

Chatham Township Environmental Commission
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 4, 2025
58 Meyersville Rd. Chatham NJ 07928

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT: The meeting schedule for 2025 and January 2026 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.

PROPOSED DATES FOR CTEC AND GREEN TEAM FOR 2025 AND JANUARY 2026

The first Wednesday except the second Wednesday in January, April, July and November 2025: January 8, February 5, March 5, April 9, May 7, June 4, July 9, August NO MEETING, September 10, October 1, November 12, December 3, 2025 and January 14, 2026.

AGENDA ITEMS:

1.Roll Call of CTEC Members at 7:18pm: Present: Jessica Romeo (Chair), Celeste Fondaco, Lisa McHugh (Vice-Chair), Marty McHugh (Township Committee liaison) Pat Wells (alt. 1)
Absent: Jim Connelly (Open Space Liaison), Cara Pacifico Feeser, Amy Mason, Steve Gesell (alt.2)
Guests: Jen Rowland, Susie Rowland and Diya Nandkumar

2. Public Meeting Statement (see above)

3. Approve Meeting Minutes of May 7, 2025

Motion to approve Meeting Minutes of May 7, 2025 was postponed due to the lack of a quorum.

4. Guest Speakers: Susie Rowland & Diana

Susie and Diya made a compelling presentation to CTEC about encouraging the Township to make more of an effort to offer composting options to the residents. They identified the problem and discussed possible solutions as well as roadblocks. CTEC discussed their prior experience on the topic. One key component to the discussion was the Rocket Composter for food scraps which currently sits unused at Chatham High School. Another discussion point was the importance of education at a young age in our community about the importance of being

responsible for composting waste. CTEC was supportive and encouraged Susie & Diya to be persistent and to continue with follow up on ideas that came out of tonight's discussion.

4. Green Team updates

Activities that CTEC manages are all part of the Green Team, including Sustainable Jersey. Chatham Township was awarded Bronze in 2024.

New initiatives:

- Mosquito Dunks to deter mosquitos will be placed around the community. 4 are planned for the Community Garden and others at Colony Pool. It is the hope that such efforts will encourage residents to use similar mosquito deterrents rather than using companies that indiscriminately spray. A demonstration on how to make the Mosquito Dunks is planned at the Library of the Chathams.
- CTEC has held discussions / participated in meetings with the Borough EC on collaborating at the Fall Sustainability Fair. CTEC will be focusing on establishing a Kid's Zone with education, games and activities involving the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. We will also look into a possible Red Bud tree distribution with trees from the Arbor Day Foundation.

5. Adopt-A-Drain

Chatham Township has renewed the Adopt-a- Drain program for 2025 and has added 25 Welcome packets for new participants. Chatham and Berkeley Heights were featured in the Spring 2025 issue of ANJEC Report. There was a discussion about continuing to promote the Adopt-a-Drain program, in coordination with DPW for the summer of 2025, including the activity 'Citizen Scientist.' Jessica has inquired about using Clean Community funds to purchase 3 gift cards as incentive to participate.

6. Township NRI discussion

The NRI was last updated in 2013. CTEC is eager to work in tandem with the Planning Board who needs to include the NRI in the updated 2027 Master Plan. CTEC submitted an application for a Sustainable Jersey/PSE&G technical assistance grant on Feb 13th, 2025 with letters of support from Mike Neibert of the Planning Board, Rich Young of the Township DPW and from Mayor Mike Choi of the Township Committee. We did not receive a grant for the 2025 cycle; It was a very competitive cycle. CTEC was offered excellent feedback to help reapply in the next cycle. Most salient, the next grant request should include more detailed information about engaging the community; who could we involve (e.g CHS and Drew University) and how they could be involved.

7. Fenske Property adjacent to Nash Field

The Township is looking for best use practices for our newly acquired open space, currently called the Fenske property. The topic was on the June 3rd Township Workshop meeting agenda. CTEC partnered with the Open Space committee on a Stakeholder Input Summary document which was well received by the Township Committee. The Stakeholder Input document reads: "Proposals for ways to change the property should be evaluated in light of the overall value of the property and needs of residents.

Toward that goal, this DRAFT attempts to summarize and contextualize stakeholder feedback received thus far that we hope will eventually help form the foundation of an overall stewardship plan for the property, into which various components can be fit. It will evolve as additional feedback and insight is added.” The entire document is attached.

8. Tree Ordinance

CTEC is revisiting the tree ordinance. Next steps will be for Steve and Lisa to merge two drafts of the ordinance. Lisa and Steve are calling other towns to interview them about their experience with a Tree Bank and to answer the questions about how well it has worked and are there any compliance issues. The goal is to determine “Is it worth it for Chatham Township?”

10. Leaf Blowing Ordinance

CTEC had begun to investigate options for how the Township can address noise, environmental and health issues and is collaborating with the CBEC. Several existing ordinances regarding leaf blower use have been reviewed and favorable language in each has been identified. Next step is to present a model ordinance and findings to the Township Committee in June/July. There is no update at this time.

11. 2025 events (running list, not complete):

- Determine at least two educational seminars- Jessica /Lisa
 1. Possible idea: Water Usage and impacts of increased major weather events
 2. Co-sponsor League of Women Voters webinar on “Electrifying Housing” – 2/24/25
- EV Expo with Madison and Chatham Borough – 4/26/25- Amy
- Spring yard sale with Madison, Chatham Borough, GSWA- 5/3/25 (rain date 5/4/25)- Jessica
- Completion of ANJEC Open Space Grant/2nd planting at Shunpike- to be confirmed, April 12th
- Plant sale (April 1st-18th) with the Great Swamp Watershed Association, distribution at Colony on 5/3/25 JR
- *Webinar 1- Plant for Pollinators- 1/29/25 7pm-8pm
- *Webinar 2- 2/27/25
- *Webinar 3- 3/19/25
- *Webinar 4- 3/31/25
- Earth Day Celebration- Seedling giveaway, trails awareness and clean-up. 4/26/25
- Fishawack- reconsidering participation for educational information for NRI? 6/14/25
- Fall Sustainability fair- Pat/Celeste will meet with Susie Robertson of the to discuss ways to participate more with the Borough. See Green Team updates.
- Snake Hill Clean-up with DPW, CTPD and Chatham Township Historical Society; date TBD
- Township Fall Festival/Fall cleanup event/Trail workday- 10/18/25 (focus of invasives and provide info about pumpkin and fall plant disposal after Halloween) - Jessica, Lisa
- Fall yard sale with Madison, Chatham Borough, GSWA- 10/18/25 (rain date 10/19/25)

12. Reports:

- a. Township Committee – Marty has been tasked with reinvestigating potential uses for the length of the PSE&G right of way through Chatham looking into what can and cannot be done. More details to follow.
- b. Planning Board – a new liaison search continues
- c. Open Space – No Report
- d. Education and Outreach –
- e. Invasive Species – Jessica Romeo
- f. Social Media – Jessica Romeo- No Report
- g. Website – No Report
- h. Pollinator / Native Gardens – Jessica Romeo
- i. Grants – Jim Connelly-

13. Next meeting: Wednesday, July 9th at 7:15pm

Location: The Senior Center. Parking and entrance from the lower lot.

Reminder: No meeting in August

14. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn

Lisa motioned to adjourn at 8:27pm; Pat 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.

Most recent: 355 Green Village Road

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>.