

# Chatham Township Environmental Commission

## Meeting Minutes

Wednesday May 1st, 2024 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 7:21pm- Present: Jessica Romeo, presiding, Jim Connelly (Open Space Liaison), Amy Mason, Lisa McHugh, Cara Pacifico-Feeser John von Knorring (alternate 2) Pat Wells (alternate 1) Absent: Celeste Fondaco, Marty McHugh (Township Committee liaison), Dan Miller (Planning Board liaison)

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

### **3. Approve Meeting Minutes of March 6, 2024 and April 10, 2024:**

*Motion to approve the minutes of March 6, 2024 and April 10, 2024*

Jim motioned to approve the minutes; John 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. After conversations with Township Committee members and Township Administration, it was agreed the current goal is a Bronze certification because of limited resources in completing the lengthy application. Application dates to focus on are May 10<sup>th</sup> and July 31<sup>st</sup>. 2024 Sustainable Jersey (SJ) Team members/subcommittee: Jessica Romeo and alternate commissioners Pat Wells Jim mentioned a sneaker drive that the Senior Citizen Center may qualify for points. Jessica asked Jim to follow-up with documentation.

220 Points were submitted on Feb. 24, 2024 application deadline. Progress is being tracked on an excel document 'CTEC Sustainable Jersey 2024 Tracker'.

### **5. Native Plant Ordinance**

The committee reviewed the draft and offered comments. Jessica will incorporate comments. The ordinance is on the Township Committee Workshop agenda tentatively for 5/7/24.

### **6. Chatham Township Tree permitting process and tree replacement discussion.**

The committee discussed the current permitting process and tree replacement ideas. Lisa has done a comparison by towns and wants to pursue a comparison to any state ordinance. Lisa also described the idea of a Tree Bank being used in some towns. All agreed that follow-up is a critical component of any future changes.

### **7. Adopt-a-Drain program**

Adopt-a-Drain is a not-or-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. The program has been launched. Residents can sign up at <https://nj.adopt-a-drain.org>. The committee agreed there is a need to engage the community and encourage participation. Information will be included at future events such as Fishawack and any fair or festival CTEC attends. Information will also be sent to the Courier.

### **8. Fishawack Festival**

The committee confirmed their interest in attending. There will be Mosquito Dunks, information on Adopt-a-Drain, a simple craft, and overall awareness of all that CTEC does in the community.

### **9. Shunpike Restoration Project**

CTEC has consulted with Jean Epiphan from the Morris County Extension Service as well as two Rutgers Stewards. ANJEC Open Space grant application was submitted on April 24<sup>th</sup>. A grant application has been submitted to the Jaycees for signage for this project as well as native plant garden signate.

### **10. 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 as appropriate. Must consult the Planning Board who needs to include the NRI in the 2027 Master Plan.

### **11. Pollinator Pathway Project for Municipalities**

Amy will look into what is involved. Discussion expanded to included the widespread use of Mosquito Sprays on yards and the role of the Morris County Mosquito Commission. The question was also raised as to whether the Township continues to use organic turf products.

### **12. 2024 events (running list)**

-EV Expo with Madison and Chatham Borough 11am-4pm– (4/27/24) **(John)**

-Spring yard sale with Madison, Chatham Borough, Great Swamp Watershed Association - 5/4/24 **(Jessica)** Over 85 participants.

-Plant sale & distribution with the Great Swamp Watershed Association on 5/4/32 at 10:30am at Colony Pool in combination with the following seminars: **(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)**  
 Jessica authored an ordinance regarding native plants on Municipal properties. See above.  
 -Speaker event at the Library of the Chathams “Fight Invasives, Go Natives” Speaker Master Gardener Ilona Ontscherenki- 5/6/24 at 7pm. Determine an additional educational seminar **(Celeste)**  
 -Fishawack – (6/8/24) **(Celeste, Jim, Pat)** See above.  
 -Tree seedling giveaway- 100 trees from Arbor Day Foundation -Possible dates include Fall Sustainability Fair or Township Fall Festival **(Cara, Jim, Lisa)**  
 -Fall Sustainability fair – (9/21/24, 8am-1pm) **(John, Pat)**  
 -Fall cleanup event – Nash over to the Fenske property- DATE TBC- **(Jim, Lisa)**  
 -Trail work day- DATE TBC (June 1<sup>st</sup>- 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)**

### **13. Reports:**

- a. Township Committee – Marty McHugh- No report
- b. Planning Board – Dan Miller – No report
- c. Open Space – Jim Connelly- No report
- d. Education and Outreach – Jessica Romeo
- e. Invasive Species – No Report
- f. Social media –if post worthy, send to Jessica
- g. Website – Jessica/Jim/ All agreed a process for updating is necessary.
- h. Pollinator / Native Gardens – Jessica/Pat –see Shunpike Restoration Project above
- i. Grants- Jim Connelly- grants pending

### **14. Possible New project 2024**

Updating the Conservation Easement Inventory / map which was created in 1999. The last update to the map was done in 2020. This is part of the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) which can be found on the Township website.

### **15. Informational Articles**

**(Subcommittee Jessica, Lisa, Pat)** Articles will be written to be informational purposes. “Leaf Blowing” in March; “Anti-Idling” in April; “Native plants in landscaping” proposed for May

### **16. Next meeting:** Wednesday, June 5th at 7:15pm

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

## 17. Adjournment

*Motion to adjourn*

Jim motioned to adjourn at 8:45pm; Amy 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>.