

**Pennington Environmental Commission**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Oct 20, 7:30 pm**  
**Held via Zoom**

**1. Call to Order and Attendance**

The meeting was called to order by Kieran.

*Present:* Andy Jackson, Brian Friedlich, Joann Held, Nancy Fishman, Dan Rubenstein, Nell Houghton, and Kieran John.

*Absent:* Andrew Seeder, Emily Broeg, and Jim Fuger.

*Members of the public:* Neil Southall and Michael Southall.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

The commission reviewed the previous meeting minutes, which Brian had prepared.

Motion to approve: Brian. Second: Nancy. Approved with Andy J abstaining.

**3. Announcements**

Kieran reported from the quarterly meeting of commission and committee chairs with Borough officials. Topics included the 2025 budget timeline, the new borough email contact links for all commissions, and reminders for members to stay signed up for borough notifications.

**4. Resignation**

Emily Broeg has stepped down from the EC after moving to Princeton. Members expressed appreciation for her work, especially her focus on wildlife and birds. A vacancy now exists, and the mayor will be looking for a replacement. Members were encouraged to suggest potential candidates.

**5. Eagle Scout Arboretum Collaboration Project Recognition**

The EC recognized Neil of Troop 44 for completing his Eagle Scout project at the arboretum. His work included repairing two aging bridges and constructing a new bridge that will eventually support a formal trail connection.

Highlights included:

- Usage of a computer model by Neil to review to refine the design
- The bridge structures are capable of supporting at least 1,000 pounds
- Safety improvements were incorporated for walkers, strollers, and bikes
- It took roughly 135 volunteer hours over two weekends

The commission thanked Neil and Michael for their work and encouraged Neil to prepare a short write up and photos so the project can be shared on borough communication channels.

## 6. **Draft 2026 EC Budget**

Kieran reviewed the draft budget, which includes:

- Modest funds to support EC attendance at training such as the ANJEC Environmental Congress
- Support for certifying an additional public space under the National Wildlife Federation program
- A small amount for arboretum enclosure signage, with the understanding that a grant may be needed for the full project

Members supported the budget as presented.

Motion to approve: Nancy. Second: Joann. Approved.

## 7. **Review of ANJEC Environmental Congress**

Four EC members attended the ANJEC Congress at Rutgers and shared key takeaways.

- PSE&G programs: Opportunities to partner with the utility on rebates, incentives, free energy audits, and community outreach. Kieran to follow up with PSE&G.
- Faith based collaboration: Joann described a presentation on GreenFaith. She will reach out to local congregations about forming a small local working circle.
- Policy and legislative updates: Sessions covered dam removals, single use utensils (“skip the stuff”), bag alternatives, recycling practices, and gas powered leaf blowers.
- Stormwater utilities: Discussion covered how stormwater fees can support local improvements and incentivize green infrastructure.
- Green Acres and Blue Acres: Information on buyouts, stream restoration, and the lengthy permitting process for any hydrologic changes.

Members agreed several of these ideas could be developed into next year’s EC work plan.

## 8. **Stormwater**

There was discussion about the EC taking a more active role in stormwater issues, especially given ongoing flooding concerns near Eglantine, Franklin, and Main Street. Kieran noted that the EC structure now allows for this, and Dan supported the idea of closer EC involvement.

## 9. **Community Energy Plan (CEP) Update**

Brian provided an update on the CEP work.

- The \$10,000 grant agreement is finalized, and funds are now available for consultant support if needed.
- The CNWG has been meeting regularly and has prepared multiple draft sections that will be merged into a single working plan.
- A spreadsheet of action items is being used to help prioritize the focus areas.
- The group is developing ideas for community outreach, including a survey.
- Data gathering has been challenging. Gas data is supplied by ZIP code, not borough boundary, which makes local analysis inaccurate. Sustainable Jersey is raising this with the BPU.
- The working timeline is to prepare a full draft in the spring, hold at least one public feedback session (required by the grant), and bring a final plan to Council for adoption by resolution by end of the summer.
- Adoption is necessary for Pennington to qualify for future implementation grants.

The group also met on Oct 9 with the new Sustainable Jersey coordinator, who will provide examples of surveys, support with outreach, and sample RFP materials. Pennington continues to coordinate with Hopewell Township, which is also preparing a CEP.

Nancy will be involved as outreach planning moves forward.

#### **10. Green Team Report**

Joann gave a deeper overview of the Hopewell Valley Green Team.

- Formed in 2009 as a three-municipality collaboration. Representatives appointed from Hopewell Township, Hopewell Borough, and Pennington Borough. Budget of zero, with occasional small grants from Sustainable Jersey. Focus on public education through talks, tabling at Pennington Day and Harvest Fair, and other community engagements. Monthly meetings held via Zoom

The EC thanked Joann for the update.

#### **11. Wildfire – Continuous EC Learning Topic**

Due to time, the wildfire preparedness discussion was postponed to the next meeting.

#### **12. Adjournment**

The meeting ended at approximately 8.58pm. Motion proposed Andy. Second, Joann. Minutes will be circulated as a pre read ahead of the next EC meeting.