

Chatham Township Environmental Commission
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 3, 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), Phil Ankel (Planning Board liaison), Polly Brophy JoAnne Lockwood White, Amy Mason, Pat Wells, Celeste Fondaco, (alt. 1), Steve Gesell, (alt.2)
Guests: Aanya Aditya

2. Public Meeting Statement (see above)

3. Approve Meeting Minutes of April 8, 2026

Motion to approve Meeting Minutes of April 8th, 2026

Lisa motioned to approve the meeting minutes; Pat seconded.

All in favor.

4. Discussion of “Quiet Summer” Initiative

There was a discussion regarding the “Quiet Summer” Initiative encouraging resident to opt out of gas-powered leaf blowers from June-September. It was signed by Chatham Borough EC as well as Madison and Morris Township. It was sent to media outlets on June 3rd. Members encouraged Jessica to repost throughout the summer. Looking ahead, challenges to a more permanent Leaf Blower Ordinance are apparent in some of the negative social media responses. DPW to be

brought into the conversation. One member asked about whether Chatham Township has a registry of Landscapers to more easily facilitate communication.

5. Discussion: Is Chatham Township Climate Ready? Do we have a Climate Change-Related Hazard Vulnerability Assessment (CCRHVA) in the Land Use Element of our Master Plan? Recent issues to discuss include data centers, storms, extreme heat, heat related mulch fires, etc.

It is not obviously apparent whether there are answers to these questions. Chatham Township does have a Master Plan and an NRI which are both in compliance. It is the opinion of CTEC that both could be further updated and strengthened. Unfortunately, CTEC was not awarded the grant that was recently submitted to finance a thorough NRI update. Craig encouraged members to go to the public meetings to raise concerns to give these issues more attention from the Township Committee. Several members mentioned the importance of a conversation about a Data Center Ordinance for our community. Phil will follow-up to see what information he can find about these issues in our Master Plan.

6. Discussion of upcoming training sessions, special meetings or workshops

-Aanya recently participated in a Research Conference at Millburn High School where she showcased her recycling App.
-JoAnne recommended the documentary **The Plastic Detox** which is available on Netflix. - JoAnne also recommended the book **The Carbon Footprint of Everything** by Mike Berners-Lee.

7. 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>

-Annabelle Palmer completed her Girl Scout Silver Award project called ‘Planting for NJ’ on May 16th where she educated younger scouts and planted native perennials near the Shunpike understory which CTEC has begun to rehabilitate. CTEC helped to fund her planting selections using a \$1500 ANJEC grant. The Farm donated about \$2000 worth of plants for the project. A press release will highlight the project, the grant and the generous donation.

-There will be a milkweed garden added to the Community Garden this season. Five Mosquito bucket will also be added.

- The Jaycees awarded CTEC a \$300 grant which will be used for milkweed and other monarch friendly plants to enhance and grow the Monarch Waystation at Colony Pool.

-The Passaic River Clean up with the Great Swamp Watershed, the Passaic River Waterkeeper and Roots & Shoots was on May 9th. CTEC was a hub leader at Stanley Park. It was well attended by all ages. Some interesting pottery was recovered and turned over to the Chatham Township Historical Society

-Discussions and email have been circulating with Chatham Borough EC and community affairs department around the September 2026 Green Fair / Sustainability Fair.

Earth Month Events

- The Screening of “Your Extraordinary Caterpillar” in partnership with the Library of the Chathams on April 22nd was well done and well attended.

-Invasive Species Walk and Learns w/ Joanne on April 11th at 10:30am at the Green Village Trail and April 12th at 10:30am at the Shunpike Trail were a success and quite interesting. A comprehensive list of Native plants and invasives was made. JoAnne reports this a good model for a 2027 **Bioblitz**. She suggested it be done in one location for two hours with the help of three scientists. JoAnne will propose a date and will investigate whether the scientists can get some sort of remuneration.

-Plant sale w Great Swamp Watershed Association. Sale dates; April 1-21 was a success.

-Pat will explore a June Pollinator event at the Chatham Library. Ideas include posters, 7 days of pollinators and educate others about pollinator.org. Pollinator week is June 22nd-28th.

8. 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.

9. 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-

10. 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 4/22/26

-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)

-Township Fall Festival/Fall cleanup event/Trail workday – Lisa will follow-up

-EV Expo with Madison 7 Chatham Borough 10/3/26 (Bottle Hill Day)

-Fall yard sale with Madison, Chatham Borough, GSWA- 10/17/26 (Jessica)

11. Reports:

a. Township Committee – Craig Alperowitz- Updated CTEC on the Information App he has been working on to disseminate Township information. Craig also informed CTEC that a

Chatham Soccer Club has stepped up to fund a feasibility study on turfing Esternay Field. It is still early stages with questions and strong opinions on all sides.

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- no update

d. Open Space –Steve Gesell – Steve said there are ongoing discussions about the Green Village Connector Trail. Completion is still, most likely, a few years away.

e. Education and Outreach –JoAnne & Jessica. Milkweed garden and mosquito buckets being added to the community garden

f. Invasive Species –Joanne- Bioblitz- see above

g. Social Media – Jessica Romeo- Facebook page is active. “Quiet Summer” initiative was posted

h. Website – No Report

i. Pollinator / Native Gardens – Jessica Romeo- Tom Salvas would like to find a location for a garden to honor veterans. Shunpike Field was discussed. No further update

j. Grants – Looking for grants for electrical maintenance equipment.

12. Keep on the Radar

- Noe Pond and its future preservation
- Handling of organic waste in the future

13. Next meeting: Wednesday, July 1st, 2026 7:15pm

Location: Chatham Township Municipal Building

14. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn

Amy motioned to adjourn at 8:39pm; Lisa 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/roslite.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/>