

WWT ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

July 13, 2023

The July 2023 meeting of the WWT Environmental Commission was held on Thursday, July 13, 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; H. Shankar;
Liaison: D. Dobromilsky Council Liaison: S. Gawas
Guests: Andrea Mandel, WWT Council President Aaliya J., Girl Scout
David Novak, Planning Consultant

PUBLIC COMMENT – Aaliya J, WWT Girl Scout, gave a presentation on her proposed Girl Scout Gold award project addressing the declining bee population throughout New Jersey by installing a Bee Garden in Zaitz Park preserve. The garden will consist of approximately 150 native plants designed to attract pollinators such as honeybees. The overall project will incorporate providing needed maintenance to an adjacent existing pollinator garden previously installed by another girl scout as well as compliment bee boxes previously installed by a boy scout. She would hope to begin installation by late summer and commence in October 2023. At that time, she would incorporate an educational element of the project by providing instructional courses at the local library on the importance of bees and how individuals can install bee gardens at their own homes. She is anticipating a completion date for the project in June 2024. E. Gordon suggested incorporating information on the usage of pesticides, specifically their impact on the bee population and some alternative suggestions that residents can utilize instead. E. Buhks thanked Aaliya for her presentation and looks forward to receiving a status update at a future EC meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: December 10, 2022 S. Parratt motioned; L. Katz seconded;
Minutes were approved as presented.

January 12, 2023 S. Parratt motioned; E. Gordon seconded;
Minutes were approved as presented.

CONTINUING BUSINESS:

Master Plan Conservation Plan Element Draft Review – E. Buhks thanked the members of the EC working group that have coordinated with D. Dobromilsky to review and assist in updating the Conservation Plan Element. D. Novak, the township Planning Consultant, gave a background, description of the purpose and an overview of master plan documents and how they are used to provide a blueprint for current municipality development and future improvements. Multiple elements, or chapters, make up a master plan and address various topics such as Land Use, Historic Preservation, Open Space and Transportation. He stated the Conservation Plan Element is a large document consisting of numerous sections including Environmental Resource Inventory, Air Quality, Hydrology, Soils, Vegetation and Wildlife Habitats, Greenbelt, Waste Management and Recycling, Wetlands, and Cultural Sites. D. Dobromilsky stated he sent the draft version to EC members for their review before the meeting and welcomed feedback at this time. S. Parratt inquired how members of the public would review the document and provide feedback. D. Dobromilsky stated this is a Planning Board document therefore, it will be made available online for public access before a scheduled PB public hearing at which they could provide feedback. E. Buhks inquired how extensive the revisions were since the last update the element received in 2002. D. Novak replied that the largest revisions pertained to the addition of an introductory section including a climate change component, updating the air quality component, land use/land cover, and invasive species and flood management impacts. Additionally, graphic components of the document were updated and it will continue to receive grammatical changes as necessary. D. Dobromilsky

shared a resolution drafted endorsing the 2023 WWT Conservation Plan Update to the Planning Board and Township Council for final approval. S. Parratt suggested a spelling correction in the title. L. Katz motioned to approve the resolution. It was seconded by S. Parratt and approved unanimously by a roll call vote.

Project Review/Update:

Community Park Gardens and Meadow – S. Parratt stated that several EC members met with Agriya to continue planning and developing her Girl Scout project to incorporate a Contemplation Garden within the area. He provided an update on the status of the Pollinator and Rain gardens. The deer have inflicted damage to several plant populations resulting in them being significantly reduced or eliminated. He will utilize this information while evaluating and choosing which plants to incorporate in his current proposed project to create and install a wildflower meadow in Community Park. Girl Scout volunteers assisted in mulching the recently planted Eastern Red Cedars to prevent township mowers from getting too close and causing damage. E. Buhks thanked S. Parratt for all his continuous efforts on the projects and reminded him to request assistance from other EC members and community residents whenever feasible.

Planning Board – A. Baig was unable to attend the meeting. D. Dobromilsky reported that the WWT Arts Council has received a small grant to install an open-air porch on the back of the building. The application will be presented to the PB for approval at a future meeting.

Township Council Update – S. Gawas reported the Township Council presented a proclamation to the Farmers Market to commemorate 20 years of service to the community. The Cranbury Road Sidewalk Project was recently completed after several years. Community residents participated in an inaugural walk to acknowledge the completion of the project. The Historical Society will be hosting a Craft Bazar at the Schenck Farm where numerous vendors can sell their handmade crafts on Saturday, July 15, 2023. Due to inclement weather, the Dive Into Sumer event was postponed to August 11, 2023 at Waterworks in Community Park. National Night Out will be held on August 1, 2023 if EC Members are interested in coordinating a table at the event with Township Council as well as Girl Scout volunteers and presentations. Community Day is scheduled for September 23, 2023, with a rain date of September 24, 2023. A. Mandel stated National Drive Electric week will again coordinate with the EV presentation at Community Day.

Solar Lighting – H. Shankar stated she has been able to obtain quotes from two separate vendors. D. Dobromilsky suggested she request some additional information from one of the vendors. Once the information is obtained, she will forward all the details to the EC members for their review and input before a purchase decision is made. This is a pilot project to install two solar lights on signs within the community parks. D. Dobromilsky stated the approximate cost for the total project is \$1,000 and EC budget funds can be utilized for this purpose.

NEW BUSINESS:

Meeting Cancellation - After some discussion, it is determined to cancel the August meeting to accommodate several planned EC members' vacations and scheduling conflicts during the summer months. If pertinent documents or events need review or discussion, EC members will communicate electronically.

Motion to adjourn by S. Parratt, seconded by L. Katz. Meeting was adjourned at 9:07pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Samantha Tomaro, Administrative Secretary
WWT Environmental Commission