

Minutes of the Franklin Township Environmental Commission meeting, August 18, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM, and the Sunshine Law Notice read. The roll was called. Present were: W. Andrews, T. Chase, S. Jaracz, E. Pires, M. Santiago, A. Schmidt, R. Suydam, E. Vastola, P. Walitsky, and sustainability coordinator T. Kenyon. Absent: Council liaison E. Potosnak.

Chair's report: he visited Jersey Mike's, on Cedar Grove Lane, about Save the Stuff. They are interested, would like recognition. He also reported on the Planning Board's approval of 30 conditions on the court-ordered approval of the B9 warehouse site plan (which has been appealed to a higher court).

Minutes of the 8/4 meeting: A. Schmidt commented that they should say "meeting the impervious cover limit should be required for all applications" and "first asking the county print shop what they would charge for the signage". With these changes the minutes were approved.

The meeting was opened to the public for comment. There were no comments, and the meeting was closed to the public.

Correspondence: a letter from the Dept. of Environmental Protection advertised a virtual meeting, by Microsoft Teams, on their statement about the NESE proposed compressor. Is anyone speaking for the township? Another letter copied a request by Eastern States Environmental Associates to the DEP for a Letter of Interpretation of possible wetlands on block 84.06 lot 37 (Dahmer Rd, west side, just south of the railroad right of way).

There were no site plans for review.

P. Walitsky noted the ANJEC conference on Oct. 10 at the New Brunswick Theological Seminary, on Seminary Place in New Brunswick. R. Suydam encouraged seeing the library.

T. Chase mentioned sending some of our minutes to Sheila Baker Gujral of ANJEC to describe what we are doing.

M. Santiago reported that the program on residential energy conservation *will* take place on Aug. 28, 6:00 PM at the library. Community Energy Aggregation and Community Solar should be mentioned. T. Kenyon will get the announcement of the meeting to all township social media.

We seem not to have the banner listing everything the Environmental Commission does. If we cannot find it a new one should be printed.

Franklin Day, Sept. 13: Can we get from PSE&G more night lights to give away? T. Kenyon asked DEP, ANJEC, and Somerset County for printed material to give away. DEP does not provide such. W. Andrews noted that in the past we have shared material with Somerset Co. Health Dept.

Environmental Stewardship awards: T. Chase suggested finding out which of our township schools got the most points toward Sustainable Jersey certification and give the award to the school with the most points. T. Kenyon looked this up: Franklin High School got 350 points (just attaining Silver certification), Elizabeth Ave. School 380, Pine Grove School 405, the most. Other schools had fewer points and attained only Bronze certification.

R. Suydam moved approval of the two suggested awards. This was approved. We should arrange to present the awards at the Nov. 25 Council meeting.

R. Suydam described her contact with United Airlines about their use of sustainable jet fuel. We might sponsor a program on this next spring. Other possible program topics could include composting and Monroe Township's advanced recycling program.

S. Jaracz reported on the gathering of electric vehicle owners on Aug. 10 in Colonial Park, with some 70 attendees. Transfer of electrical energy from one vehicle to another was demonstrated, and pizza baked by an electric truck was served.

The state has money for installation of fast chargers. The commission discussed possible locations for them.

R. Suydam has arranged a luncheon with NJLCV, the Watershed Institute and other environmental groups to inform insurance companies and associations about the NJ PACT REAL regulations and why they should not oppose them.

T. Kenyon got a quote from the county print shop for Skip the Stuff signs, \$125 for 100, better than the commercial printer's quote (\$215). So we will order signs from the county, decals from the printer.

A. Schmidt reported that the township raised the fee to developers for trees not planted to \$315/tree. But the Shade Tree Commission replied that their research indicated that the cost of planting a tree of the specified size is considerably more.

Still no response from Council about appointing a 'youth' member to the EC. The ordinance establishing the EC would need to be amended.

S. Jaracz reported that Franklin Police Dept. participated, with an electric vehicle, in an EV show in Metuchen, which is considering purchasing an electric police car.

The problem of providing EV charging for townhouse and apartment developments which lack individual driveways was discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM. Members were reminded that September meeting is on the 29th, Sept. 1 being Labor Day.