

Minutes of the Franklin Township Environmental Commission meeting, April 20, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM, and the Sunshine Law Notice read. The roll was called. Present were: K. Anastasakos, W. Andrews, T. Chase, S. Jaracz, E. Pires, M. Santiago, E. Vastola, P. Walitsky and sustainability coordinator T. Kenyon; and Council liaison S. Singh. Absent: A. Schmidt.

Chair's report: he congratulated S. Jaracz for a highly successful stream clean-up of Seeley's Run on April 11.

The meeting was opened to the public. A member of the public, Ken Karp, said he was moving into Franklin Township and wanted to see what the Environmental Commission did. With no further public comment the meeting was closed to the public.

Correspondence: a letter from CME (the township's engineering firm) on behalf of the township Sewerage Authority, about moving the Weston Canal Rd pumping station. E. Vastola comment commented that they should fully remove every aspect of the present station when the new one is placed in service.

There were no site plans.

Chair P. Walitsky introduced Sterling Clyburn, an information engineering specialist, to speak about portable solar cell systems, with which he had many years of experience. Mr. Clyburn noted that while he started with a 5-volt cell, there are now 5, 12, 18 and 24 volt systems, which can charge many things. He passed around a 5-volt cell, the size of an iPad, and connection cords. The lifetime of such systems is up to over 20 years. Their power is best when they are outside, window glass cuts their power by 30%. Also, solar cells produce DC power; conversion of AC to DC for purposes needing it loses efficiency. They can run any appliance, and are particularly important when line power is lost, as during a storm; crucial for medical equipment.

Such systems are now up to 400-500 watts power; a 500 watt system would cost about \$500. The portable solar cell business is increasing 15% a year.

Some systems can put out AC, otherwise cells can be connected to an inverter that will put out AC. [It is commoner to use an inverter to convert AC to DC, as for charging an electric vehicle.]

S. Jaracz reported on the stream clean-up, thanking all who participated. He emphasized the importance of bringing people together, especially the young, building the idea of cleaning up after themselves and others. The clean-up collected 54 garbage bags of general litter, 25 clear bags of recyclables, two shopping carts, a child's bicycle, a 50 lb. cement yard ornament, metal scrap, copper wire, plastic beverage crates, etc.

The Green Fair at Franklin High School is this Saturday, April 25, 11 to 2. K. Anastasakos P. Walitsky, and S. Jaracz will represent the EC there. We will not have any flyers to give out at this event, but the EC approved ordering 150 each of three ANJEC-designed flyers for future events.

M. Santiago attended the Thomas Edison Energy Smart Charter School's Green Fair on Saturday, April 25th as well. She spoke to students about climate change and distributed materials.

M. Santiago has e-mailed the Franklin Middle Schools (teachers and administration), asking whether they would be interested in a showing of *Multiple Choice*, a documentary film on career-based learning with vocational elements as an equitable path for student success.

T. Kenyon reported ordering (through a Sustainable Jersey grant) amber (dark sky-friendly) light bulbs, stickers, etc., for advancing residential energy efficiency.

The leaf blower restriction ordinance draft was sent to Council. No reaction as yet.

T. Kenyon reported on activities of the Astronomy Club. They meet every Friday night at the John Clyde Grasslands.

The meeting was opened to the public. K. Karp reported on being in an Environmental Stewardship course with Mike Orsini, chair of our Planning Board.

The meeting was closed to the public and adjourned at 8:23 PM.