

CAPE MAY POINT ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES

February 21, 2024 – 10:00 am

Start Time: 10:02 am

End Time: 11:30 am

EC Members present:

(x) Sandy Allison
(x) Barb Bassett, Chair
(x) Commissioner Catherine Busch
(x) Peg Fraatz

(x) Elise Geiger
(x) Isabelle Neary
() 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 10:02 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 SA seconded by EG, the minutes of January 10, 2024 were approved by all present.

ON-GOING BUSINESS

Invasive Patrol

EG reported that the volunteers have exceeded their original goal in removal of invasive plants and have reached the first outfall on the west side. The horseshoe bed in Pavilion Circle is in its winter slumber and lots of weeds are growing. In the spring we will need to begin to work on it. BB said we are very thankful for their work and how much money it saves the Borough, freeing up resources for new native plants and trees. We can easily estimate hours worked for the Mayors' Monarch Pledge.

Commissioner Liaison

- The Community Forestry Management Plan was approved. PF will be completing the Core training and joining the Tree Committee along with EG, Bill Gibson and CB.
- One of our main goals this year is the maritime (dune) forest. Public Works (PW) has started removing hazardous dead trees on the street side of the dunes and along the beach entrances. Dead trees in the middle of the dunes that pose no hazard to the public will be left standing. They are also cutting invasive trees including selected smaller Japanese Black Pines in areas where the trees will kill native dune vegetation such as bayberries, beach plum, cedar trees, and dune grasses. We'll be working with the CMPTA to replant selected areas on Dune Day.
- In Pavilion Circle, PW started pruning the large trees to remove dead and hazardous limbs. They will be looking to plant some more trees this spring and will address fertilizing the larger trees.
- CB met with the President of the Friends of Lake Lily (FLL) to discuss the treatment plan provided by Clean-Flo. The FLL has offered to provide partial support for the cost of the plan. She will be looking at our budget on how to cover the rest of the cost while waiting for FLL's check. Once the funds are secured, she will be able to sign the contract with the Clean-Flo to start treatments in April.
- The Beach Management Plan was finished by the State. The other Commissioners have reviewed and the plan has been formally adopted. We will put symbolic fencing where the beach is protected for nesting birds.

Planning Board

- There is nothing to report this month.

CAPE MAY POINT ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES

Light Pollution

- BB shared her screen to display the document that summarizes the EC's recommendations to the Commissioners on light pollution. BB requested that everyone take notes and send their comments to KR. The main points of the document included:
 - Examples of light trespass and its harmful effects on people and wildlife
 - LEDs emit blue wavelengths vs warmer tones
 - The use of motion detectors
 - Principles for outdoor lighting and sources of information on lighting design
 - Examples of acceptable and unacceptable fixtures
- SA said we could recommend to the Commissioners that this information be shared with builders.
- CB said that after this is reviewed by the Commissioners the next step would be that it would be discussed at Planning Board.

Borough Landscaping and Tree Ordinance Review

- EG reported that she and PF met with zoning official Bruce Britton and Commissioner vanHeeswyk. Key concepts in the code include:
 - Properties must have 60% natural, vegetative covering. If they are pre-existing nonconforming there are triggers that require a property to come into compliance.
 - A 10% change in area of the structure triggers the requirement to complete a landscaping plan.
 - Removal of a tree requires that it is replaced with two trees which might not even be possible.
- EG said that we have to determine what our environmental goals are, whether that is focusing on requirements to plant native trees, consequences for removal of native trees or even limitations on the size of lawns. We also need to better educate people in the community that vegetative cover can also mean mulch or sand as opposed to just installing grass.
- Commissioner vanHeeswyk suggested that the EC review tree ordinances from other municipalities; CB will provide EG and PF a model tree ordinance.
- CB said that this has been looked at many times over the years, and the 60% vegetative lot cover has unintended consequences because a lawn is the easiest thing for a builder to do. The larger trees in towns are properties with smaller houses. Builders will almost always clear a lot completely and start over with small trees and large lawns.
- BB summarized the next steps:
 - The EC needs to develop a vision and mission for CMP landscaping and trees.
 - Document the key factors we want included in an ordinance.
 - The PB members can review what work has already been done as part of the master plan.

Update on ANJEC Correspondence

- BB stated that our latest correspondence from ANJEC states that they have contacted ACE to discuss the planned replacement of streetlamps with LED bulbs.

CAPE MAY POINT ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES

Update on Website

- KR shared that we are still making progress on the website. Next step is to review the Our Environment page in depth to remove outdated information.

NEW BUSINESS

- MMP
 - BB asked the EC to vote on whether we sign up for the MMP in 2024. All present voted in favor.
 - BB asked if anyone was interested in supporting the MMP this year; IN volunteered. Next steps will be for them to meet with KR and plan for this year's activities.

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Arbor Day is April 26, 2024. CB said that she is waiting for the state forestry to post if there are seedlings available. She is also contacting Pineland Nursery to see if they have anything that would be appropriate. She has been looking at them as a possible give away in honor of Arbor Day. EG volunteered to work with CB on this.

SA said that the Bluebird Society is looking to establish more bluebirds in South Jersey. SA spoke with a representative who is willing to visit Cape May Point to determine where boxes could be posted. We would need volunteers here to monitor them.

PUBLIC PORTION

On motion of PF seconded by SA, the public portion was opened. Jean Biesecker said that she appreciates the time and energy that the EC dedicates to the community. She asked if outdoor media entertainment centers would be looked at as part of the recommendations for a lighting ordinance; she said it is also a noise issue as well. BB said that there is a noise ordinance in place that begins at 9pm every night, but there is nothing in the code prohibiting outdoor televisions.

Ms. Biesecker also asked if there is a way to engage property owners in a discussion about Cape May Point. She feels there is limited opportunity for the larger public to participate in daytime meetings, and she doesn't see a mechanism for property owners to attend. All meetings are held via ZOOM so that property owners who do not live here may attend remotely. The monthly EC and the Commissioner's work session are held during the day, but the Regular Meeting of the Commissioners meets monthly at 6pm, and the Planning Board is held monthly at 7pm.

Garrett Bergman said that BB did a tremendous amount of research on the harmful effects of light and asked if the information could be made available to the public. Once the report is final and provided to the Commissioners it will be posted on the website.

ADJOURNMENT

When no one else wished to speak, on motion of IN seconded by SA, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Kelly L. Redington, EC Secretary