

## CAPE MAY POINT ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

April 12, 2023 – 10 am

Start Time: 10:00 am

End Time: 11:27 am

EC Members present:

(x) Sandy Allison

(x) Paula Massanari

(x) Barb Bassett, Chair

(x) Commissioner Catherine Busch

(x) Peg Fraatz

(x) Elise Geiger

( ) Isabelle Neary

(x) Emelia Oleson

Sunshine Law Statement – This meeting was properly advertised in the Cape May Star & Wave and duly posted at the Borough Municipal Building in accordance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

On motion of EG, seconded by PM, the minutes of March 8, 2023 were approved.

### **ON-GOING BUSINESS:**

#### **Pavilion Circle:**

- Plants have been ordered for the Circle by the Borough, and we are scheduled to plant them the first week of May. EG reported that there is a lot of weeding to be completed and we will look to recruit additional volunteers. The volunteers typically meet in the circle on Mondays between 9:00 am - 9:15 am.
- EG shared that we have determined a location for the two new cedar trees. All beds and plants from 2022 appear to be healthy.
- May 6 is the 2023 Mulch Day. CB said the CMPTA via Elise is working with Public Works for obtain and deliver mulch to the appropriate locations as the time approaches. EG said the signs for the event are posted.

#### **Gas Powered Leaf Blowers:**

- BB stated that last month IN presented an overview of why some communities have looked to ban commercial gas-powered leaf blowers. The EC collectively agreed that environmentally electric powered blowers are a better choice, but there are additional ramifications that need to be considered. PM and EG volunteered to look into what all needs to be considered, which we will discuss now.
- PM said she was responsible for connecting with the ECs in South Orange and Montclair, NJ where the gas powered commercial leaf blowers were banned. She and EG created a list of questions so that their research was aligned.
  - PM received a very detailed response for South Orange. Their reason for the change was a quality of life improvement. In addition to the environment they felt it improved health, economy, water management and the impact on pollinators. While they did not require the purchase and use of electric blowers, gas powered blowers were banned 6 months of the year (May 1-Sept30). They created FAQs and the EC was responsible for communicating to residents and business owners of the ordinance. Enforcement includes residents informing the municipality's code enforcement if anyone is in violation. Their website is a comprehensive resource of information on the topic, particularly as it relates to health, the benefits of leaf litter and quality of life. BB asked if there were any comments related to landscapers increasing costs to offset this ban; PM

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said that other nearby communities had made the ban already. One additional rule is the time of day that they are allowed to be used.

- PM also sent a request to the Montclair EC to discuss but has not heard back yet.
- EG provided an overview of Princeton NJ's ordinance 2021-32, Sustainable Landscaping. This ordinance is inclusive to all homeowners and landscapers, and excludes clean-ups and leaf season. Gas powered blowers are banned May 16 through September 30. All landscapers must register with the municipality to ensure they are aware of obligations (\$10 fee, annually). The list of approved landscapers is on their municipal website. Penalties for not complying with the requirements include removal from approved list and a fine.
- EG presented "Research Into the Operational Impact of Gas Leaf Blower Ban", a presentation she created which covered how a ban could affect landscaping contractors. Speaking with three local businesses that provide landscape services to homes in Cape May Point.
  - Electric blowers have less speed and air volume and are not effective on any wet debris;
  - To compensate for shortcomings, electric blowers need to operate for longer than a gas powered for the same job, and they could require 20-46 batteries per day;
  - Alternative would be sweeping and raking which requires more time per property;
  - There would be a significant capital investment, and lawn maintenance is a loss leader (10%) for landscapers very low margins, so volume is critical for a break even, which impacts the smaller landscape businesses.
  - There will be a significant financial impact which would be passed on to the customers. The three municipalities in NJ that have implemented this ban are among the wealthiest in the state.
- BB said we will take all of the information, list pros and cons, and then present to Mayor Moffatt in a report. CB confirmed it is his decision if he wants to present the findings to other Borough Commissioners.

### Commissioner Liaison:

- CB reported that Cape May Point, Cape May and West Cape May participated in a watershed management plan that is posted on our website. Completed by Stu Ferrell, the plan was done from the perspective of managing floodwaters and stormwater diversion. She encourages the EC members to review it.

### Lake Lily Update:

- PW continues to work with NJ Audubon on removal of invasive species. EG mentioned that CB will be looking into what will happen after the current contract with NJ Audubon ends we will need to evaluate whether they will have the personnel available to continue invasive removal and reforestation. CB said that during the remainder of the contract this year they are going to do some additional removal/planting with Public Works and do a volunteer day/workshop in conjunction with Triangle Park. CB said the EC could help this year by educating the public in

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some manner why we are doing this work as part of our wildlife management plan. PM said that Audubon had published something along these lines that we can use as a communication; she will follow up and send to CB and BB.

- The EC led another nature walk in support of the Borough's Sustainable New Jersey certification. Like the Winter Walk, we had approximately 30 people attend. We still had ducks on the lake during this one-mile walk.

### Green Team

- The application that CB and BB worked on in February has been electronically returned/unlocked. BB shared her screen to show the various categories including priority items and points obtained thus far.
- CB said that two areas we are working on are related to emergency management and resiliency actions which fall under CB. One is our emergency communications planning and the other is vulnerable population identifications for emergencies. Both were approved.
- The other priority program is the community prescription drug recycling which should be approved in the next round. This is led by the Cape May Police that service our area, and she has obtained posters and digital information for the website. SA offered to take care of picking up the printed flyer for the post office.
- BB will work with CB and KR to work on the next submission.

### Planning Board

- There is a meeting next Tuesday. The agenda is posted on the website if anyone would like to review it. There is a hearing scheduled for the application for the Fire House. BB doesn't believe there is anything related to the EC in this application.

### Salem Oak Tree

- SA asked if someone could water the oak over the next few weeks; PF offered to care for it. SA also looked into what other towns have done when planting their oaks, and questioned whether it should be moved into full sun or not. It was in full sun when it was at BB's house. This will be added to the agenda for next month to discuss further.

### Other

- SA asked if the bulletin boards at the entrance to the beaches are for Cape May Point generated only or if they are public bulletin boards. CB confirmed they are Borough owned and it falls under her department. SA requested we could look into replacing the one at Alexander because it is weathered.

**NEW BUSINESS:** None.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- EO reminded everyone that there will be a presentation at the Lower Cape branch of the Cape May County library. It is a CMBO presentation called Conservation in Cape May 6-7:30 pm.
- BB said that if anyone finds deceased birds in Cape May Point they can be bagged and given to CMBO along with a summary of where they were found and the conditions they were found in. They could eventually end up at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia for analysis.

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**PUBLIC PORTION/ADJOURNMENT**

On motion of PM, seconded by EO, the meeting was opened to the public. When no one wished to speak, on motion of PM seconded by EO the meeting was adjourned at 11:27 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly L. Redington, EC Secretary