

WWT ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

June 8, 2023

The June 2023 meeting of the WWT Environmental Commission was held on Thursday, June 8, 2023 via Zoom with Ephraim Buhks calling the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

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; I. Singh; H. Shankar;
Liaison: D. Dobromilsky Council Liaison: S. Gawas
Guests: Andrea Mandel, President Agriya B., Girl Scout
Eleni Litt, Rutgers Steward

PUBLIC COMMENT – Agriya B., a Girl Scout, provided the EC with an update on her project for the installation of small outdoor libraries incorporated into a meditation garden at WW Community Park. She has received final approval for the project and is preparing to move forward with the next step to determine the exact installation location, take measurements of the space and begin designing the library. She will coordinate to meet with S. Parratt and D. Dobromilsky to coordinate this next phase. She anticipates the construction of the libraries to be completed by the end of the summer with the continuation of the project into early fall. E. Buhks thanked her for providing the update and invited her to provide a progress report at a future EC meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Tabled due to technical issues.

CONTINUING BUSINESS: Project Review/Update:

Community Park Gardens and Meadow – S. Parratt stated that both gardens have been weeded, edged and seasonal signage has been updated. D. Dobromilsky will coordinate with DPW to remove the clippings. S. Parratt is exploring more sophisticated and durable signage options for the future and will discuss it further with D. Dobromilsky to determine if EC funding could be applied. Two of the Eastern Red Cedar trees he planted have died and he plans to replace them as well as add additional ones in the fall. He recently implemented two separate smothering methods at his home. He will evaluate the results to determine which method would be best utilized for his current proposed project to create and install a wildflower meadow in Community Park. If successful, he will determine a schedule to plant the wildflower seeds. H. Shankar recommended sharing information on the gardens and meadow on social media to raise awareness and reach a broader audience. S. Gawas suggested utilizing the township's website as a permanent platform with full information and then sharing a link on the township's Facebook page to inform community members of the project's existence as well as the availability of additional information. A. Mandel and S. Gawas volunteered to accomplish this task.

Planning Board – A. Baig was unable to attend the meeting. D. Dobromilsky reported that the next PB meeting on June 14, 2023 will include the next concept hearing on PB20-08 Penns Neck Plaza located at Washington Road and Route 1.

Master Plan Conservation Plan Element Update – The EC working group has met with D. Dobromilsky three times to review the Conservation Plan Element of the WWT Master Plan. They plan to have a draft version available for members within the next week to review and provide revisions if necessary at the July EC meeting. D. Dobromilsky requested that all EC members make a conscious effort to attend the meeting so a quorum can be met. Once approved by EC it will be forwarded to the PB for their review and approval before being submitted for final township council approval.

Township Council Update – S. Gawas reported the public hearing for the 2023 municipal budget was held on May 22, 2023 and the budget was approved. The EC has been involved in Community Day in collaboration with the township in previous years and is invited to participate again. The event will take place on September

23, 2023 and any EC members or volunteers are encouraged to join, develop activities, and provide information as applicable. The Dive Into Summer event is scheduled for June 23, 2023 at Water Works in WWT Community Park. This is located near the pollinator and rain gardens therefore information could be shared with participants to generate awareness and encourage visitation. A. Mandel stated that three robotics teams who competed at different world championship levels this year will be honored and presented with proclamations at the next TC meeting on June 12, 2023. Each team has been invited to share their robots at a small public expo to be held before the meeting. Any interested EC member is invited to attend.

Solar Lighting – H. Shankar reported she recently the local recycling event which provided information to attendees on acceptable or unacceptable items for recycling in WWT. Additionally, small seed packets were being distributed to encourage residents to participate in an environmental activity. Unfortunately, several species included were non-native plants. She suggested the EC research if there is an option to incorporate the idea at future events utilizing only seeds from native plants. D. Dobromilsky volunteered to see if such an option exists.

H. Shankar stated she continued to gather information, with assistance from D. Dobromilsky, on her solar lighting project which would utilize small-scale solar lights to illuminate various park signs and areas around WWT. She will share the comparison chart with EC members for their review and input to determine which option to purchase. She will continue to update the EC as progress is made, such as the purchase is completed, anticipated installation and whether the project is successful.

Recycling – I. Singh shared his presentation on information he obtained regarding the negative impacts fireworks can have on the environment. After some discussion, it was determined to utilize the information in a pamphlet or flyer to be distributed on a general basis as well as potentially included when the township receives permit requests for fireworks displays. S. Gawas and A. Mandel suggested he look to see if there is specific information or regulations implemented in New Jersey that could be used as a template and incorporated. The presentation or flyer could be posted online as well to educate residents when utilizing fireworks for private entertainment.

Memorial Day – E. Gordon shared a presentation that included photos he took at the recent WWT Memorial Day celebration. S. Gawas commented positively on the number of community residents in attendance and the ability to enjoy a small return to normality after the past few years.

Environmental Science News – E. Buhks shared some articles on environmental issues and topics he had come across recently that EC members may want to read. He will continue to share additional resources and information that may interest EC members as he finds them.

Motion to adjourn by I. Singh, seconded by S. Parratt. Meeting was adjourned at 9:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Samantha Tomaro, Administrative Secretary
WWT Environmental Commission