

CAPE MAY POINT ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

September 13, 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

The Environmental Commission of the Borough of Cape May Point was called to order by Chair Barb Bassett (BB) at 10:01 AM and the Open Public Meetings Statement was read. This meeting was held electronically via ZOOM under local operation guidance from the NJDCA pursuant to P.L. 2020, c. 11.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

On motion of EG seconded by IN, the minutes of August 9, 2023 were approved as amended.

ON-GOING BUSINESS:

Salem Oak Tree

BB shared her screen to display the information gathered by PM and PF about possible signage for the Salem Oak tree in Pavilion Circle (PC). PF said there is no standard sign being used across NJ, and shared the sign being used in Hopewell Township. PF reached out to Commissioners of Hopewell Township via email looking for someone she can speak to about their display. PM stated that she and PF are proposing two signs, one for the historical information and one detailing that drawing local resident Lynn Smith's grandfather created, possibly with a QR code. KR stated that the Borough has not used QR codes in the past and she would need to review it with the Clerk. CB added that QR codes are linked to a specific website address, and if that link changes the QR code will no longer work. BB proposed that members consider the options and discuss again at the October EC meeting.

Pavilion Circle

EG said we are making progress on invasive plants in the beds at PC. We received a donation of Joe Pye weed plugs which bloom June through August. These can also be planted at Lake Lily (LL) if Public Works (PW) needs them.

Commissioner Liaison:

CB reported that we are using the white walking mats in beach entrance locations where the sand has buried walkways, like St. Pete's. PW is also working on the shed in PC the houses the water pumps. EO asked if the Borough has topped any trees recently. CB said that PW is selectively discouraging young Japanese Black Pine trees from shading and killing the dune grasses and bayberry that we want to grow and stabilize the dunes.

Planning Board

There is a Planning Board meeting scheduled in August, but there are no agenda items related to the EC.

NEW BUSINESS

Light Pollution

CB had provided all EC members a copy of the proposed light pollution ordinance for Cape May since it has been a frequent topic of discussion in Cape May Point, both by the residents of the EC and in comments directed to

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elected officials by residents. CB would like to get feedback from the EC on what the environmental impacts are of light pollution only, and they should not comment on implementation.

EG asked if the streetlights in the Point comply with the example provided, and if not, what are the implications. CB said lighting belongs to Atlantic City Electric and we are responsible for paying the electric bills to operate them, so she will investigate this further.

The following topics will be further researched by the individuals listed:

- Light Design: PF
- Dark Sky Association website: CB
- Street Lights: CB
- Light effects on birds: BB
- Light effects on all other animals and insects: PM
- Light effects on humans: PF

EG cautioned that some may use outdoor lighting at night because of concerns about safety. BB said everyone should review and prepare to discuss at the October EC meeting.

Communications Subcommittee

BB shared her screen which showed the draft 3-year Communications Plan created by EG and PM to help prioritize communications from the EC to the community. All communications will focus on “why” to engage and educate. Key components include:

- Environment/Flyway Communications/Wildlife
- Stewardship of CMP Environs (food sources, tree canopy and dune, waterway health and light pollution).

The plan also includes recommendations on better utilization of media for communication. EG stated that this could be a working document to help guide EC efforts. BB asked that everyone review and be ready to discuss at the next meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BB shared that the Delaware Valley Ornithology Club will be holding a zoom presentation on migration October 8, 2023; she will send the link to the EC members.

PF said there will be native plant sales this weekend at the Nature Center of Cape May.

PUBLIC PORTION

On motion of PM, seconded by PF, the meeting was opened to the public. Garrett Bergman stated that he would like to share a detailed update from the Friends of Lake Lily; BB will add their report to the October agenda. He also mentioned that he is an avid bird watcher and that when looking into light pollution, the EC should recognize that what applies to other communities would not apply to Cape May Point. When no one else wished to speak, on motion of PF, seconded by SA, the public portion of the meeting was closed.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion of PM, seconded by PF, the meeting was adjourned at 11:17 am.

Respectfully submitted, Kelly L. Redington, EC Secretary