

Chatham Township Environmental Commission
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday September 11, 2024 7:15 pm
58 Meyersville Rd., Chatham NJ 07928

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT: The meeting schedule for 2024 and January 2025 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, August NO MEETING, September 4, October 2, November 13, December 4 2024 and January 8, 2025.

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Roll Call: CTEC Members at 7:15pm-Present: Jessica Romeo-presiding, Cara Pacifico-Feeser, Amy Mason, Lisa McHugh, Pat Wells (alternate 1), John von Knorring (alternate 2); Absent: Jim Connelly (OpenSpace Liaison), Celeste Fondaco, Marty McHugh (Township Committee liaison), Dan Miller (Planning Board)

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

3. Approve Meeting Minutes of June 5th, 2024:

Motion to approve the minutes of June 5th, 2024

Lisa motioned to approve the Minutes; 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. After conversations with Township Committee members and Township Administration, it was agreed the current goal is a Bronze certification solely because of limited resources in completing the lengthy application. 2024 Sustainable Jersey (SJ)Team members/subcommittee: Jessica Romeo and alternate commissioner Pat Wells. Progress is being tracked on an excel document 'CTEC Sustainable Jersey 2024 Tracker'.

- The subcommittee identified areas where we do a lot but don't capture SJ points.
- Second submission was sent to SJ on 5/10/24 application deadline.
- Final submission sent to SJ on 7/31/24.
- Discuss our priorities as related to Sustainable Jersey given our limited resources on the Green Team and EC. **Goal is to submit off cycle in 2025 to get back to our Silver status.**

5. Shunpike Restoration Project

Planning session 1: CTEC has received the ANJEC Open Space grant of \$1,500, and a Jaycees signage grant of \$500. This project will be part of the Fall 2024 workday and the public is invited to assist, **October 26th from 8:30-10am**. Community groups have been invited to participate including CHS sports teams, Key Club and the Chatham Township Garden Club. Two test plots will be planted. A plant list will be developed after consulting with Jean Epiphan from Rutgers. This event will be coupled with the Shunpike Field/Castle Park clean up which needs to be promoted as part of Clean Communities.

6. Review 2024 Priorities

- The Native Plant Ordinance was adopted by the Township Committee Agenda on 6/25/2024.
- Adopt-a Drain was implemented in Q1 2024. More needs to be done to promote this initiative.
- We are looking to improve our tree removal and replacement ordinance - [https://chathamtownship-nj.gov/vertical/sites/%7B440F80DF-7E94-40B8-B1AECE161FC4406A%7D/uploads/Tree Removal Permit.pdf](https://chathamtownship-nj.gov/vertical/sites/%7B440F80DF-7E94-40B8-B1AECE161FC4406A%7D/uploads/Tree%20Removal%20Permit.pdf). The EC discussed the idea of a Tree Bank being used in some towns. Discussed reaching out to Madison about their program. Currently there is no mechanism for follow up to ensure proper tree replacement. Draft document to be created.
- We are keen to address gas leaf blowers on some level – this is a health issue as well as an environmental issue. CTEC should keep an eye on land use moving forward: eg paving of municipal property such as parking lots, use of pavement for open space trails, development in sensitive areas, etc.

7. Opt-in option for the free weekly advertising drop to all driveways.

Draft ordinance sent to CT Administrator, CTEC liaison and Mayor on August 18 and again on August 29, 2024. To date, there has been no response.

8. Grants

Preliminary research continues re applying for a \$20,000 ANJEC grant to help with the technical portions of the NRI. A resolution from the Township Committee is needed for the grant. Model Resolutions are being researched. Note: Must consult the Planning Board who needs to include the NRI in the 2027 Master Plan.

9. Strike Force Team

A newly created Strike Force Team will kick off with a Walk and Learn event with former CEC member Matt Palmer if he is available, Columbia University Senior Lecturer in the department of Ecology, Evolution, and Environmental Biology.

10. Solar Energy Generation

John von Knorring has begun investigating the idea of generating solar energy as a town which involves identifying solar panel placement opportunities and research for grants for such projects. John has sent his initial ideas and findings to Marty McHugh.

11. Pollinator Pathway Project for Municipalities

Amy Mason will keep the committee updated. Possible next editorial.

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 5/4/24 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 Ontscherecki- 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) Discussion regarding who will volunteer and what information will be included. Good opportunity for Adopt-a-Drain information and the Trail Map brochure. Question: Can a QR code be used to obtain a map of Chatham Township trails? A Hybrid Police car will be on display.
- Fall yard sale with Madison, Chatham Borough, Great Swamp Watershed Association (10/18/24) (Jessica)
- Township Fall Festival/Shunpike Restoration Workday & Fall cleanup event** (10/26/24 11am-1pm) (Jessica, Pat, Jim, Lisa) Discussion regarding details of events such as a tree seedling giveaway. Developing a more professional look for CTEC was also discussed which could include picture boards and table covering with CTEC logo.
- Trail work day- DATE TBC - tie in Walk & Learn on invasive plants with Matt Palmer

13. NRI (subcommittee Lisa, John, Jessica)

See #8 Grants

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 – Jessica- Contacted Matt Palmer regarding Walk and Learn event
- 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- see above
- J. Monthly Editorials (600-700 words for the Courier) Next up: Pollinator Pathways

14. 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. A new easement map has been updated by Amy Mason in September of 2024. Next step is to add it to the website.

15. Informational Articles

(Subcommittee Jessica, Pat) Articles will be written to be informational. “Leaf Blowing” in March; “Anti-Idling” in April; “Adopt-a-Drain” in July; “Shunpike Restoration Project & Grant” in August; “Pollinator Pathways” proposed for September.

16. Next meeting: Wednesday, October 2nd at 7:15pm

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

17. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn

Amy motioned to adjourn at 8:25pm; John 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>.

