

KINGWOOD TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes

December 21, 2021

7:30 pm

Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the Environmental Commission was called to order by Chair Debbie Kratzer at 7:33 pm. The below Notice Requirements were read aloud.

Notice Requirements

Adequate notice of this meeting was provided in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act and published in the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Courier News on February 11, 2021. A copy of this Meeting notice was telefaxed to the Express Times and posted in the Kingwood Township Municipal Building on February 12, 2021.

In order to ensure full public participation in this meeting, all members of this Commission, and also members of the public are requested to speak only when recognized by the Chair so that there is no simultaneous discussion or over talk, and further, all persons are requested to utilize the microphones which are provided for your use by the Township. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Due to the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic this meeting was conducted by a virtual Zoom meeting. Information on the meeting notice was posted on the Kingwood Township website.

Roll Call

Present

Maureen Syrnick
Debbie Kratzer
Sandra McNicol
Lois Voronin
Gail Ashley
Mara Tippet
Ralph Celebre

Absent

Cynthia Niciecki
Timothy Cahalin
Betsy Combs

Public Comment – Privilege of the Floor

Chair Debbie Kratzer stated Jack MacConnell, Kingwood Township Emergency Management Coordinator, was present on the Zoom meeting. She asked him about erosion around pipelines in Kingwood Township after a storm occurs. He explained Elizabethtown Gas has a pipeline and Buckeye Partners has two pipelines (carrying petrochemicals) that travel through Kingwood Township. He noted that Buckeye is very proactive, performing weekly aerial inspections of the pipelines and an annual field inspection by walking the pipelines and immediately informs him if there are any issues. Also, when there is a high-water storm, Jack noted he personally inspects the pipelines and roads, closing roads if necessary. The EC members thanked him for his explanation.

Chair Debbie Kratzer stated Priscilla Hayes from the public was present on the Zoom meeting; she has been attending the last several Environmental Commission meetings.

Approval of Minutes

Motion to Approve the November 16, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Environmental Commission

It was moved by Sandra McNicol and seconded by Lois Voronin and carried to approve the November 16, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Environmental Commission as corrected.

All present from the Environmental Commission voted Aye on the Roll Call Vote with the exception of Mara Tippet and Ralph Celebre who were absent at last month's meeting and abstained.

Correspondence

Chair Debbie Kratzer stated a Letter of Interpretation Application: Wetlands Delineation for Block 33, Lot 3.01 was received as the owners want to build a barn on the property. She shared a map showing that the 10-acre parcel is narrow and is mostly wetlands. She noted NJDEP will review and make a decision regarding the barn construction.

Reports

N/A

Notice of Upcoming Meetings/Workshops: Reminder of Dates

Chair Debbie Kratzer thought the Native Plant Society of New Jersey's free webinar "Backyard Transformation in Just 3 Years: Re-creating Nature" scheduled for January 19, 2022 would be one the EC members would be interested in attending. Sandra McNicol has been attending their webinars this year and thought they were very good.

Stewardship

Chair Debbie Kratzer reported that she was approached by Stephanie Fox (Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park) regarding planting trees on Bulls Island. Chair Debbie Kratzer contacted Delaware Township (Bulls Island is mainly in Delaware Township) as she thought this would be a good fit for the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River Mini-Grant Program. Chair Debbie Kratzer met with the Stephanie Fox and Kathleen Klink (Delaware Township Environmental Commission) and it was decided that Delaware Township would take the lead on applying for the \$5000 grant. Chair Debbie Kratzer prepared a list of possible trees and shrubs for planting on Bulls Island as well as a rough budget.

Chair Debbie Kratzer provided the New Jersey Forest Service Tree Seedling Catalog for EC members to review. The seedlings would be used to fill in around the trees that the EC has already planted. Lois Voronin mentioned the State's annual tree giveaway and thought the EC should participate in this program before purchasing additional trees.

Debbie Kratzer stated that she met Betsy Combs at Kingwood Park and they performed tree maintenance such as straightening tree tubes, removing tree tubes from dead trees and using metal posts for trees needing reinforcement.

Rockfall Mitigation

Chair Debbie Kratzer reported there hasn't been a recent update however, the towns of Plumstead, PA and Stockton, NJ have passed resolutions that were similar to the resolution passed by Kingwood Township.

PennEast Pipeline

Chair Debbie Kratzer reported that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) voted to vacate PennEast's certificate of public convenience and necessity. Also, they dismissed PennEast's application to construct the project in two phases. If PennEast decides to pursue constructing the pipeline again they will need to start the entire process over.

Environmental Resource Inventory

Chair Debbie Kratzer reported she hasn't worked on this during the past month however, she indicated she will soon.

Revised Well Ordinance

Chair Debbie Kratzer reported the Board of Health canceled their December meeting. Lois Voronin asked Maureen Syrnick about the status of the review being done on the revised well ordinance by Katrina Campbell, Kingwood Township attorney. Maureen Syrnick stated she thought the new, revised well ordinance (the version that was in effect prior to it being revised in early 2021) would be introduced in the beginning of 2022.

Well Water Testing and Septic System Pumping

Mara Tippet reported there were 51 residents who participated in the well water testing program, a record number this year. She will be preparing a report for inclusion in the EC Annual Report.

Sustainable Kingwood

Mara Tippet reported that Kingwood Township is certified until the end of 2022. The application for 2023 recertification is due in June 2022 and some points will be expiring therefore a few projects will need to be done. Mara Tippet noted the well testing action offered through Sustainable Jersey requires the well water testing information be available on the municipality website, thus that information needs to be added to the KT website.

Open Space and Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting News

Sandra McNicol stated a property located on Locktown Road (two lots comprised of 60 and 90 acres) is in the farmland preservation process and is anticipated to close in early 2022. There are open space preservation funds specified for the Bluffs and they are working with several land owners in that area for preservation of their properties.

Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting News

Mara Tippet reported there was a holiday tree lighting event at Kingwood Park. Mara Tippet noted that applications for grant funds to preserve the Lindsay White house at Horseshoe Bend Park East are in the works and she believed there also was an ordinance introduced to allocate some open space funds for the restoration of the house.

Planning Board Site Plans, News

Lois Voronin noted there is no new update however, David Banisch, Kingwood Township Planner, will be adding climate change to the Master Plan.

New Business

As a result of a discussion at last month's EC meeting, Gail Ashley contacted David Robinson, State Climatologist, to ask if he would be interested in lecturing at an EC Zoom webinar. Topics such as climate change, precipitation, extreme weather events and groundwater recharge rates specifically for Kingwood Township, Hunterdon County and New Jersey could be presented. The EC members discussed logistics such as the date, time and advertising for the public to attend. Gail Ashley will contact Mr. Robinson for possible dates in March and to determine if he charges a fee for his services.

Chair Debbie Kratzer asked the EC members if they wished to continue meeting on the fourth Tuesday of the month in 2022 and for the Reorganization meeting to be held on Tuesday, January 25, 2022. All agreed to this schedule as well as to continue meeting virtually on Zoom until further notice due to Covid 19.

Chair Debbie Kratzer noted a few members' terms are expiring this year and wanted to alert those EC members to think about whether they want to remain on the Environmental Commission for 2022.

Chair Debbie Kratzer reported there is a community water monitoring project at the NJDEP (where she works) which looks at the effect of road salt on surface water. Sandra McNicol expressed interest in this project and will be participating, monitoring the water at three different locations.

Chair Debbie Kratzer stated she received an NJDEP Update email detailing a variety of topics, one of which is the NJDEP is seeking public input on: Scope of Lands Management Initiative Intended to Reduce and Sequester Carbon Dioxide, Greenhouse Gas Emissions Fueling Climate Change. Also, a funding opportunity is available for radon action month. She will review the email more thoroughly and forward the information to EC members.

Sandra McNicol attended both Recycling and Clean Communities meetings last week. She reported the County is collecting air conditioners and dehumidifiers for a short period of time and residents must make an appointment.

Chair Debbie Kratzer wanted to close out 2021 by thanking the EC members for all their hard work throughout the year.

Adjournment

Sandra McNicol made a Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:36 pm, seconded by Mara Tippet, which was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Debra Hutton, Secretary