

CAPE MAY POINT ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES

June 10, 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 EO, seconded by SB, the minutes of the May 13, 2026 EC meeting were approved by all present.

ON-GOING BUSINESS

Commissioner Liaison Report: As SY has mentioned in earlier meetings, there have been a number of unanticipated problems this year at Pavillion Circle:

1) Irrigation: The previous 3 smaller wells were wearing out so the borough spent \$21,000 to have a new 6 inch, 104 foot deep well drilled at the end of last year. Unfortunately, and unexpectedly, a high level of iron was discovered in the well water. A micron filter was added but it was not able to mitigate the iron fast enough with a flow of 80 gallons/minute for the vast irrigation system in the Circle. Bill has been actively seeking a water softener solution but it is difficult to source a system that can remove the iron at that fast a rate. In the meantime, the irrigation system is off as the iron is impacting the leaves on the trees, burning some of the vegetation and browning the sidewalks.

CMP must use well water for their irrigation needs as the public city water would be astronomically expensive for the volume of water it takes to irrigate the entire circle. The situation is compounded by the persistent drought in coastal south Jersey. NJ has issued a warning for extremely dry conditions. SY points out that the community needs to think more carefully about growing drought tolerant native plants/shrubs/trees to mitigate these tough coastal conditions – especially as our climate changes.

2) Trees: There is a cottony scale issue on 2 crape myrtle and most of the holly trees in Pavillion Circle. Cottony scale is a common sap-sucking insect. Arborcare, the local Licensed Tree Expert in Cape May County, recommends spraying an insecticide at the end of June or early July when the cottony scale eggs are hatching. The insecticide has precautions: no rain, not near storm drains, no people or animals in the vicinity until it dries.

PM will send information about the insecticide product which calls for 24-48 hours to dry and settle before being safe. The product is also a broad scale insecticide so it will impact pollinators such as bees. After reviewing the information, EC members should email PM with their opinions on whether or not the pesticide should be applied.

SY, TR, RJ, and Bill Gibson (PW) had a meeting with CleanFlo regarding the progress and health of the lake.

KEY POINTS:

- 2026 water sample taken in April; 2025 water sample taken in May (could account for some variation in analysis)
- Overall the lake is healthier this year than last
- Biovolume of cryptophytes is in a good place for the start of the summer season. Cryptophytes (CP) indicate high nutrient concentrations which are a food source for zooplankton. There was a beneficial improvement in this “good” algae. Clean-Flo’s BioBooster enzyme product encourages growth of CP. In addition, CP helps keep BlueGreen (BG) “bad” algae at bay.
- There are two types of aquatic growth in Lake Lily

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- Filamentous algae and duckweed which float on top of the water, often attaching to lake bottom vegetation to form clumps.
- Bottom-rooted vegetation (e.g. Phragmites, lilies, parrotfeather) that grows up from the sediment/muck at the lake bottom.
- The phosphorus and nitrogen levels are still elevated but Clean-Flo believes we are keeping it under control through the high levels of dissolved oxygen in the water column via the diffusers (bubblers)
- The measurement of phosphorus last year was “total phosphorus” – this year the measurement was “ortho phosphorus.” Ortho phosphorus is the simplest, most bioavailable form of inorganic phosphorus. It is directly usable by plants, algae, and microorganisms and is the primary form driving eutrophication. So, this is the measurement of critical importance to watch.
- By keeping the dissolved oxygen high in the water column, it helps keep the sediment from producing undesirable nutrients.
- Lake Lily fills from ground water and from stormwater. Not surprising, Cape May Point has a high water table.
- Four primary outfall catch basins to possibly test for phosphorus and nitrogen: Lighthouse, Central, Oxford, Cedar. Decide utility of testing with cost at \$114/sample for phosphorus and \$227/sample for nitrogen.
- Vegetative growth at the South end of the lake is due to the shallow water (< 2'). Sun hits the muck bottom stimulating vegetative growth. Clean-Flo described that area as becoming “wetlands.”

ACTION STEPS:

1. Do 2027 water sample in April so we can compare same time of year as 2026
2. Decide utility of testing four stormwater catch basins
3. Public works to change diffuser compressor filters on a regular basis
4. Public works to distribute the Clean-Flo Clean & Clear product directly on the filamentous algae mats to help them disperse.
5. Bill Gibson will talk to DEP about permits for hydroraking (specifically using a [Weedoo work boat](#)). See [this Rutgers article](#) on hydroraking.
6. Bill Gibson will talk to DEP about permits to cut back phragmites in June per [this Rutgers article](#) on phragmites management.

Additionally, regarding the lake, the mats are popping up at the south end due to the density of waterlilies. As they die off under the mats, they're releasing methane causing the mats to pop up. It was recommended to weigh the corners down to keep them settled.

SY shared that thanks to TR's connections, the Friends of Lake Lily (FLL), and the Cape May Point Taxpayers Association, the debris on the island was completely removed and plastic was placed to prevent future growth. PM asked if the island's happenings should be communicated with the community even after the FLL and Taxpayers have already released information. SY suggested an article highlighting the invasive removal and TR encouraged extended communication as well. TR will draft an EC article about the happenings on the island and share it with PM for review.

The garden in the island bed just off Sunset on Cape Avenue will no longer have a caretaker and may be something for the EC to take on. PM suggests the EC should weigh in on the garden and what should and should not be planted.

Questions/feedback for SY:

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- Regarding the insecticide, RJ suggested soft pesticides included soaps and oils. SA was also concerned that CMP is asking community members not to use chemicals and yet considering using them for public spaces.

Triangle Park: The workday was a success with 10 community volunteers including PM, SY, and the Audubon representative. They were able to clear a significant amount of invasives from the park. Six asters were also planted at the park. PM reported the sweet gum is doing well, but they are still looking for a black cherry to plant.

The tree giveaway was moved to the fire station due to weather. SA reported that all but two trees were claimed at the giveaway. Everyone who came was very excited to receive their trees. PM shared that the two leftovers were planted on the southeast side of the Lake.

Planning Board: There were no updates from the Planning Board.

Mayors' Monarch Pledge: Six asters were planted at Triangle Park. Ten butterfly weeds were ordered and planted around the lake. Five black-eyed susans were planted in the Cape Avenue island bed instead of the beach entrances.

PM asked The Wildlife Gardener for a quote to improve the plant-life at the pillars by Sunset and Cape; however, there is a concern that a bike path will be put in and encroach on the space in future years. MLM added that the Monarch Minutes will be going out again this year starting in July with ten newsletters since July is Monarch Month. SY suggested SB could write an article on what he saw in Mexico, and SB also shared that there will be a monarch event July 13-16 at the CMPASC with portions open to the public. P

Stormwater Project: RJ shared during their meeting the test result came back with elevated levels of phosphorus and nitrogen. Due to the DO (dissolved oxygen) in the water column, it was likely coming from an external source instead of decomposition. Determining the external source is difficult with 8 outfall pipes coming into the lake. They will be doing four tests at Cedar, Central, Oxford, and Lighthouse. Ideally, they will be able to test these locations after a first flush to determine if there is an outfall basin with a higher concentration of chemical input. Bill expected the elevated levels to be coming from fertilizers applications. Some of the phosphorus could also be coming from the elevated water table rising into the lake water.

MLM asked after the prevalent number of geese over the winter and the geese droppings increasing the levels of phosphorus and nitrogen. EO added the outflow from Lighthouse pond where it begins at the Nature Conservancy (NC) is from a tidal pipe. EO asked if the other townships (Lower Township) could be involved with testing due to the span of the water flow. The pipe has been cleared out before with a significant positive impact. SY said the MOU of the four groups (State Park, NC, Lower Township, and CMP) needs to be reconvened regarding management of the creek.

It has been suggested to do a muck probe of the lake. CleanFlo can do the probe and provide a quote to SY.

Dune Preservation: The emails went out to the photographers list and the President of the photography club offered to further distribute the message to all the club members. There were also several positive responses. TR and MLM are still following up on sending correspondence to residents. SA suggested adding wedding planners to the list of contacts for next year. MLM will reach out to the Star and Wave to assist in publishing the article. TR suggested adding the Herald as well. SY shared that the rental flyer did include a note to stay off the dunes.

NEW BUSINESS

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Light trespass speaker and draft communication: SB will try to get Jim Webster to speak at the Science Center on one of their monthly stargazing nights on July 26. PM plans to do a series of light education communications. PM will share additional resources and articles with the commission to help inform the series. PM will refine the first article going out, but will hold off until learning more information from SY about the Borough's approach for lighting.

Public comment time limit discussion: In the training video reviewed at the previous meeting, there was a recommendation for a public comment time limit. The Planning Board uses four minutes for discussion. PM suggested a public time limit of four minutes per person for public comment. On motion of TR, seconded by MLM, the public comment period was approved by all present.

CORRESPONDENCE:

PM wrote to the grant group for feedback on the grant proposal for future years but has yet to receive a response.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

PUBLIC PORTION/ADJOURNMENT

On motion of RJ, seconded by EO, the meeting was opened to the public. 1 member of the public was present, but did not wish to speak.

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

Respectfully submitted, Courtney R. Lacombe, EC Secretary