Chatham Township Environmental Commission
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 7, 2026 7:15pm
58 Meyersville Rd. Chatham NJ 07928

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT: The meeting schedule for 2026 and January 2027 is posted on the main bulletin board at the Township municipal building, in two newspapers and on the Chatham Township Environmental Commission website at *https://www.chathamtownship-nj.gov/environmental*. The public is cordially invited to attend all meetings, join the discussions and participate in projects.

CTEC'S PURPOSE: To undertake projects and make recommendations concerning the protection or use of natural resources, including water resources and air quality, located within or directly affecting Chatham Township.

The Chatham Township Environmental Commission's goal is to provide a responsible environmental viewpoint to Township committees and boards and to undertake projects with a strong educational component in order to inform officials and residents about constructive actions that can be taken to preserve the environment.

DATES FOR CTEC AND GREEN TEAM FOR 2026 AND JANUARY 2027
The first or second Wednesday, depending on the month: January 14, February 4, March 4, April 8, May 6, June 3, July 1, August NO MEETING, September 2, October 7, November 18, December 2, and January 13, 2027.

AGENDA ITEMS:

1.Roll Call of CTEC Members at 7:20pm: Present: Jessica Romeo (Chair), Lisa McHugh (Vice-Chair), Craig Alperowitz (Township Committee liaison), Polly Brophy, JoAnne Lockwood White, Amy Mason, Pat Wells, Celeste Fondaco, (alt. 1), Steve Gesell, (alt.2)
Absent: Phil Ankel (Planning Board liaison),
Guests: Aanya Aditya; Melissa Gleeson, Devon Gleeson

2. Public Meeting Statement (see above)

3. Approve Meeting Minutes of September 2nd, 2026
Motion to approve Meeting Minutes of September 2nd, 2026
Pat motioned to approve the meeting minutes submitted by Amy Mason; JoAnne seconded.
All in favor.

4. Status report of the revised tree ordinance
Lisa reports that the revised tree ordinance is under review by the Township Committee after Lisa and Jessica met with Ziad Shehady, John Ruschke and Township attorney Tiena Cofoni. A list of best practices will continue to be developed. Jessica and Lisa asked that a list of native trees suggested by Jean Epiphan, Assistant Professor and Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent for the Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Morris County, be included. Details on how that

will be accomplished are still to be worked out. Melissa Gleeson emphasized the importance of the fair and consistent implementation by the Township officials of the new tree ordinance. Adjacent to the tree ordinance conversation, Melissa Gleeson introduced her son Devon who has plans to measure the tree canopy of Chatham Township which can become a part of the Sustainable Jersey application. Hopefully, at a future meeting, Devon will explain his project in more detail.

5. Update of Artificial turf fields
Following the SDOC's referendum which includes adding more artificial turf and an interest in making Esternay artificial turf, on September 30th Polly sent an email to the members of CTEC in regards to information she obtained following an email exchange with Kathleen Michels, PhD of Safe, Healthy Playing Fields, Inc. Polly wrote "they had an overwhelming amount of information/resources." Reactions included the suggestion that there be an informational meeting for the community about artificial turf fields. Polly said she has not been able to identify an expert but would continue to look for someone to lead such a meeting. Craig mentioned that the cost of artificial turf at Esternay may prove to be prohibitive. This cost will fall on private recreation clubs not the Township or SDOC. It is unclear how the field expenses would be handled after initial installation.

6. Action item: Grant Application for food waste/composting pilot program
Neighboring communities, including Morristown and Verona, have started pilot programs to collect food waste to turn into high quality compost. The pilot program is called "Scraps to Solutions" and managed by Java's Compost. The pilot includes a limited number of households to start. Selected households will be responsible for dropping off their food waste at a designated site. The collection location is one issue to be decided. Another question is whether it needs to be in a bear proof container. When the details have been worked out, a grant will be needed to cover initial costs.

7. Fall Community workday and cleanup
The Shunpike area will be the main focus for a community clean-up. Plant ID tags for educational purposes will be added to the reforestation project. The date has been set for November 14th with the rain date on the 15th.

8. Community Engagement BioBlitz
In prior meetings, Joanne has suggested a BioBlitz in 2027 to be part of Sustainable Jersey. Jessica suggested we take a look at a successful BioBlitz conducted in Princeton using Citizen scientists and the iNaturalist app. Joanne had envisioned something more limited using two or three professional naturalists who would receive a small stipend. She has planned it for April 3rd/4th. The stipend could be provided by a Jaycee's grant. Joanne will get more details to Jessica to include in the grant application. Jessica hopes a citizen scientist's BioBlitz can happen at another time.

9. Green Team updates
Activities that CTEC manages are all part of the Green Team, including Sustainable Jersey. Chatham Township was awarded Bronze in 2024. Jessica suggested the committee visit the Sustainable Jersey website at https://www.sustainablejersey.com

-Great success at the 2026 Sustainability Fair – thank you to Pat and team for being an integral part of planning the Sustainability Fair in partnership and to co-host with Chatham Borough! Aanya had her own table and she reported a number of people stopped to download her Recycling App.
- Fall Tri-town Yard Sale set for 10/17 (rain date 10/18). Signups are open.
-Very successful year at the Monarch Waystation! CTEC has received a Jaycees Grant to enhance the Monarch Waystation; we have had a number of monarch caterpillars this summer. Jessica added multiple milkweed plants, Joe Pye weed, and other native plants on the monarch waystation list.
-Shunpike Grove restoration recap – it's been looking great this summer. The Girl Scout Silver Award was a wonderful enhancement to grow the project.
-Quiet summer was well received.

10. Discussion of upcoming training sessions, special meetings or workshops
-Lisa reported she attended a class offered by Rutgers "Earth Day Every Day."
-Mt Cuba Research Center was visited by some EC members.
-Pat shared National Refuge Week is Oct 10th-17th. Many activities planned at Great Swamp Wildlife Refuge.

11. CTEC Tracker
Jessica has created a Google spreadsheet to track all of the CTEC activities. Jessica reminds all members to enter all of their community activities and individual meetings, seminars, workshops and site visits for ease of preparing the end-of-year report for the Township Committee.

12. 2026 priority project list and events
Projects where public health intersects with the environment will be the priority.
-Priority projects

1. Leaf Blower Ordinance
2. Tree Ordinance
3. NRI Update

13. 2026 events (running list, not complete):
-Educational seminars:
1. Light Pollution Awareness Seminar with GSWA 2/5/26
2. "Your extraordinary Caterpillar" in partnership with the Library of the Chathams 4/22/66
-Earth Month Celebration- Invasives Walk & Talks with JoAnne– April 11th & 12th
And Take Action "What can you do" campaign; list of "Simple Ideas for Earth Month."
-Understory project at Shunpike Field- funding provided to Annabelle Palmer for Girl Scout Silver Award 5/16/26 10am-12pm & 1pm-3pm
-Spring yard sale with Madison, Chatham Borough, GSWA- 5/2/26 –(Jessica)
-Resubmission of ANJEC NRI Grant
-Plant sale (April 1st-18th) with the Great Swamp Watershed Association.
Sale dates April 1st -21st Distribution date: May 2nd at Colony pool
*Webinar 1: Jan 27th, 7-8pm (Soft Landings- Add life Under Trees)
*Webinar 2: Feb 24th 7-8pm (Native Pollinator Interactions)
*Webinar 3: March 31st 7-8pm (Plant for Pollinators- Plant Overview and Preparation)

-Fall Sustainability Fair 9/19/*26* (Celeste and Pat, in coordination with Chatham Borough)
-EV Expo with Madison & Chatham Borough 10/3/26 (Bottle Hill Day)
-Fall yard sale with Madison, Chatham Borough, GSWA- 10/17/26 (Jessica)
-Fall Community work day and clean-up– 11/14/26; rain date 11/15/26

14. Reports:
a. Township Committee – Craig Alperowitz-Reported on the installation of solar panels in the township at three locations: the Municipal Building, the DPW area and the Sewage plant area. Reports the ROI will be substantial.
b. Zoning Board- Lisa McHugh- Topics most often include impervious surfaces, steep slopes and tree removals. Lisa said there has been an increase in pool requests.
c. Planning Board – Phil Ankel- Reported to Jessica that the board has voted to start reviewing and revising the Master Plan. He encourages all to be involved.
d. Open Space –Steve Gesell – no meeting
e. Education and Outreach –JoAnne & Jessica.
f. Invasive Species –Jessica/Joanne- Bioblitz- see above. Future topic Knotweed & Burberry
g. Social Media – Jessica Romeo- Facebook page is active
h. Website – No Report
i. Pollinator / Native Gardens – Jessica Romeo-see Green Team Updates
j. Grants – Looking for grants for: electrical maintenance equipment; food waste/compost pilot project; BioBlitz stipend.

15. Keep on the Radar
-Noe Pond and its future preservation
-Handling of organic waste in the future
-AI Data Centers

16. **Next meeting**: Wednesday, November18th, 2026 7:15pm
Location: Chatham Township Municipal Building

17. Adjournment
Motion to adjourn
Lisa motioned to adjourn at 8:34 pm; Amy seconded. All in favor.
Respectfully submitted by Abigail Maddi

APPLICATION/ENVIRONMENTAL PERMIT REVIEW – Lisa will continue attending site visits and preparing comments for Board of Adjustment and Planning Board applications.

ONLINE RESOURCES (update DS Feb 2026)
- NJDEP website for maps, parcels and environmental information at NJ-GeoWeb.
https://dep.nj.gov/gis/nj-geoweb/
- View parcel information for Morris County. Zoom in for parcels. Has owner information.
https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/7651b23561f54d4c8176d6df4b2207f0
- Old map of Morris County parcels. Parcel information is out-of-date but map is still very useful.
https://morrisgisapps.co.morris.nj.us/apps/parcelsearcher/
- Details about each parcel in Morris County.
https://mcweb1.co.morris.nj.us/MCTaxBoard/

- View open space and Green Acres properties at
https://www.state.nj.us/dep/greenacres/ga50/docs/rosi.lite.pdf
and
https://www.state.nj.us/dep/greenacres/openspace.html
- Legiscan to view and track NJ bills in the legislature
https://legiscan.com/NJ/legislation
- Chatham Township permits that have been filed. Free but have to create an account.
https://www.sdlportal.com/
- NJDEP status of environmental permits that have been filed
https://dep.nj.gov/bulletin/
- NJ State Plan Map. Zoom to see streets. Planning Area 5 is the most environmentally restrictive.
https://dosopa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=fbb0c0a8c7ce4a31b05d123426c4a79a
- NJ State Plan. Updated 2025.
https://www.nj.gov/state/bac/planning/state-plan/development/
- NJ State OPRA records request
https://nj.gov/opra/