

## CAPE MAY POINT ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES

April 16, 2025

Start Time: 10:00 AM

End Time: 11:56 AM

The Environmental Commission of the Borough of Cape May Point was called to order by Chair PM at 10:00 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.

PM Welcomed new EC member Sean Burcher and called those present to introduce themselves.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On motion of TR, seconded by MLM, the minutes of the March 12, 2025 EC meeting were approved by all present.

### ON-GOING BUSINESS

#### Commissioner Liaison Report:

- The sprinklers are working at all of the parks. Public Works (PW) had to replace five that were clogged by the iron that is present in our well water.
- The road work at Lehigh and Ocean is complete. There is now angled parking on the 100 block of Lehigh, and the sidewalk and curbing has changed.
- The Public Works building is undergoing renovations and the addition of a new bay.
- Public Works seasonal staff returned April 1. Frank Eckel has joined the department as well.
- There was a loss of sand between Surf and Alexander; we hope it will come back this summer and will keep an eye on it.
- We will be adding additional beach mats to seven beaches this year.
- There is a new pet waste station at the north end of the Pavilion Circle Park.
- We are submitting a grant to repair the dune crossover at Coral Avenue in order to bring it up to ADA compliance. If we are successful, the work will begin 2027/2028.
- The Civic Club has donated \$4000 to the Tree Trust Fund, for which we are very grateful. PM suggested that an article be written on which native trees are chosen so that we can reinforce why we should choose to plant native trees and plants.

#### Update on Lake Lily:

- SY said that in March, 2025, Clean Flo came to fix the bubblers, and added the Winter Warrior treatment at their expense. This treatment addresses muck and breaks down vegetative growth. Yesterday she met with the Friends of Lake Lily (FLL) to discuss plans for the next steps. She received a report from Clean Flo that seemed inconclusive. They conducted a sonar scan that showed a maximum depth of 6.7 feet and an average of 3 feet across the lake. There is 100% bottom vegetation coverage with a density of 23%. Water testing will be conducted in May when the next treatment is completed. They will also do a sonar scan in May to compare to a scan conducted in 2021. Clean Flo had previously trained Public Works on the proper application of the treatments to the lake. When they return in May, they will do this again with our new PW employees. PM asked when water quality was last checked; SY replied that she is still researching this. Clean Flo advised that they do not address aquatic weeds and suggested we contact Tigris Water Management, which has offices in NJ. They will know the DEP requirements and what can or cannot be done with the vegetative growth in the lake. Rutgers also has papers on aquatic weed management, which SY shared with the FLL. We will also need to get advice on the parrot feather, because if removed incorrectly it can spread over wide areas. Regarding the overgrowth on the island, we will be seeking advice from Matt Pellagrini of the State Park and Brett Ewald of the CMBO.
- SA asked why there is an even a question about the island in Lake Lily. She hopes that we simply do not want it to look "pretty." SY said it was her understanding that there is concern from the community about

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the invasive vines, so she is exploring the topic. TR said that Courtney Leo will be reaching out to Rutgers for their opinion on the lake as well. EO shared that the island was not natural and was man made (circa 1900). RJ asked if going forward there could be more discussion on the lake's role in stormwater management. SY confirmed that she and Bill Gibson both feel that stormwater management is the most critical role of Lake Lily.

**Invasive Patrol:** PM reported that we sent thank you notes to Peg Fraatz, Catherine Busch and Elise Geiger for their work on removing invasive vines along the perimeter of the lake. The group meets Monday mornings around 9:15 AM, and we encourage you to join them. Elise Geiger provided an email summary to PM that rainy weather has impacted their ability to work every week, but they are currently focusing on an area around Holly Avenue that has caused such severe damage to persimmons that had to be removed by PW. These are areas that should be considered for reforestation. Plantings from last year have survived because of the volunteers and members of PW who watered everything throughout the drought.

**Follow up discussion on Triangle Park:** PM said that based on discussion at our last meeting, she sees three possible recommendations for the wooded area of Triangle Park and asked that members of the EC vote on which option they recommend as a next step to address the issue.

- Option 1: SA and EO are in favor of the EC approaching the Tree Committee for their recommendation on the next steps.
- Option 2: MLM and PM are in favor of the EC contacting NJ Audubon and ask if they are interested in signing a new contract with the Borough, which would be based on their available staffing.
- Option 3: TR is in favor of the EC partnering with a tree company to provide annual maintenance to the trees.

Since there is a tie between options 1 and 2, PM suggested that we ask our alternate members to vote. SB and RJ both voted in favor of option 1. PM will reach out to the members of the tree committee and will share their response with us.

**Planning Board:** MLM reported that the previous meeting included the variance hearing for the Audubon Society at 701 E. Lake Drive. The feedback from the EC was included in the final resolution. There are no hearings planned for May. The Climate Change Hazard Vulnerability Assessment project is underway, and as there is not a representative from the EC, they will contact the EC with any questions that arise. Finally, the light trespass recommendations created by the EC in 2024 have been raised again to the Planning Board for review.

### **Mayors' Monarch Pledge:**

KR shared her screen which had a summary of actions planned for the Mayors' Monarch Pledge (MMP) that PM designated as tentative action items. We must do a minimum of 3 actions, and she welcomes feedback from EC members on which these are the actions the EC will pursue.

- Action 1, the act of the mayor signing the pledge has been accomplished.
- Action 2, launch or maintain public communication efforts to encourage residents to plant monarch gardens. We have upcoming EC articles that would be part of our ongoing communication efforts that could count towards this.
- Action 14, planting milkweed and pollinator-friendly plants in public gardens is accomplished with what is planted in Pavilion Circle and additional planting at the south end of the lake. We previously did a milkweed giveaway; PM would like to consider planting late-blooming nectar producing flowers like Black-eyed Susan, which is drought tolerant, at the beach entrances. She asked SY and PW if this will impact their work on dune entrances, and Bill Gibson suggested contacting Jonathan Westcott who designs the Dune Day plan every year to get his feedback. RJ asked if this would coincide with Dune Day Plantings; PM had reached out

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to Elise Geiger who suggested that this be done prior to Dune Day. All members agreed that this is a good idea to investigate.

- Action 20: Launch or expand an invasive species removal program. This is well underway with the Invasive Patrol group.
- Action 22: Display educational signage at monarch gardens. PM said we may look for ways to add signage, but there were problems with people moving the signs to the wrong place in the past. SY asked if we could use the kiosks at Alexander Avenue and the Post Office. She also suggested considering a paper handout that could be given away at a CMPTA event. EO said that CMPTA worked a table at an event, and they used that opportunity to reach people.

PM asked if anyone from the EC is interested in supporting the MMP. MLM volunteered. SB added that NJ Audubon does public tagging demos with education several times throughout peak migration periods. PM said that one of our potential action items is to partner with community organizations. SB said that at the Cape May Point Science Center they also do public tagging demonstrations and public education on monarchs over a six-week period, which could further support the MMP action items.

SA asked if the EC could consider their own kiosk at Lake Lily that would be dedicated to EC initiatives. She asked if this would support the MMP. PM asked that it be on the agenda for the May EC meeting to discuss whether we should have a kiosk at the south end of the lake.

### Review of Native Plant Educational Walk

PM said that an educational plant walk was an idea raised by the previous EC members in 2024. TR had volunteered to reach out to Courtney Leo to see if she was interested in leading this. TR asked how many walks there would be. PM said that there could be one or many; when Barb Bassett was part of the EC, she led bird walks that were quite popular, which is why it was being pursued. TR said he would speak to CL further, and PM said we would add this again to the agenda for next month.

### Communication on Nectar Producing Plants

PM had sent an email to the EC with a link to a WCM article called 'Plant This, Not That', and asked if anyone was interested in doing one for Cape May Point. No one volunteered, so this item will be removed from the agenda.

**Salem Oak Sign:** The prior EC members spent time designing a sign for the Salem Oak in Pavilion Circle. PM has no opinion on whether a sign is needed, but she felt a yes or no decision should be made. Elaine Wallace asked each Commissioner individually and not all are agreeable to putting sign up since it might invite malicious activity. PM will send the proposed language for the sign and asked that before our next meeting, all EC members should visit the tree and be prepared to vote on whether we will move forward with adding a sign to the fence.

### NEW BUSINESS

**Rain Barrels/Compost Bins:** EO asked that we raise this topic again to see if any other EC members are interested in working with her on this topic, as she has both on her property and have used them on an ongoing basis for the past 25 years. The EC previously gave away compost bins and considered doing the same with rain barrels. When no one volunteered, PM said that we would table this topic until next year.

**Educational Articles:** PM wrote three educational articles for EC members to review and provide feedback on. "Be a Good Neighbor to Cape May Point Turtles", 'EC Guidance on Safely Controlling Mosquitoes', and 'Earth Day 2025: Add a Native Plant to Your Garden' were unanimously approved to be launched. These will be launched at the end of April and beginning of May and will also be posted on the website. SY said anytime an article is launched, she will

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mention it in her Commissioner's reports. PM said that it would be advantageous if RJ could ensure that EC communication would be shared with the CMPTA so that they may share and reinforce the EC's message.

**Lawn Treatment Recommendations:** TR was assigned this topic after expressing interest in the topic. He said his next step is that he will create a flyer that discusses lawn fertilization and how it can affect the health of the lake. PM said that anything he creates should be reviewed by the EC, and that he should send the EC a draft prior to the next meeting.

**Rutgers Lake Management Training:** PM said there are a number of EC members who want to learn more about lake management through the Rutgers course. The next course will be in November. RJ said that he is interested in taking it, and he will personally cover tuition, to which PM thanked him for his generosity. PM and MLM have also volunteered to take the course, and the EC will vote today on whether to use the EC budget for this expenditure. On motion of RJ and MLM, all members agreed to this expenditure. KR said that she will connect with these EC members to discuss how members should sign up for this course.

**Request to Divide Echinacea at Lake Lily:** SY received a request to divide and spread echinacea at the lake from Courtney Leo, who is now in charge of the Bedfellows program. PM said that she would like to wait until fall, after they are done blooming. PM asked if anyone had concerns about sharing the echinacea with the FLL in the fall; when no one replied, PM asked if SY could convey this opinion to CL.

**Recommendation on Borough Donations:** At the last meeting, SY asked if the EC could provide recommendations on how the Borough could use some of the money that was being donated. PM asked if we could postpone that conversation until next month which was agreeable to SY. PM said she has a list of ideas as to where it could be used, and she will send it to EC members for consideration before the next meeting.

### CORRESPONDENCE

SA received a request from a homeowner about the approved native tree list for Cape May Point. The homeowner had an approved list for coastal areas, and it does not match what the EC is publishing on the website. PM will send everyone the lists, and she will ask for volunteers to work with her on updating the list.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Earth Day is April 22, 2025; Arbor Day is April 25, 2025. We have an article that will be launched on Earth Day. SA said the Audubon will be holding a native plant sale, which PM confirmed is in her communication.

Doug Tallamy will be presenting at the Science Center in the coming weeks. EO recommended that residents obtain the book 'Nature's Best Hope' to share with younger residents in the community.

### PUBLIC PORTION/ADJOURNMENT

On motion of SB, seconded by TR, the meeting was opened to the public. Cathy Stambaugh recognized the Borough for looking to update the list of approved native trees. CS asked that the EC look more closely at smaller or medium sized native trees.

When no one wished to speak, on motion of EO, seconded by MLM, the meeting was adjourned at 11:56 am.

Respectfully submitted, Kelly L. Redington, EC Secretary