

Chatham Township Environmental Commission

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday March 6, 2023, 7:15pm
58 Meyersville Rd. Chatham NJ 07928

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT: The meeting schedule for 2023 and January 2024 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.

APPROVED DATES FOR CTEC AND GREEN TEAM FOR 2024 AND JANUARY 2025

The first Wednesday of every month except second Wednesday in January, April and July 2024: January 10, February 7, March 6, April 10, May 1, June 5, July 10, August NO MEETING, September 4, October 2, November 13, December 4, 2024 and January 8, 2025.

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Roll Call of CTEC Members at 7:19pm- Present: Jessica Romeo, presiding, Jim Connelly (Open Space Liaison), Lisa McHugh, Marty McHugh (Township Committee liaison), , Pat Wells (alternate 1), Absent: Cara Pacifico Feeser, Celeste Fondaco Amy Mason, Dan Miller (Planning Board liaison), John von Knorring (alternate 2)

2. Public Meeting Statement and CTEC's Purpose (see above)

3. Approve Meeting Minutes of February 7, 2024:

Motion to approve the February 7th minutes with correction to next meeting date

Jim motioned to approve the minutes with change; Pat seconded. All in favor.

4. Green Team updates

Activities that CTEC manages are all part of the Green Team: clean ups, gardens, plant sales and tree seedling giveaways, educational webinars/meetings, etc. Silver Certification received October 2021. We are up for recertification in 2024. Application dates to focus on are May 10th and July 31st. 2024 Sustainable Jersey (SJ)Team members/subcommittee: Jessica Romeo and alternate commissioner Pat Wells.

There was a discussion about other ways to capture SJ points:

-Art in the community. Amy Mason will pursue with the Borough about opportunities to collaborate.

-the Township has been helping with the Friends of the Library Book Sale;

- we are getting ready to launch Adopt-a-drain for March 2024;
- CTEC has worked with DPW to provide some educational materials to the K-3 schools in the SDOC around recycling and waste;
- the anti-idling campaign will again be promoted at CHS and perhaps LAF in the Spring; Jessica is meeting with the CHS Environmental Club;
- ideas for the “Healthier Communities” component;
- we are set to host Native Plant month with the Library of the Chathams in May of 2024.

220 Points were submitted on Feb. 24, 2024 application deadline. The goal is to submit at least a total of 350 points for the May 10, 2024 deadline.

Progress is being tracked on an excel document ‘CTEC Sustainable Jersey 2024 Tracker’.

5. NRI Update

(Subcommittee Lisa, John, Jessica). CTEC to make suggested updates to each section identified as needing updates and share with Township engineer for advice and input. Must consult the Planning Board who needs to include the NRI in the 2027 Master Plan. Relationship with Drew University in assisting with the updates in Fall 2024 needs to be reevaluated.

6. Adopt-a-Drain program

Adopt-a-Drain is a not-for-profit organization that helps towns introduce this program to their residence. They provide maps of where the drains are located, a welcome packet and a report back to the DPW providing a metric to track progress: # of drains adopted, # of participants and amounts of debris collected. Program will begin as soon as possible. Recent delay caused by the lack of geodata on each drain. The geodata is currently being manually entered.

7. Shunpike Restoration Project

Pat had conversations with Jean Epiphan with Morris County Extension Service. A site meeting has been arranged for March 11th at 1pm. Pat, Lisa, Jessica, Rich Young will attend.

8. 2024 events (running list)

- Determine at least two educational seminars; “Wildflowers” Speaker Ilona Ontscherenki
 - Tree seedling giveaway- 100 trees from Arbor Day Foundation tree- Spring date has been reconsidered. New possible dates include Fall Sustainability Fair or Township Fall Festival
- (Cara, Jim, Lisa)**
- EV Expo with Madison and Chatham Borough *updated time* 11am-4pm– (4/27/24)- **(John)**
 - Spring yard sale with Madison, Chatham Borough, Great Swamp Watershed Association - 5/4/24; rain date 5/5/24 **(Jessica)**
 - Plant sale & distribution with the Great Swamp Watershed Association in combination with the following seminars: - DATE TBC- **(Jessica, Pat, Celeste)**
 - *Creating a Woodland Garden with Indigenous Plants & Vertical Structure – (1/18/24)
 - *Plug in To Native Groundcovers (2/15/24)
 - *Pollinator Conservation: Creating and Protecting Habitat for NJ’s Bees, Butterflies, and Biodiversity (3/13/24)
 - *Plants for Pollinators: Plant Sale Overview and Kick off with Hazel England GSWA (4/1/24)
 - Celebration of Native Plants w/ the Library of the Chatham – May 2024 **(Jessica, Pat)**

- Jessica will write an ordinance regarding native plants on Municipal properties.
- Fishawack – (6/8/24) **(Cara, Celeste, Jim)**
- Fall Sustainability fair – (9/21/24, 8am-1pm) **(John, Pat)**
- Township Fall Festival – DATE TBC- **(Jim, Lisa)**
- Fall cleanup event – Nash over to the Fenske property- DATE TBC- **(Jim, Lisa)**
- Trail work day- DATE TBC (June 1st- National Trail Day)
- Shunpike Restoration - DATE TBC – **(Jim, Lisa, Pat)**
- Fall yard sale with Madison, Chatham Borough, Great Swamp Watershed Association (10/18/24) **(Jessica)**

9. Reports:

- a. Township Committee – Marty McHugh- No report. Discussion regarding Esternay Field-turfing is not feasible.
- b. Planning Board – Dan Miller- No Report
- c. Open Space – Jim Connelly- Discussed public meeting to be held March 18th regarding Federal grant for half mile trail
- d. Education and Outreach – Jessica Romeo
New ideas include electrify your home and rebates, interactive programs with GSWA, make your own composter and hands on compost tutorial, ideas to reduce trash, mosquito management, food challenge- reduce meat consumption
- e. Invasive Species – No Report – hoping to involve Matt Palmer
- f. Social media – Jessica Romeo, Cara Pacifico Feeser- if post worthy, send to Jessica
- g. Website – Jessica/Jim - All agreed a process for updating is necessary.
- h. Pollinator / Native Gardens – Jessica Romeo –explore new locations for 2024
- i. Grants- Jim Connelly- 1. ANJEC offers \$1500 grants – Pat will submit for the Shunpike Restoration Project. Jim and Pat will discuss details. 2. Community Energy Plan Grant Program (CEPG) offers various levels of funding for municipalities in support of the development of a Climate Action Plan due May 24th

10. Possible New project 2024

Updating the Conservation Easement Inventory which was created in 1999 and has not been updated since 2003. This is part of the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) which can be found on the Township website.

11. Informational Articles

(Subcommittee Jessica, Lisa, Pat) Articles will be written to be informational purposes.

Next up: Anti-Idling

12. Next meeting: Wednesday, April 10th at 7:15pm

Location has moved to the Senior Center. Parking and entrance from lower lot.

13. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn

Lisa motioned to adjourn at 8:35pm; Jim seconded. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by,

Abigail Maddi, Recording Secretary

APPLICATION/ENVIRONMENTAL PERMIT REVIEW – CTEC members attend site visits and prepare comments for Board of Adjustment and Planning Board applications.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Good NJDEP website for maps, parcels and environmental information at NJ-GeoWeb, <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/gis/geoweb splash.htm>
. Use Internet Explorer.
- Very good Morris County mapping utility at <https://morrisgisapps.co.morris.nj.us/apps/parcelsearcher/>, hit Map and use the i tool. Gives information about each parcel and has aerials layer. Search for more detailed information about a parcel at <https://mcweb1.co.morris.nj.us/MCTaxBoard/>.
- View open space and Green Acres properties at <https://www.state.nj.us/dep/greenacres/ga50/docs/roslite.pdf> and <https://www.state.nj.us/dep/greenacres/openspace.html>.