CAPE MAY POINT ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES

August 12, 2026

Start Time: 10:02 AM End Time: 11:30 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 and Emelia Oleson were present. Tom Reilly was absent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On motion of RJ, seconded by MLM, the minutes of the July 8, 2026 EC meeting were approved by all present.

ON-GOING BUSINESS

Commissioner Liaison Report: SY and PW are still working on the next best steps for the well in Pavilion Circle Park. SY has written to a former geologist for their expertise and Bill has identified another company that may be able to assist with the iron levels. In addition, the lights on the pathway through the park have been flickering. A new line needs to be run, and they are using this opportunity to consider DarkSky principles to run it on a new line with lower voltage.

Regarding Lake Lily, invasive control has been done on the west side using the skidsteer. They intend to consult with the Tree Committee in Sept for what to plant in replacement of the removed vegetation. TR and SY had a call with Dr. Sousa regarding expertise on the lake. He recommended re-doing the water analysis now, given the time of year. SY has scheduled the analysis with CleanFlo. Dr. Sousa also confirmed that removing the invasives is helpful in reducing additional biomass. He shared that Lake Lily's circumstances and concerns are present across lake managers around the state, including climate change and algae growth. He was supportive of the decision not to apply chemical management strategies and is willing to keep consulting with them on the lake.

SY is looking for feedback on the Tree Ordinance and how it affects homeowners while maintaining the integrity of upholding the ordinance. She invites members to send her feedback. It will come up with the Commissioners in Sept/Oct to vote on.

Questions/feedback for SY:

- PM asked about an ordinance that put a percentage on trees within a property that could be removed at one time. SY was not familiar with this ordinance. PM asked whether there has been a limitation on the percentage that can be removed or not.
- SA had concerns about the definition of a hazard tree. She felt there should be further discussion about evaluating a tree and whether it should be saved versus cut down.
- PM wanted to better understand the removal of a dead tree versus a nuisance tree and why the latter is required to be replaced, but a dead tree is not. SY responded that hazard trees are considered nuisance, sick, dead, etc. Under the statute, there isn't a requirement for replacement for any of them. When SY brought it up previously, there were questions about why it wouldn't be required. This resulted in splitting the difference, where distinctions were made between the hazardous types, where some required removal while others didn't.

Triangle Park: PM contacted Churches Nursery. They were unable to supply a black cherry tree. The sweet gum is doing well, but the asters have been eaten down by wildlife again. PM called for a vote to approve the cost of fencing for around the asters, not to exceed $50. On motion of RJ, seconded by MLM, the cost was approved by all present.

PM reported that the lantana are almost bush-sized near one bench but on the south end of the lake the lantana are close to dead. She suggested not planting in that area next year. RJ asked if we know whether or not there is a line or sprinkler on the south end that isn't working. SY will follow-up with Bill.

Planning Board: There is a hearing next Tuesday for the property at 207 Central Ave. MLM provided the variances that were requested to the EC members. All existing vegetation on the property will remain. The applicant believes they will qualify for an exemption with the Coastal Area Relief Act due to proximity to the dunes. They've hired a consultant, but MLM has not received any update on the qualification. PM asked if the application would be approved without documentation for the exemption. MLM is unsure but expects it will be contingent on the consultation and documented qualification.

PM proposed the following communication to the Planning Board: The EC rejoices about the vegetation not being removed; however, the EC will not be able to endorse the proposal without the documentation and approval for exemption from the coastal engineer consultant.

Mayors' Monarch Pledge: MLM shared a slideshow will be the next step for the action items. The slideshow will go to the webpage, be emailed to the community, and uploaded to our Mayors' Monarch page. Also, PM wrote to Courtney Leo who was very happy to share native planting information with the Bedfellows. PM also drafted and shared an article about the CMBO's free seed library.

Stormwater Project: SY shared that Dr. Sousa discussed catch basin devices used up north with success. The Borough does already have a vac truck which is needed to clean the basins out, and the basins could be placed at the key points where debris collects.

RJ confirmed this item can be removed from On-going Business, and if there is a new development they will provide updates at that time.

Dune Preservation: MLM shared that they are finished with this project. It can be removed from On-going Business and if there is a new development she will provide updates at that time.

Dark Skies: 20 people from the community attended the lecture. It generated discussion on lighting ratings. PM acknowledged that RJ went above and beyond in researching this topic. She will share what RJ and SB researched for the rest of the EC to reference. PM wrote a third and final article about lighting and dark skies to educate the community on this topic. SY added that the $200 honorarium for the lecture has not yet been made as they wait for Jim Webster to provide the information needed to make the donation.

Draft communication regarding the Island in Lake Lily: TR drafted an article and PM shared it with EC. Feedback is open from the EC until Friday, and then the article will go out next week.

NEW BUSINESS

Wildlife Gardener proposal: The proposal to amend the beds around Sunset and Cape was shared on Monday along with SY's information on the bike lane. RJ asked about the L-shaped garden and its proximity to the potential bike lane. The L-shape may conflict with the bike lane;however, there are questions about whether or not the bike lane will occur at any point in the future. PM asked for the EC to consider if they want to move forward, wait to see about the bike path, or not do the project at all.

SB asked about how it will fit based on the illustration, with concerns regardless of the addition of the bike path. PM informed them that existing vegetation will be moved, and the new garden will be placed in the previous footprint. SA shared that previously the beds had planting plans, but there wasn't enough water there at the time. She also had concerns about adding another project to the EC's plate at this time. PM indicated that the proposed plants will hold up to drought conditions, and the proposal is deliberately limited to drought-tolerant plants. MLM suggested the possibility of returning to this proposal next spring or fall when there is more information about whether the Borough gardener position is fulfilled.

PM called for a vote to approve the cost of $1,706 to move forward with the wildlife garden along the pillars on Sunset this fall. On motion of RJ, seconded by SB, the cost was approved by EO, PM, RJ, and SB.

SY will need to ask Elaine and follow-up if this has to go through the Commissioners' since it is on public property. If so, it will come up for a vote at the next meeting.

Meeting suggestion from Commission member: EO asked for the EC members to consider once again having in-person meetings, suggesting the occasional option over the summertime to come together face-to-face. MLM recommended a hybrid system if it is considered or for the meetings to continue on Zoom. PM would prefer to continue on Zoom. RJ felt hybrid would be the most practical and shared that Matt Brown worked with a tech person to do the setup for the Planning Board's hybrid meetings. SY disclosed that the Commissioners' meetings are also hybrid, and it can be difficult to set up with the need for multiple cameras. SB prefers Zoom, but if there were one or two meetings scheduled in-person, he offered to host them at the Science Center, which is already set up with the technology to do hybrid presentations.

The members felt they would be comfortable attempting a hybrid meeting in June 2027.

Third butterfly sign discussion: The 30" x 20" sign will be on aluminum laminate with rounded corners at $178 per sign. It will also have a mounting plate and the sign shop would work with Bill to set the angle of the signs. Initially, the locations were at Circle Park and an additional sign added to the rain garden in front of Borough Hall. When SY brought it to Commissioners' for approval, Anita asked if they would put a third sign in Triangle Park. SA shared that there are more people observing butterflies at the parks than at the Borough Hall. EO included that Triangle Park is well populated by visitors in the fall as well. The quote for the signs were as follows:

- $356 for two signs
- $534 for three signs

On motion of RJ, seconded by MLM, the $534 cost for three signs was approved by all present.

NJ Shade Tree Conference attendees vote: SY and PM would like to attend a day-long meeting for the Shade Tree Conference at a cost of $225 per person. PM called for a vote to approve the total attendance cost of $450. On motion of MLM, seconded by RJ, the cost was approved by all present.

CORRESPONDENCE:

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ANNOUNCEMENTS:

PUBLIC PORTION/ADJOURNMENT

On motion of MLM, seconded by SB, the meeting was opened to the public. Two members of the public were present.

Jean Biesecker shared that she applied to the Borough to have trees removed. She asked if the $75 per application versus per tree discussion would be resolved to affect her current application. She'd been previously told there'd be a resolution in August. PM referred to SY since the EC is not involved in the approval/review of applications.

SY shared that this decision still has to come up for a vote at the Commissioners' meeting since it is an ordinance revision. SY had hoped to bring it up in Aug., but there were still issues around the right-of-way discussion. It will come up again in Sept. for a vote. SY suggested Jean bring her comments to the Commissioners' meeting.

Jean also asked after seven trees which were taken down on a different property and was wondering how these surveys and ordinances are enforced. SY shared that the way the tree ordinance is now, as long as they have three native trees on their property, they can take down as many others as they'd like, but enforcement is a continuing gap they face.

On motion of RJ, seconded by MLM, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am.

Respectfully submitted, Courtney R. Lacombe, EC Secretary