

WWT ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

February 9, 2023

The February 2023 meeting of the WWT Environmental Commission was held on Thursday, February 9, 2023 via Zoom with Ephraim Buhks calling the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE-

Pursuant to the Sunshine Law, a notice of this meeting's date, time, place and agenda was mailed to the news media, posted on the Township bulletin board, and filed with the Municipal Clerk.

ROLL CALL

Members: E. Buhks; E. Gordon; S. Parratt; L. Katz;
Liaison: D. Dobromilsky Advisors: D. Parris Council Liaison: S. Gawas
Guests: Andrea Mandel, WWT Council Member; L. Geevers, WWT Council Member
A. Bansal, Girl Scout

PUBLIC COMMENT – A. Bansal, a Girl Scout, gave an update on her Girl Scout project for the installation of small outdoor libraries at WWCP, which would include meditation or reading areas. She has received approval for her project proposal and will be actively coordinating with S. Parratt to install one of the libraries at the Rain Garden near the skate park.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: August 11, 2022 S. Parratt motioned; L. Katz seconded;
Minutes were approved as presented.

CONTINUING BUSINESS: Project Review/Update:

Community Park Pollinator and Rain Garden – S. Parratt, Rutgers Master Gardener and WWT resident, gave a brief update on the Rain and Pollinator Gardens. Additional eastern red cedars will be planted along the skate park to complete the fence line and a few will be incorporated in the field in the spring. He will continue coordinating with A. Bansal on the inclusion of one of the libraries from her Girl Scout award project to be installed in a central location between the two gardens. He potted native seedlings in his home to initiate inventory on hand for routine maintenance and the installation of a meadow within community park which will commence in the spring. Information will be shared with EC members as the schedule is determined so volunteer efforts can be coordinated.

Arbor Day – D. Dobromilsky reported that the Arbor Day Celebration will take place on April 29, 2023 at 9:30am at the Ronald R. Rogers Arboretum. The Shade Tree Commission will host its annual Art Contest with submissions to be on display and prizes to be awarded at the event. This year's theme is the "Tree Outside My Window." There will also be educational presentations on spotted lantern flies, tree planting and maintenance, tree sapling giveaways, Scout presentations on their projects and the annual proclamation by the Mayor. He has proposed to STC for the potential of EC to utilize this event as an inclusion with Mercer County Sustainability Coalition's Greening Together.

Greening Together 2023 – E. Buhks provided a brief overview of Mercer County Sustainability Coalition's Greening Together in which municipalities from throughout Mercer County organize a weeklong Earth Week celebration that provides an opportunity for residents to learn from other local stewards, Green Teams, and experts about best practices for protecting our natural resources and living sustainably. Events include local stream and park clean-ups, tree plantings, a lineup of virtual activities, panel discussions, presentations on climate change, and safe outdoor activities. E. Buhks will contact FOWWOS to determine what events are being discussed for this year and will report back to EC as information becomes available.

Planning Board – A. Baig was unable to attend the meeting. D. Dobromilsky reported two applications were heard at the February 1, 2023 PB meeting. The Edinburg Animal Hospital building, PB22-04, located on Old Trenton road had been purchased by a new veterinarian recently and was seeking to construct a small addition

to the building. It was approved with the condition that confirmation will be provided pertaining to conservation areas on the property being properly maintained. The space located at Nassau Park which was previously occupied by Walmart is being split into two separate commercial spaces. Floor & Décor Outlets, PB22-07, wishes to occupy 76,283 s.f. of the 1-story building and proposed to make minor modifications to the exterior by adding a new loading dock, making improvements to the parking lot, and installing customary signage. These changes were approved. PB planner is reviewing the Conservation Plan Element of the Master Plan for changes and will be seeking review and input from EC once available prior to approval by the PB.

Township Council Update –S. Gawas stated she would be away for the next few weeks and thanked A. Mandel for reporting EC business back to the township council while she is away. The next phase of the Cranbury Road Sidewalk Improvement Project will be presented for approval at the next township council meeting. This is the final phase of this ongoing project for sidewalk installation located on Cranbury Road. There was additional discussion of the recurring Sidewalk Maintenance project provided by the township when budgetary constraints allow for the replacement or maintenance of sidewalks damaged due to street trees throughout the township.

Solar Energy – H. Shankar was unable to attend the meeting in person but provided an update on the solar project she has been working on to E. Buhks. He reported that she is continuing to work with D. Dobromilsky and the WWT Engineering Department to review information obtained from several companies. Information will be presented at a future meeting as available.

Energy Efficiency – L. Katz reported that he is currently reviewing the Energy Efficiency element of the Sustainable Jersey Recertification application to determine goals for the next recertification process in 2025. He will discuss details of the recent renovations and updates to the municipal building with D. Dobromilsky to determine if any could be utilized in the next submission process. E. Buhks suggested reviewing new federal laws reflecting inflation and energy efficiency which could provide potential rebates and tax credits for solar installation.

MLK DAY, Human Relations Council – E. Buhks reported that the WWT Human Relations Council held a day of service on January 16, 2023 at the Liquid Church with speakers and performers to celebrate the life and contributions of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in a Multicultural Program of Hope. EC member, E. Gordon, was among the speakers included at the event where he discussed and provided photographs he personally took while in attendance at the iconic event in 1963. E. Buhks stated approximately 200 people attended the event including the WWT mayor, several members of WWT Council, and EC members.

Recycling – I. Singh was unable to attend the meeting this month. He will provide an update at a future meeting. D. Dobromilsky reported that the Recycling Coordinator informed him of upcoming Dumpster Day and Shredding events that will take place in WWT and he will share the information with EC members. The information should also be available on the township website. A. Mandel reminded members to utilize the Recycle Coach app which also contains very helpful information and features.

NEW BUSINESS:

Township Flood Ordinance Revisions – D. Dobromilsky reported that a draft ordinance has been proposed for review for the Flood Plain Management Regulations of West Windsor Township. This proposed township ordinance pertains to the federal government's review of state floodplain regulations as they pertain to the Uniform Construction Code and building permits and the identification of some discrepancies in local township ordinances. The NJDEP was requested to coordinate with these municipalities to update and synchronize their township ordinances to make them compliant with the National Flood Insurance Program. The NJDEP provided two models, a coastal version and a riverine version, which could be used as a template and modified to best fit each local municipality. The WWT Engineer utilized the riverine version and made revisions as necessary to best fit WWT. A. Mandel stated that the Township Engineer has submitted this revised version to NJDEP for their review and approval. Once that has been obtained the document will then be submitted to TC for introduction at a TC meeting and eventual adoption. D. Dobromilsky stated EC member A. Baig submitted a review report recommending the EC endorse the document for approval by TC.

L. Katz motioned to approve the endorsement of the proposed Draft Floodplain Management Ordinance as recommended in Commissioner Baig's review report pending approval by the NJDEP. It was seconded by E. Gordon and approved by a voice vote.

Discussion – In-Person Meetings: S. Gawas reported that all conference rooms in the municipal building are equipped with screens and Wi-Fi capability so there is the potential to incorporate a technical aspect into the meeting. D. Dobromilsky responded that he was informed by township staff that the technical aspect currently available would only provide a live stream of the in-person meeting to be viewable by the public but would not allow those members of the public to interact in the meeting. In order to participate in the meeting, the commission members or public individuals would still need to attend in person. S. Parratt suggested that having the meetings via the online platform allows for a broader audience to attend as well as being more environmentally conscious with less travel requirement, After some discussion regarding room capacities, ease of attendance by meeting participants, and available technology, it was determined that EC meetings would continue via zoom at this time.

Motion to adjourn by S. Parratt, seconded by E. Gordon. Meeting was adjourned at 9:02pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Samantha Tomaro, Administrative Secretary
WWT Environmental Commission