

CAPE MAY POINT ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

June 14, 2023 – 10 am

Start Time: 10:01 am

End Time: 11:17 am

EC Members present:

(x) Sandy Allison

(x) Barb Bassett, Chair

(x) Commissioner Catherine Busch

(x) Peg Fraatz

(x) Elise Geiger

(x) Isabelle Neary

(x) Paula Massanari, Vice Chair

(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 IN, seconded by PF, the minutes of May 10, 2023 were approved.

ON-GOING BUSINESS:

Salem Oak Tree

- BB shared her screen and presented photos that document the growth of the tree. She also shared photos of Salem Oak trees that have been planted in other NJ towns. Some towns have conducted dedication ceremonies and/or installed plaques explaining the origin of the tree. Based on the information shared the EC determined the following:
 - Location: Several locations were discussed. Those who meet to plant it will walk Pavilion Circle with PW and choose the most appropriate spot based on foot traffic and underground water or electrical lines.
 - Planting: The plan is to plant the tree within the week. CB said she will ensure Public Works (PW) gets water to it.
 - Fencing/Protection will be installed by PW.
 - Identification Plaque/Dedication Ceremony: The commission unanimously agreed on creating a plaque, but it was suggested by EG that we pause until after the tree's first winter in the chosen location. PM volunteered to look for graphics which could include a woodcut that Cape May Point resident Lynn Smith's grandfather made of the original Salem Oak tree.
 - Communication: PM will work on a formal communication once the tree is planted that can be sent to the Borough. It could also be laminated and hung on the fence temporarily.
- With Pavilion Circle being chosen as the place we will plant the tree, SA inquired about why we have seen some trees die in Pavilion Circle, and whether we fertilize. CB said that in general, trees in public parks typically don't live as long as those in the wilderness. We do treat the grass in the circle each spring with pre-emergent weed killer and fertilizer. The Borough investigated organic lawn care several years ago which is significantly more expensive and typically results in more weeds. However, she is fine with the EC investigating organic lawn care further.
- SA suggested that we not have grass growing right to the edge of the tree where lawn equipment could nick the bark.

CAPE MAY POINT ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Pavilion Circle:

- EG reported that volunteers were at Pavilion Circle (PC) last Monday, and all plants are doing very well. They will be working on a plan to present to the EC this summer for a perennial and grass planting in the fall.

Commissioner Liaison:

- CB reported that we have received the first draft of the community forestry plan. She has worked with EG on documenting their initial comments back to the consultant. The next draft will be available in the coming months for review by the EC members.
- PW has been doing work in PC to ensure trees planted last year are protected from lawn equipment.
- At Lake Lily more plants were put in. We are looking at ways to keep people from walking through the gardens. At this point we will not be adding any additional plants until the fall.
- Clean Flow has been out to do another treatment to the Lake. We still have an algal bloom, and while it isn't harmful, the EC should consider further educating the community on the use of lawn fertilizers and the effect it has on the lake. PM offered to write an article on the topic.

Green Team

- BB said we have not heard anything back from Sustainable New Jersey regarding our application. We expect to hear from them in the coming weeks.

Planning Board

- BB said there is an agenda for next week's meeting but no applications for review. The main topic of the meeting is lot coverage.

Mayor's Monarch Pledge

- BB has been populating the Cape May Point portal on NWF MMP website. We are on the right track for meeting the pledge requirements again this year.

NEW BUSINESS:

Environmental Commission Vice Chair Appointment

- BB contacted Paula Massanari, after speaking with Bob Moffatt (who is responsible for filling vacant Commission positions), and asked if she would be willing to serve as the Vice Chair. PM agreed to serve in that role.

Native Plant Selection for Triangle Park

- Levi Morris of NJ Audubon planning an invasive plant removal event for Triangle Park. There will be a volunteer work day in July. SA offered to hang a poster in kiosks and at the post office. PM will write an article to be sent out.

Communication Plan Advisory Committee

- EG and PM will be working together as an advisory committee that will be looking at EC communication practices. They will report back to the EC at a future meeting with recommendations.

CAPE MAY POINT ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- The Native Plant Society of NJ is holding an event on June 21 which includes a video on invasive plants funded ANJEC. CB will forward to everyone on the EC; PM will create something we can send out.

PUBLIC PORTION/ADJOURNMENT

On motion of SA, seconded by PM, the meeting was opened to the public. When no one wished to speak, on motion of EG, seconded by SA, the meeting was adjourned at 11:17 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly L. Redington, EC Secretary