CAPE MAY POINT ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES

October 14, 2026

Start Time: 10:00 AM End Time: 11:14 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. Sandy Allison, Sean Burcher, Rich Johnson, Mary Lynn Mackenzie, Paula Massanari, Emelia Oleson, and Tom Reilly were present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On motion of TR, seconded by RJ, the minutes of the September 9, 2026 EC meeting were approved by all present.

ON-GOING BUSINESS

Commissioner Liaison Report: The Veteran's Memorial Park meeting was very positive. The planning team shared that CMP was a model for other towns. The next step, besides the permits, will be a site visit with the planning team. They are waiting to do the application until they have the permits.

SY is still pursuing the appropriate well depth for the Circle. SY had a discussion with a geologist who provided a number of suggestions to look at with neighboring wells. At this point, they are anticipating about 350 feet. They won't pursue any digging over the winter since it will be categorized as a capital expense.

Bill and SY are continuing to research path lighting options that will better comply with the light pollution principles. They will be attending the League of Municipalities conference to discuss options with the professionals to better determine the best course of action. While they are looking at low-level lighting, Bill has concerns that it may invite difficult management scenarios in regards to lawn mowers, pets, and walkers, so they will be considering higher lighting options as well. SY will also be looking at hybrid solar lighting to accommodate the partial shade of the path.

Triangle Park had the black cherry tree planted, and the wildlife garden was planted at the entrance. Usually, all of the irrigation lines are blown out at the end of the summer. Bill would like to request the EC to focus on planting in the spring, so he can turn the lines off in Oct versus Nov, with concerns for the lines freezing.

The tree ordinance revision was introduced last night. There was continued discussion about the removal of heritage trees. It was strongly urged for there to be more disincentives to taking down a larger tree. Thus, trees over a certain size will now require additional plantings or contributions to the tree fund. The other ordinance addition was regarding trees causing safety risks that people refuse to take down. There is now a measure allowing the Borough to take it down or have the property owner do so. The public hearing will be later this month to pass the ordinance.

The Dune Day volunteers planted 29 bushes on the west side of the lake. The cost was covered by the Civic Club. The flags around the lake are a part of the permits to delineate wetlands. SY has identified 8 different vegetation species in the lake: pickerelweed, swamp loosestrife, American white water lilies, curlytop knotweed, common duckweed, hairy sedge, phragmites, and red-root flat sedge. PM added there's also cattails and potentially pink knotweed.

The water analysis from the lake came back. SY recommended reading the last page from the summary as much of the data is difficult to decipher. In the summer, there was a high volume of microcystis (microscopic photosynthetic bacteria that clump together). These levels are impacted by increased levels of nitrogen, phosphorus, and the effects of climate change. SY reached out to CleanFlo about the risks of these levels in regards to a harmful algae

bloom (HAB). Over other sites, HABs are most likely to bloom during the early fall, so this is potentially its highest point. The cell count is still well below DEPs regulations for shutting down a lake or posing public risk. Since algae hasn't been tested at this time during previous years, it's hard for them to discern how this fits into the usual trends of the lake. They recommended continuing tests for the fall, spring, and summer moving forward. In terms of dissolved oxygen, there were multiple potential causes for the drop. SY asked about getting more bubblers. CleanFlo said it wouldn't hurt, but they are unsure if it would create a positive difference.

Questions/feedback for SY:

- TR shared, in a previous discussion with Dr. Souza, he recalled talking about the algae clumping and was interested to hear Dr. Souza's feedback with the new analysis results.
- EO shared in terms of invasive species, that years ago there was an outburst of parrot's feather. SY clarified that she hadn't been all around the lake yet, but there is a section that has parrot's feather.
- SA recalled from about two years ago, they'd talked about having baseline testing done and wondered if that ever happened, or if the test results were available. TR added that he didn't think the testing that took place was done consistently. PM shared that the previous Commissioner brought NJ DEP out to evaluate the lake during a summer, so it's possible there is existing summer data for a comparison; however, she wasn't sure what they were measuring, but it was reported back that there was no HAB.
- PM asked after the additional bubblers and if they should be pursued. CleanFlo said it was more important to maintain the existing ones.
- SY is hoping to have CleanFlo come out twice a year to maintain all the bubblers and do the water analysis.
- RJ asked if it would make sense to engage someone to look at the lake from a more comprehensive standpoint and create a holistic plan. SY intended to have Dr. Souza function in that role. TR will follow up with Dr. Souza today about his involvement.
- PM added that NJ has a HAB response team that HABs can be reported to, and they will come out and assess the water body at risk.

Triangle Park: PM wrote to the Audubon stewardship connection about spraying the English ivy around the lake. They are looking into whether or not Audubon/CMP would need additional permitting. The treatment would be sprayed on, and they've been trained for the application. The application would be done during the spring. PM is waiting for the invoice.

The black cherry is about five feet tall and planted along the path behind the butterfly sign. MLM is filling the watering bag around the base.

Planning Board: MLM shared the previous applicants thanked the EC for their feedback and suggestions. There is not a hearing for the coming month, so there were no further updates.

Mayors' Monarch Pledge: MLM has put together the slideshow, and it will be ready to add to the website by the end of the month as well as an article to share. PW replaced the hoses at the new beds at Cape and Sunset. They are getting watered five mornings a week, and the beds are having a good start.

People have stopped in Borough Hall multiple times to express good feedback on the butterfly signs. The gardener at the Science Center wanted to replicate the sign but focus on native plants. The MMP is open and due on Dec 1. PM, MLM, and CL are working to compile all the information for the submission, and it will be shared prior to its submission.

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Dune Day Update: 29 shrubs were planted. They couldn't plant all of them, so PW is going to finish what wasn't completed. There were so many volunteers it took less than an hour to complete the work. MLM shared there was also a great turn out at the beach site and how people remembered planting on the dunes and how much they've been able to grow. There were even volunteers from Cape May and Avalon who attended.

NEW BUSINESS

Project leaders for 2027: PM thanked the commission members for their participation and asked for each member to share their project moving forward.

- SB and PM will be partnering on the MMP for next year.
- TR will be taking on the Triangle Park management and coordination of projects like the spring clean-up.
- PM and EO will be pursuing a Tree City USA certification. Much of the work needed is already taking place with the Tree Committee, so EO and PM will be focusing on putting together the application.
- MLM will continue with the outreach and education on dune preservation, including resending the photography letter, additional articles, and social media.
- RJ will continue with articles on stormwater and anything that evolves from the lake and flood management plan.
- SA will be doing another tree giveaway after the success of May 2026.

EC Tree Giveaway 2027: SA has talked to Aaron Church, and while it's too early for pricing and lists, he has the information with the request for eastern redbuds and the anticipated budget. He doesn't expect to hear from the growers until January. Once there is a quantity, species, and price for the trees, the EC will vote on it.

Master Plan Advisory Committee: SY and PM are a part of the Master Plan Advisory Committee. They were divided into subcommittees to assess the data received from surveys. There are meetings scheduled through January to review the subcommittees' data analysis. The data will be shared with the community, but it hasn't been decided when/how. SY is currently unsure if the EC will need to weigh in on the environmental components; PM is waiting to hear back about what was done for the previous master plan in 2017.

CORRESPONDENCE:

SY received concerns about the garden at the south end of the lake. There is a lot of golden rod, and maintenance is needed to manage it since CMP doesn't currently have a gardener. They discussed asking the wildlife gardener to come and look at the bed to evaluate it for any invasives, better options to plant around the benches, and overall suggestions. His consultation fee is $250.

PM called for a vote to approve the cost of $250 to hire the wildlife gardener for a consultation. On motion of RJ, seconded by SB, the cost was approved by MLM, EO, TR, PM, RJ, and SB.

TR was asked to bring up the recent outbreak of the mosquito population and if there is any active management for it such as the county spraying. PM shared that as a homeowner, you can contact the Cape May County Department of Mosquito Control for your property. They will send someone to your property and evaluate it for potential mitigation strategies. Using mosquito dunks and removing standing water containers are all management efforts that can be taken as well.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS:

PUBLIC PORTION/ADJOURNMENT

On motion of MLM, seconded by EO, the meeting was opened to the public. Two members of the public were present. Vincent Feeley asked when the meeting minutes will be available. CL clarified that the minutes for this meeting will be posted online, but will be unavailable until after they are approved at the following EC meeting on Nov 4. The other member of the public did not wish to speak.

On motion of TR, seconded by EO, the meeting was adjourned at 11:14 am.

Respectfully submitted, Courtney R. Lacombe, EC Secretary