

CHATHAM BOROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

May 10, 2023

7:30 p.m.

Chrmn. Susan Robertson called this Regular Meeting of the Chatham Borough Environmental Commission to order at 7:30 p.m. in Room 301, Upper Level, Chatham Municipal Building. Mrs. Robertson read aloud the Statement of Adequate Notice. All legal notices have been posted for this meeting.

Name	Present	Absent
Susan Robertson, Chrmn.	X	
Pat Soteropoulos, Vice Chrmn.	X – present by conference phone	
Rozella Clyde	X	
Yana Doyle		X
Joseph Treloar	X	
Allison Slater	X – present by conference phone	
Nicholas Eck	X	
James Cashel		X
Lisa Allocco	X	
Council Member Karen Koronkiewicz	X	
Liz Holler, Recording Secretary	X	

Public Comment

There was none.

Motion to Adopt Meeting Minutes

Ms. Soteropoulos made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2023 EC Meeting. Council Member Koronkiewicz seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken. The minutes of March 8, 2023 were unanimously approved.

Reports/Pending Business

Borough Council Liaison Report – Council Member Koronkiewicz

Council Member Koronkiewicz reported that the Council passed the Budget yesterday. The request from the Commission was approved. Also, Borough Administrator Williams met with Adam Taylor from Talva Energy. They drove around the Borough looking for possible areas that could support solar paneling. The Chatham Ivy building being constructed on River Road would not be the best location in Mr. Taylor's opinion. Mr. Taylor will do a report on his findings on possible locations.

Chrmn. Robertson asked if there was any news from Jim Burnet of Madison. Council Member Koronkiewicz answered that the RFP for solar companies to bid for a PPA at the Joint Meeting went in last week.

Planning Board – Chrmn. Robertson

Chrmn. Robertson reported that the Board had recently heard an application proposing a minor subdivision at 142 No. Passaic Ave., and also proposing a small home on the subdivided lot. The new home will be similar in style with the other neighborhood homes. The Board approved the application. Chrmn. Robertson also reported that the Post Office Plaza Plans will be before the Board in June. Planning Board Chrmn. Favate will be organizing a subcommittee to review local zoning ordinances that need more clarifying language. The Environmental Checklist for the Land Use Boards, which had been suggested earlier in the year, is on Chrmn. Robertson's list for Fall 2023.

Earth Day Fair Wrap – Ms. Slater

Chrmn. Robertson reported the weather was beautiful for Earth Day. All age groups attended, particularly the parents of the students participating in the Fair. Council Member Mathiasen was on hand at the Fair with a display of future garbage can sizes. She also answered questions about the new garbage program. Representatives from the Environmental Commission gave information on waste reduction and composting.

Ms. Slater stated she would like the Earth Day Fair to continue to evolve and become a real community event. Some thought should be given as to whether to keep this event outdoors, or at least be prepared for bad weather in the future. Organizers should designate a rain date. Ms. Slater suggested more ways to bring people into future fairs. Perhaps food trucks could be invited next time. She will continue to reach out to local businesses to take on green practices in the HGAY initiative. Ms. Slater felt that this year was more successful than last year.

Commissioners were curious to know how many people attended the Earth Day Fair. Around 200 was the estimated attendance. Regarding another feature of Earth Month, Chrmn. Robertson reviewed the number of people who had viewed the photo/clips of Chatham personalities doing green activities for the "Take One Step" campaign. The Facebook insight data showed promising outreach numbers. For example, 540 people viewed the composting clip of Mayor Conley at Java's drop-off site. Ms. Slater and the Commission discussed having interns helping out the next time.

Regarding the intern idea, Dr. Clyde pointed out that the Sustainability Fair will be held on September 23rd. CHS interns, interested in green activities, could be invited to help with this event.

Chrmn. Robertson noted that Mayor Kobylarz had given a speech recognizing the students who had helped out with the Earth Day Fair. Many parents of these teens attended the Fair and this ceremony.

Chrmn. Robertson asked Commissioners to submit any invoices from the Earth Day event to her. Also, a write-up needs to be done about the event for Sustainable Jersey. The door prize winner at the Earth Day Fair was Ian Haas.

Dr. Clyde reported on the list of residents who have expressed an interest in the Green Team. Twenty-six individuals were on the list.

A discussion on how to utilize this list and to engage new volunteers was discussed under the “Green Team” part of the meeting.

Garden Park & Memorial Park Native gardens – Mr. Treloar, Chrmn. Robertson

Chrmn. Robertson reported that the Garden Club worked in six shifts to install the plants at the two new garden sites. Mr. Treloar was kind enough to help.

Mr. Treloar noted that 200 plants were put in. So far they look healthy. He believed the DPW has these plantings on their list for watering.

Regarding plantings, Chrmn. Robertson is waiting to hear if the EC will get a grant for \$1500 from the ANJEC Open Space grant program.

Green Team report

Dr. Clyde gave out copies of the spreadsheet created by Shannon in Community Services. It is entitled “Sustainable Jersey Actions”. Dr. Clyde felt that Shannon will probably follow the same process her predecessor, Margie Lowe, had done in collecting the needed SJ info into a folder.

Dr. Clyde reported that she had six new people interested in the Green Team. Chrmn. Robertson suggested not holding a Green Team meeting on SJ until possibly November. She did not want these volunteers to burn out.

Dr. Clyde felt that a good relationship could be built with these volunteers if a meeting was held to explain what Sustainable Jersey is and the requirements of SJ. The people who already are familiar with SJ won’t be asked to attend, just the new people who have expressed an interest.

Mr. Eck appreciated Dr. Clyde’s point; however, trying to explain something like the SJ Actions spreadsheet to newcomers may overwhelm them. The Commission should just pick out what tasks these volunteers could really help with.

Chrmn. Robertson felt that people’s free time should be respected. She asked Ms. Soteropoulos for her thoughts on this.

Ms. Soteropoulos recalled that, in the past, Green Team meetings were just called as “action meetings” when something tangible was in the works and required attention. Most Commissioners were of the opinion that Zoom meetings in the evening should be avoided until there were substantive tasks to be discussed and ready to be acted on. Meetings will be on an “ad hoc” basis until closer to SJ submission (Oct. 23 – Feb. 24).

Mr. Treloar asked if there were any requirements as to how many Green Team meetings need to be held. Commissioners said no.

Ms. Slater suggested a meeting be held between EC representatives and Janice Piccolo in Community Services. The EC reps could review with Mrs. Piccolo the SJ projects that need

attention, the number of volunteers that would be needed, and the time line that could be followed.

Chrmn. Robertson suggested that in place of the Green Team meeting on May 16th, she and Dr. Clyde will meet in person with Mrs. Piccolo and Shannon McCarty to discuss how to proceed with Sustainable Jersey work. They will report back to the Commission on what transpired.

EC Table at Fishawack Festival – June 10, 2023

Chrmn. Robertson suggested the Commission set up the same displays that were used for the Earth Day Fair and establish time slots for EC members to staff the table. Specific plans will be firmed up by email among EC members.

Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI)

Chrmn. Robertson reported that the Commission did not get the grant for \$20,000 from the PSE & G Foundation; however, the Borough has included a budget for this project. A complete version of the existing ERI document has been obtained. Chrmn. Robertson will be doing a press release on the ERI. The public will be invited to help organize it after Mr. Cashel finishes his work on the first draft.

GSWA Native Plant Sale wrap-up

Mr. Eck reported that the Sale went very well. Two car-loads of plants were picked up on Saturday morning, May 6th. That equated to about 25 flats of plants that were distributed to the people who had put in orders. There are some left-overs at the Great Swamp Greenhouse if Commissioners are interested in purchasing for their own gardens.

Tri-Town Yard Sale wrap-up

Chrmn. Robertson noted that the original date for this yard sale was cancelled due to the serious rainfall that day. It was re-scheduled to May 6th. Chrmn. Robertson reported that in the six events partnering with GSWA, \$4,600 have been raised for the Great Swamp. The autumn Tri-Town Sale will be held on September 30th.

Repair Café

Chrmn. Robertson reported that preliminary discussions on a Tri-Town Repair Café with Madison and Chatham Township have been held. Watch for future details on an event proposed for October 14th.

EC Retreat

Chrmn. Robertson said she would like the Commissioners to informally get together to discuss what they would like to accomplish on the Commission. She was not sure how this would work out with the requirements of the Sunshine Law.

Mr. Eck and Mr. Treloar suggested the EC ask the Borough Attorney on the best way to handle a gathering like this. If a quorum of Commissioners met informally like this, it is possible a violation may occur.

On other matters, Chrmn. Robertson reported that Mrs. Doyle has a very full schedule and will be taking a leave of absence from EC & GT until Fall.

EV Chargers

In answer to an inquiry made by Dr. Clyde, Chrmn. Robertson and Mr. Treloar will research the Borough finances regarding the installation of EV chargers in town. Chrmn. Robertson just attended a Sustainable Jersey presentation on this and will explore the funding sources provided.

At 8:42 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

The next Chatham Borough Environmental Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, 7:30 p.m., Room 301, Chatham Municipal Building.

Respectfully submitted:

Liz Holler
Recording Secretary