get the word out to the public about the benefits of using electric leaf-blowers. Perhaps Maddie Kaplan could be asked to do a short video clip to educate the public.

Dr. Clyde suggested that signage promoting electric leaf-blowers could be put on the side of the local DPW trucks, especially the large truck that sucks up the leaves. A conversation could be held with Tony Torello, the DPW Director, about the ways the Public Works Dept. could help promote electric blowers.

Mrs. Allocco asked if the Commission had a web site to encourage activities like electric leaf-blowing.

Mr. Lampert answered yes. He reviewed some of the items that are currently on that website, like the cut it & leave it document, regarding lawn mowing.

Chrmn. Van Wie told Mrs. Allocco about the activities of the sustainability group at Chatham High School. Lawn care has been a major focus for the past year. The CHS Green Team has looked into obtaining CVS grant funding to buy some electric lawn care equipment. Unfortunately, some push-back resulted. However, the CHS Green Team will continue to pursue this matter. The Green Team will be meeting next week. Chrmn. Van Wie said she will make sure the electric lawn care equipment remains on of her Green Team's missions.

Returning to the Fishawack Festival, Chrmn. Van Wie felt that Susie Robertson's EV Expo was an awesome success. Chrmn. Van Wie brought up the goals of

having 1600 of these EV vehicles on the road by 2025. She felt that there is a good chance that the number may go beyond 1600.

Commissioners discussed what is the current number of EV vehicles operating in the Borough. Chrmn. Van Wie believed there are between 300 and 400 “green vehicles” currently in Chatham Borough.

Summing up, Chrmn. Van Wie stated that the Commission should, as a group, needs to strategize everything they can do to promote EV driving.

Regarding the Chatham Borough charging station, Borough Administrator Steve Williams had contacted Chrmn. Van Wie today to inform her that the grant funding for this project has been guaranteed at this point. Mr. Williams will review the package tomorrow. Hopefully the charging station will be installed by the end of the year.

Dr. Clyde felt that once the Borough gets its charging station installed, and people see it, it will be a big incentive. Having a charging station installed on our Main Street will be a game-changer. Mr. Lampert added that a charging station would be an endorsement for the future.

Planning Board Liaison Report

Chrmn. Van Wie noted that the Planning Bd. has not met recently.

Dr. Clyde summarized what had transpired at the Council Meeting held last night, October 12th. One of the actions taken by the Borough Council was to renew the contract for the Post Office Plaza developer for another three months. Dr. Clyde noted that Post Office Plaza development is a very hot topic in the Borough right now, particularly the public housing aspect of it.

Chrmn. Van Wie pointed out that in regard to the Post Office Plaza project, the only upside of doing a project of this size with regard to the Environmental Commission, is whether some energy generation was created. Chrmn. Van Wie pointed out that a “net zero” development was currently being constructed in Madison Borough. She hoped Chatham Borough could emulate this action.

Concrete Steps to deal with Climate Change

Chrmn. Van Wie brought up the concept of everyone in Chatham Borough seriously working together on climate change. How could that be accomplished if

there is not even a road map of sorts in place? How would things change from a mind-set perspective to an actual physical process?

Mr. Dorflinger felt that a major move would be for people to no longer use fossil fuels. Another move is to eliminate the devices in the community that use fossil fuels.

Chrmn. Van Wie asked if that could ever be accomplished.

Mr. Treloar and Mr. Dorflinger thought that would require a major change in people's mindset.

Chrmn. Van Wie felt there had to be land somewhere in Chatham Borough where community solar paneling could be installed.

Dr. Clyde brought up the municipal fleets that could be changed. She pointed out the Borough Police Department received three new vehicles this year; however, they are not buying EVs. At least the Chatham Township Police Department have one hybrid vehicle. Dr. Clyde stressed that any new vehicles purchased, like police cars, should be environmentally sustainable purchases.

Chrmn. Van Wie noted that someone should give a compelling argument to the Borough Department heads that the next vehicle should be electric-powered. Obviously, fire trucks and police cars should not be electric-powered at this particular time; however, DPW vehicles and others could be.

After further discussion, Chrmn. Van Wie and Dr. Clyde decided to have a meeting with Steve Williams, the Borough Administrator, to review the Borough's fleet inventory. Dr. Clyde suggested Chrmn. Van Wie also speak with Sam Francis who is with Emergency Services. Mr. Francis would be a good spokesperson to encourage this change in the Borough fleet.

Dr. Clyde asked Mr. Dorflinger if he could find out if there is anyone on the County level who is using electric vehicles for their fleets.

Mr. Dorflinger agreed to look up that data; however, maybe we should investigate what is being done nation-wide. He felt Commissioners should propose a vehicle that could be customized to be a police vehicle. The Commission could then put forth an example of a community that has fulfilled this initiative of electric vehicles.

Chrmn. Van Wie clarified that she didn't necessarily mean an electric-powered patrol car. At this point, she felt there was a good chance that an electric-powered pick-up truck could be found for the Borough's DPW truck fleet. Commissioners should encourage all their friends to buy electric cars. A campaign could be started for this incentive.

Mrs. Allocco suggested the Traffic Enforcement Officer's vehicle could be the first one to change to electric power.

Mr. Treloar and Chrmn. Van Wie commented that was a good idea; however, that particular vehicle is brand new and probably won't be replaced for a long time.

Summing up, Chrmn. Van Wie noted that the Commission should think of ways to urge their fellow residents to buy electric cars. An EV campaign can get started. She will take the initiative to approach the town leaders in buying electric vehicles for Borough departments in the future; however, someone in authority should join her and the Commission in endorsing this much needed action.

Chrmn. Van Wie reported that she will write down the concrete goals that had been discussed tonight and will circulate them. The Commission could form subcommittees to try and make some of these goals a reality. She reported that Mayor Kobylarz had informed her that Energy Aggregation will be explored more thoroughly in the coming year.

Dr. Clyde suggested the Commission try to get on the Borough Council Agenda once each quarter to hold a discussion item on an issue, for instance this promoting of electric cars. This would make the Environmental Commission more visible and would give the residents a chance to listen to the issues being worked on by the Commission. Dr. Clyde recommended that Council Member Mathiasen be informed that the Commission would really like to reach the goal of 1600 electric vehicles owned and operated by residents.

Dr. Clyde announced that next week is the Annual ANJEC Conference. It will be a virtual event spread out over Monday through Friday. Borough Administrator Steve Williams will be handling the membership fees for this event. Commissioners can then pick and choose what talk would be of interest to them. The Green Team will also be invited to participate in this conference.

Dr. Clyde noted that she will pick up the Natural Resource Inventory for the Green Team.

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

The next Chatham Borough Environmental Commission Meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 10, 2021, 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Liz Holler
Recording Secretary

cc: Chatham Township Environmental Commission
Mayor Thaddeus Kobylarz