

## **Minutes of the Franklin Township Environmental Commission meeting, December 15, 2025**

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM, and the Sunshine Law Notice read. The roll was called. Present were: W. Andrews, T. Chase, S. Jaracz, E. Pires, A. Schmidt, E. Ventola, and P. Walitsky, and sustainability coordinator T. Kenyon. Absent: M. Santiago (ill), R. Suydam (out of state), Council liaison E. Potosnak.

Chair's report: the court has set a date for consideration of the township's proposed conditions for approval of the B9 warehouse. The application for a mosque on South Middlebush Rd has a problem: its web site promises many things where were not included in the variance application. The Ukrainian Church's proposal to subdivide to allow construction of a warehouse on the plot now occupied by its meeting center is opposed by its congregation.

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

The minutes of the Dec. 1 meeting were approved, with one correction: S. Jaracz said that litter was found everywhere within 20 feet of *roads*, not just of stream crossings.

Site plans: there were three, all second or third versions. P. Walitsky reported on 230 Davidson Ave.: there is no room for buffering, and the neighboring lot is similar in character of development. T. Chase reported on 655 Mr, addition to an existing warehouse on Howard Ave., with increased lawns and trees, decreased impervious surface (the addition would be on a presently impervious area). E. Pires reported on 339 Elizabeth Ave., at present a gas station with auto repair, wishing to replace the auto repair area with a convenience store. A. Schmidt reported on their last hearing, at which both the Zoning Board and the public gave them a hard time.

S. Jaracz suggested that we have a general comment, favoring batteries for storage of electrical energy over generators.

New business: The Commission discussed R. Suydam's suggestion of a committee of retired EC members. They could be appointed as a subcommittee of the EC, reporting during the public portion but able to meet on their own to develop recommendations to the sitting Commission.

Calendar: the Commission has not yet approved its calendar of meetings in 2026, with only one January meeting, Jan. 5. P. Walitsky will be in Florida then; he suggested choosing S. Jaracz as vice chair, to preside at that meeting, R. Suydam, previously vice chair, having left the Commission. This was approved. Other scheduling matters: Sep. 7, first Monday in September, is Labor Day. S. Jaracz suggested meeting instead on Aug. 31, with a regular Sept. 21 meeting. February meetings will be Feb. 2 and 23, because of Presidents' Day, Feb. 16. With these adjustments the calendar was approved.

Collaboration with Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership: T. Kenyon met with Heather Fenyk to discuss this. She will send a proposal. In particular, they did a feasibility study for New Brunswick's stormwater utility.

LEED certification for cities (which several members of the Commission met with on line). This requires recertification every 5 years, with a \$8000 fee, as well as an initial one-time \$1300 fee. Preparation for certification would require many hours of work; could we get T. Kenyon more hours to work on this? Would Council approve the \$8000 fee? We need to meet with E. Potosnak on this before deciding whether to go for it.

T. Kenyon will work on the annual report for 2025.

M. Santiago (not present) sent in that the composting workshop will be presented by E. Ventola on Jan. 8.

Old business: the Astronomy Club would like to meet with us on Feb. 23.

The annual stream clean-up will be on April 11 (Saturday), and will clean up Seeleys Run brook between Easton Ave. and (Petty Rd.

The meeting was opened to the public: Jenny Kafas suggested a township ordinance banning the planting of invasive plants. She will write a memo about what the ordinance should contain.

The meeting was then closed to the public and adjourned at 8:28 PM.