

**West Deptford Environmental Commission
Minutes
18 May 2015**

Present: Ed Komczyk, Carl Ford, Miriam Reichenbach, Mayor Denice Di Carlo, Eric Agren, Ken Miller

Absent: Joe Rhyner

Guests: Joe Traum (NJ Watershed Ambassador, AmeriCorpsWMA18@gmail.com, 856 589 5250 X 16), Kathy Sherff, Patty Holsten, Gina Carolla

Call to Order: Ed Komczyk called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Secretary's Report: Ken Miller moved and Carl Ford seconded the motion to accept the minutes as distributed. Approved with one abstention.

Ken had a question about the amount of money in the environmental commission budget. \$4400 is correct.

The secretary reviewed the completed Earth Day activities, thanked the volunteers, mentioned the thank you letter from the library, noted Bob Waller's wonderful contributions and the hard work of the volunteers from the Living Waters Church in Woodbury.

We need to have a conversation with Mr. Steck, twp. engineer, and Mary Cummings about the "rain garden" at the library. What is the basin set up to be? How do we make it do its intended work?

Denice asked a question about the upcoming site plan reading workshop. We decided all invited guests should reply to Miriam by 20 June, who will remain in touch with the staff of Riverwinds, who will set up the room for the meeting.

Denice requested we amend the minutes of the April meeting by deleting the phrase "and how to pay for it" from the Water Qualities Issues report. Moved by Carl; seconded by Ken. Approved with one abstention.

Joe Traum: Americorps Watershed Ambassador (lower Delaware). These are full-time volunteers doing work in education, stream assessment (visual and biological), and organizing environmental stewardship projects.

We had extensive conversation about our WD Day goals and plans. We discussed the pros and cons of a mini rain garden, a possible rain barrel demonstration, a display of water run-off on pervious vs. impervious surfaces, etc.

Kathy Sherff suggested we speak with Mike Hogan, SJLWT, about setting up an aquarium or the enviroscape (from the watershed ambassador).

We also discussed a possible "please touch" activity with furs, skulls, snake skins, antlers, etc. Perhaps Matt Moore can help in this area.

Once again, we had a lengthy discussion regarding rain barrels: purchase/donation and storage; hardware/assembly and paint; payment for registration; etc. Perhaps plan a limited participant workshop next spring.

Carl raised the issue of homeowners' associations creating restrictions regarding environmental concerns. Joe Traum suggested trying to work with the homeowners' associations. Denice offered that a community garden somewhere in the development might offer a partial solution. Ken asked if there is a way to modify homeowners' association rules. Denice suggested that builders allow space for community gardens, etc. in their plans.

Public Comment: Patty Holsten asked about the tent caterpillars in the trees along Riverwinds Dr. They are unsightly, but they are not damaging in the long term. The twp. cannot spray because of the caterpillars' proximity to the eagles' nest also along Riverwinds Drive.

Kathy Sherff asked about the status of the Environmental Commission web site. It is a dead link; no one is overseeing it. Denice told us that there is some money in the budget to create a more interactive twp web site. She will ask Michelle Hack to create "who we are, what do we do, meeting dates" statements for the web site.

Old Business:

ERI Update: still working on where we are in conjunction with the DVRPC. This is a one or two year project; cost of about \$10,000; payment can be made over two years (three, if necessary). Chuck Jones from Solvay made a \$1500 donation to the environmental commission to go toward the ERI, in honor of Earth Day, but because of regulations, we had to return the check to Solvay. Chuck assured us that Solvay will reissue the check to the DVRPC or whoever we need it to go to. Carl moved and Ken seconded a motion to allow the twp. to begin the process of spending up to \$3900 for the ERI. Unanimous vote.

Carl moved and Ken seconded a motion authorize the twp. to set up a trust rider (as with the Field of Dreams). Unanimous vote. Donations could be made to the twp. for the environmental commission. There is \$4400 this year and \$6100 next year to cover the cost of the ERI.

Ed talked with ANJEC about holding their annual meeting at Riverwinds, hosted by the West Deptford environmental commission in 2016.

Water Quality Issues: nothing to report.

New Business

Ed told the group that we need to look for people to fill the one full time and two alternate positions open on the commission. We would like to see Bob Waller appointed to the commission in some capacity.

Chair Report: Joe received no response from the previous chairperson for either information or records.

Financial Report: \$4400 minus money earmarked for ANJEC dues, site plan reading workshop, ERI. Ken asked if the "trust" is tax deductible. The answer is "No."

For the Good of the Order

Ed informed the group that we had a walk-through of the Maple Ridge Preserve area. This will be our own Gloucester County State Park. This area is the headwaters of the Mantua Creek. Ken spoke with Joe Rhyner. Apparently, when our trash cans are emptied by the twp. workers, they should be left upright, not upside down, so pollutants in the cans don't spill into the ground.

Eric asked about the possibility of starting meetings a half hour earlier so we have more time to discuss issues. We will discuss this at the next meeting.

Public Comment: Kathy Sherff suggested that we save some of our budget to pay for WD Day activities. Gina Carolla asked about the "no trespassing" signs posted at Maple Ridge. Were they posted by the owners of the grounds? The county doesn't own the property just yet, so it has no control over the signage.

Gina also asked whether Solvay is blowing off its responsibility regarding water quality in our area. Chuck Jones from Solvay has been very open and forthright about the company's reactions to the water problems.

Denice said that Solvay has paid for testing and retesting of the twp. wells. Private wells are being examined – the ones Solvay feels it might be responsible for. The biggest current problem is on Clement Dr. and Solvay is working to solve this issue. Solvay has been open and above board; they are willing to share information.

Adjourn

Ken moved and Carl seconded that we adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.