

The meeting of the Chatham Township Environmental Commission convened at 7:20 pm on Tuesday, October 6, 2015 at the Township Municipal Building. In attendance were CTEC members Steve Carroll, Frank Esposito, Maureen Kelly, Marilyn Murray, Dot Stillinger and Township Committee Liaison Karen Swartz. Absent George Crimmins, Matt Palmer, and Don Travisano. Also present was Katie Ellis, Watershed Ambassador, David Workman, Sabina Workman and John Nelson (all residents of Susan Drive).

CTEC'S PURPOSE: To undertake projects and make recommendations concerning the protection or use of natural resources, including water resources and air quality, located within or directly affecting Chatham Township.

The Chatham Township Environmental Commission's goal is to provide a responsible environmental viewpoint to Township committees and boards and to undertake projects with a strong educational component in order to inform officials and residents about constructive actions that can be taken to preserve the environment.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT - The meeting schedule for 2015 and January 2016 is posted on the main bulletin board at the Township municipal building and on the Chatham Township website at www.chathamtownship.org. The public is cordially invited to attend all meetings, join the discussions and participate in projects.

DATES FOR CTEC AND GREEN TEAM MEETINGS IN 2015 AND JANUARY 2016

Every first or second Tuesday February through December 2015 and the second Tuesday in January 2016.

Dates are: February 3, March 3, April 7, May 5, June 9, July NO MEETING, August MEETING CANCELED, September 8, October 6, November 10, December 1 in 2015 and January 12, 2016.

Frank Esposito motioned to approve the CTEC and Green Team meeting calendar for 2016-2017 and Steve Carroll 2nd with all in favor.

DATES FOR CTEC AND GREEN TEAM MEETINGS IN 2016 AND JANUARY 2017

Every first or second Tuesday February through December 2016 and the second Tuesday in January 2017.

Dates are: February 2, March 1, April 5, May 3, June 14, July NO MEETING, August 2, September 6, October 4, November 1, December 6 in 2016 and January 10 in 2017.

Frank Esposito motioned to approve the June 9, 2015 CTEC and Green Team minutes and Steve Carroll 2nd with all in favor.

Steve Carroll motioned to approve the September 8, 2015 meeting notes, as a quorum was not present, and Dot Stillinger 2nd with all in favor.

RESIDENT CONCERNS

David Workman, Sabina Workman, 19 Susan Drive and John Nelson, 15 Susan Drive expressed their concerns regarding a new home recently built, located at 23 Susan Drive along with a large retaining wall, height and lot coverage. The house is built higher than all homes located on Susan Drive, which is out of character. The proposed plans were approved by the Board of Adjustment. The back of the property has a conservation easement and drywells. Mr. Workman, Mrs. Workman and Mr. Nelson expressed that they are looking for relief and support. Mr. Workman stated that Gov. Christie's office suggested that he reach out to the Environment Commission. Dot Stillinger, CTEC Chair explained that as an advisory committee, they can review the conservation easement, and as a public committee, listen to the public's concerns. Mrs. Stillinger stated that they will do a site visit of the conservation easement and report the findings. This is a learning concern regarding steep slopes, which needs to be taken seriously.

GREEN TEAM MEETING (8:37-8:52) S. Carroll, Green Team Chair and CTEC Vice Chair.

Sustainable Jersey Action Re-certification submitted June 5, 2015 with 180 points for bronze status; 150 points are required; waiting on confirmation from Sustainable Jersey.

Sustainability Fair, Saturday, Sept. 12th was held next to the farmers market, due to location, this event was a huge success. Steve stated that he will not lead the 2018 sustainable jersey program.

HOLIDAY TREE DONATION

Reviewed a handout from “Back to Nature Home & Garden”, an ecologically-minded and community-focused garden center in Basking Ridge, regarding a Holiday Tree Giveaway program.

CTEC felt that this company should contact the schools. This could also be publicized on CTEC website.

REPORT ON INVASIVE REMOVAL AT SOUTHERN BLVD SCHOOL

M. Palmer, Chair, Invasive Species Subcommittee

Southern Blvd School playground edge was bulldozed by the School District on July 28 and grass seed was spread and watered, with the intention of maintaining the area regularly to help keep the invasive plants away from the playground. Maintaining by mower should help alleviate the previous problem.

PILGRIM PIPELINE

Karen Swartz reported from a meeting with a PSE&G representative and was assured, that they have no intention of granting use of its right-of-way in Chatham Twp.

- Township Committee approved an ordinance to prohibit unregulated pipelines carrying hazardous liquids.
- Pipeline page on Chatham Township website at <http://www.chathamtownship-nj.gov/pipeline/index.html>.

TREE PROJECT

The remaining trees will become the property of the Morris County Soils Conservation District.

APPLICATION/ENVIRONMENTAL PERMIT REVIEW

- Golden River Homes, LLC, 11 Sunset Drive, Block 61 lot 16. Complete 6/13/2014. Application to the Board of Adjustment for steep slope variance. The lot is vacant and slopes steeply down toward Fairmount Ave. Memo sent to Board of Adjustment on August 20, 2014 was approved by CTEC. Special meeting of the BOA on November 12.
- 35 Susan Drive application approved by the Board of Adjustment in May. Long list of requirements including an interesting one allowing cooperation among adjacent lot owners when building retaining walls. This was done on two lots on Ormont Drive A conservation easement on the steep slopes is required. CLOSED.
- 43 Susan Drive, Mariam Vaziri, Block: 20 Lot: 15. Front yard , steep slope, height of principal building, setback distance of a structural retaining wall and maximum height of a structural retaining wall variances to construct a single family dwelling. Continuation.. On the BOA agenda for 10-14-15.

REPORTS

- Township Committee and Board of Health liaison – Karen Swartz

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS SIDEWALKS REPORTED

Lafayette & Spring Street sidewalk presentation by Township Engineer John Ruschke at the next Township Committee meeting Thursday, Oct 8. CTEC concerns include environment and pedestrian safety, type of sidewalk, tree replacement, native species.

- Open Space Committee

Marilyn Murray, Open Space liaison.

GIRALDA PARK

Marilyn Murray reported that an Eagle Scout project for installing benches will take place.

Open Space Committee is working on a trail for Averett property to present to the Township Committee.

Sue Hoag resigned from Open Space.

- Communications Committee

F. Esposito, Chair.

- Any EC member wanting to post material on the EC website should forward the items to F. Esposito who will work with Township Web administrator Tom Salvas.

- Recycling Committee

F. Esposito, Chair, and M. Murray

Frank Esposito reported that the MUA stated that the Township must provide coverage for the paper recycling at Tanglewood.

- Community Education and Outreach Committee.

F. Esposito, Chair.

Frank will visit the high school and report back on the Rocket composter.

NOTES AND DISCUSSION

- What is the Township position on keeping bees? Bees are becoming stressed. The Morris County Mosquito Commission routinely sprays Bti from airplanes on many waterbodies in the county. Note that Roundup is once again considered a carcinogen by the FDA.

- Updated Environmental Commission enabling ordinance

Review the draft of the proposed updated ordinance. The current Township environmental commission ordinance was adopted in 1968 immediately after the State of New Jersey first passed a law enabling environmental commissions. The State subsequently refined its statute. The proposed updated Chatham Township ordinance conforms to current State law, includes the ANJEC recommendation to remove the provision that ECs can acquire property, includes a couple of changes found in the ordinances of other towns, and alters language to be gender-neutral (“he” to “he or she”). G. Crimmins.

- Wells in the Township

- Online information from the NJDEP.

- New and very good NJDEP website for maps, parcels and environmental information at NJ-GeoWeb, <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/gis/geoweb splash.htm>. Use Internet Explorer, not Chrome.

- Very good Morris County mapping utility at <http://morrisgisapps.co.morris.nj.us/apps/parcelsearcher.html>, hit Map or Advanced Data Search. Gives information about each parcel and has aerials layer.

- Discussion about requiring subdivision and site plans and related documents to be submitted in pdf format. If that happens CTEC should be on the list to receive all pdf plans and documents. Currently the township requires applicants to submit 25 paper copies of every sheet and document, which amounts to a large stack of paper and is costly for the applicant.

- Possible projects for grants. Trails on the Green Village Pond Conservation Area.

- Waiting for the report card from Joe Dunn of the Morris County Soil Conservation District (www.mcsd.org/) on how Chatham Township is doing on its soil and sediment erosion control. Chatham Township, by means of its lot grading plan requirement, is one of four Morris County towns that assumes the responsibility for soil and erosion management instead of leaving it to the county.

- Note final Comprehensive Conservation Plan for Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. Option B was chosen. Hunting, including for turkeys, will be allowed, but no horses (riding, not hunting). Management areas will be consolidated into larger but fewer parcels. Public meetings were held in June. Read the Plan at http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Great_Swamp/what_we_do/conservation.html.

RECENT LETTERS SENT

- January, 2015. Letter to PSE&G urging denial of permission to use their ROW for the proposed Pilgrim pipeline.

- February, 2015. Memo to Board of Adjustment concerning The Farm at Green Village suggesting conditions on the approval to better protect wetlands.

- March 2015. Memo to NJDEP urging oversight of JCP&L contractors doing vegetation removal in ROWs. Letter of support to NJDEP in support of GSWA’s application for a 319 grant for storm water remediation at Seaton Hackney.

- April, 2015. Memo to Planning Board noting more than double the existing impervious cover proposed for a subdivision on Rose Terrace.

- May, 2015. Letter to NJDEP urging caution in granting permits to Verizon for communication equipment at the base of a PSE&G tower on Southern Boulevard because of nearby wetlands. Memo to Board of Adjustment suggesting a conservation easement on steep slopes on a Susan Drive parcel.

MAIL RECEIVED

- Minutes of meetings of Long Hill Environmental Commission.
- Notices and flyers.

ADJOURN 9:54

Carolyn Scannelli