

Chatham Township Environmental Commission
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 14, 2026
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 11, December 2, and January 13, 2027.

AGENDA ITEMS:

1.Roll Call of CTEC Members at 7:17pm: Present: Jessica Romeo (Chair), Lisa McHugh (Vice-Chair), Craig Alperowitz (Township Committee liaison), Phil Ankel (Planning Board liaison), Polly Brophy, Amy Mason, JoAnn Lockwood White, Pat Wells, Celeste Fondaco (alt. 1), Steve Gesell (alt.2)

Guests: Marty McHugh, Aanya Aditya and AJ Aditya

2. Public Meeting Statement (see above)

3. Reorganization of CTEC, welcome new members, review ANJEC membership

a. Brief discussion prior to reappointment of Jessica Romeo as Chair and Lisa McHugh as Vice Chair.

b. Craig Alperowitz, Phil Ankel and Polly Brophy were welcomed as new liaisons and members. Prior to the meeting, Jessica had emailed an orientation letter, a link to the ANJEC handbook and a link to the ANJEC conferences and workshops.

4. Review 2026 meeting schedule

Dates reviewed and are included in these minutes (see above) and posted on the main bulletin board at the Township municipal building, in two newspapers and on the Chatham Township Environmental Commission website.

5. Approve Meeting Minutes of December 3, 2025

Motion to approve Meeting Minutes of December 3, 2025

Lisa motioned to approve the meeting minutes; Pat seconded.

All those in attendance in December, in favor.

6. 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>

7. Light Pollution Initiative

CTEC, with co-sponsors CBEC AND MBEC, will present a Light Pollution Seminar with the GSWA on Thursday, February 5th at 7pm at The Library of the Chathams. GSWA is collecting RSVPs

8. PSEG Grant Cycle

Discussion took place regarding the next PSE & G grant cycle and whether CTEC will reapply for a grant to aide in completing the NRI which is now 2 years out of date. Based on the encouraging comments from the PSE & G grant committee, it was agreed a CTEC subcommittee would meet and make changes to the original application based on the debrief notes; CTEC was a finalist for the grant last year. Jessica reminded Craig and Marty that a resolution from the Township Committee was necessary to permit CTEC to apply for grants in 2026.

9. Leaf Blower Discussion and Update

On 1/12/26, Jessica met with three other representatives from the neighboring towns of Chatham Borough, Madison and Morris Township. It was another productive discussion and sharing of resources. The discussion included obstacles and successful efforts of limiting gas-powered leaf blowers. Part of their discussion included the pros and cons of petitions and collecting signatures of support. CTEC discussed possible timelines as retired gas equipment gets replaced with electric and time to transition from a seasonal ban to a full ban. The importance of engaging local landscaping businesses was reiterated. Also discussed were carveouts/exceptions for some larger properties. The 4 towns group will continue working on a draft ordinance. Jessica will report back.

10. Idling at Chatham Public Schools

It has been observed that idling in the pick-up lines at the schools has become a renewed problem. CTEC would like to reinvigorate the awareness campaign. One obstacle is a lack of signage on school property and figuring out who will pay for that signage. All agreed to working with the environmental clubs at CHS. Polly and Lisa will follow up and report back.

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. To this end, CTEC representatives will get together with representatives from the Board of Health twice yearly. Jessica has had an initial conversation with Katherine Fowler the Board of Health President.

2026 events (running list, not complete):

- Priority projects
 - 1. Leaf Blower Ordinance
 - 2. Tree Ordinance
 - 3. NRI Update
- Educational seminars-
 - 1. Light Pollution Awareness Seminar with GSWA 2/5/26
- 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, *Webinar 1-
*Webinar 2-
*Webinar 3
*Webinar 4-
- Earth Month Celebration- Invasives Walk & Talks – April 11th & 12th
And Take Action “What can you do” campaign
- Fall Sustainability Fair-
- Township Fall Festival/Fall cleanup event/Trail workday
- Fall yard sale with Madison, Chatham Borough, GSWA- 10/17/26

13. Reports:

- a. Township Committee – Craig Alperowitz- App for better communication with township residents is being developed. No update on the Green Village to Nash walkway.
- b. Planning Board – Phil Ankel- No update
- c. Open Space – Joe Basralian stepping down as Chair
- d. Education and Outreach –light pollution seminar planned for 2/5
- e. Invasive Species –Joanne Lockwood White – will plan a program for April 11th & 12th when the Spring peepers are emerging,
- f. Social Media – Jessica Romeo- Facebook page is active
- g. Website – No Report
- h. Pollinator / Native Gardens – Jessica Romeo
- i. Grants – All
- j. Zoning Board- Lisa McHugh Has made contact with Kristin Ace Morristown Shade Commission

14. Update for Aanya Aditya

At her second appearance at CTEC, Aanya updated CTEC about her ongoing work to affect change in the household waste of Chatham residents. She reported that she continues to work on a user-friendly App to facilitate and improve resident’s recycling accuracy. She also reports she has broadened her project to include a household waste audit and presented a four- phase plan titled, **Household Waste Audits and Educational Interventions to Reduce Waste and Improve Recycling in Chatham, New Jersey**

15. Next meeting: Wednesday, February 4, 2026 7:15pm

Location: Chatham Township Municipal Building

16. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn

Lisa motioned to adjourn at 8:20pm; Celeste 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

- 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 arials 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>.