

**West Deptford Environmental Commission  
Minutes  
17 November 2015**

**Present:** Dave Sileo, Ed Komczyk, Carl Miller, Bob Waller, Ernie Kraus, Miriam Reichenbach, John Keuler.

**Guests:** Ken and Nancy Miller

**Call to Order:** Dave called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

**Secretary's Report:** The minutes will be changed to read "Joe Rhyner" not "Chuck" from the CAP group is interested in joining us. Ernie moved and Dave seconded the motion to approve the minutes as amended. Unanimously approved.

**Public Comment:** No commentary at this time.

**Old Business:**

ERI Update: John reported that Jeff Totten and Sandy Rost are looking at the ERI. The RFP should be posted soon on the WD site. This ought to coincide with the twp. planning program (master plan). The ERI as presented by the sub-committee may be tweaked after the bids come in.

Dave: There is a \$5,000 map program available to us for \$100 (through the Environmental Congress). We could use this to help with the twp. infrastructure. **Dave will send the site to commission members.**

Do Not Mow: Carl talked with Matt Moore and shared copies of NJ and Pinelands standards and the video. Matt is concerned about negative reactions from homeowners. Miriam mentioned that the cornfield at Berkley Road where the new traffic light was just installed grows close to edge of the road; there doesn't seem to be a problem there. Why can't we plant wildflowers in some of these wide open spaces instead of mowing?

**New Business**

Chair mentioned questions about correspondence. Such items should go to the secretary for reporting. Vice Chair Ed nominated Carl for the position, which Carl respectfully declined. Ernie nominated Bob, and Ed seconded the nomination. There was a motion for unanimous approval; Bob abstained.

Bob reported that the Planning Board asked about Home Owners Associations' rules before accepting building plans. The areas of concern were items like clotheslines, solar panels, vegetable gardens, etc. The Planning Board should ask about these restrictions before approving applications. In particular, they should look at rain basins and planting around them.

There was considerable discussion (and an article from the *SJ Times*) about basin planting, reaching out to the community for support, talking with the twp. which owns the basins. Carl reiterated that we need positive community response to such plantings.

Bob mentioned a sound barrier project in Woolwich Twp. and asked if we have a shade tree commission which might become involved in similar projects? No, we don't have an active shade tree group; furthermore, any grant money for a tree planting endeavor would have to come through a shade tree commission. Ed asked if this group must be a stand-alone, or can it be a joint committee with something like the Environmental Commission? **Dave will look into the options.**

Earth Day Plans: Dave reported that we have a lot of commitments from CAP members and local businesses. Barrels for the rain barrel project will come to us from John DiCarlo and Dave Keller. We need to determine how to get commitments from students, local groups, homeowners, etc. Are there other groups in the community who will commit to help construct and then use the rain barrels? Again, extensive conversation about how many barrels, construction stations, and getting people to take them home and use them.

Next Meeting: Miriam moved and Bob seconded a motion that we skip the December meeting and plan the next meeting for Monday, 19 January. Ed opposed the motion. The motion passed. Ernie was not in the room for the vote.

Dave told us that Joe Augustine, planner, would like to meet with our group. Also, Dave will talk with Cheryl Reardon about a site plan reading workshop – perhaps for the January meeting. We could start our meeting at 6:30, expedite business, and turn the meeting over to site plan experts.

Financial Report: Ernie said there is \$6,000 in the budget, but there is a discrepancy between his numbers and what Michelle Hack has on the books regarding what has been spent to date. Anyone having expenses related to the Commission must give copies of documentation to Ernie.

For the Good of the Order: Does anyone know what happened to Joe Traum? He was supposed to be present. Dave, has Joe been invited to the January meeting?

Public Comment: Ken Miller had questions about the ERI as part of the master plan and remarked that the last EI was completed 30 years ago. What has happened in the ensuing years? Ed explained that the Environmental Commission was a ghost commission for quite a number of years during which there was little concern or action. That situation changed a few years ago.

Ken also asked about the rain barrel project and reminded the group that many companies encourage community service. Perhaps local corporations will help us with the Earth Day project? He also suggested that, if we have not already done so, we should contact the high school environmental studies teacher and local colleges and universities as this project could count toward “community service hours” required by many educational facilities.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.