

Pennington Borough Environmental Commission

Minutes for Oct 21, 2024, 7:30 pm

Zoom Virtual

Notetaker: Nancy Fishman

Attendees: Joann Held, Jim Fuger, Kieran John, Nancy Fishman, Andy Jackson, Yasmine Zein, Nell Haughton, Dan Rubenstein and John Valenza
Absent: Brian Friedlich

1. Approval of minutes from Sept 16th, 2024:
Motion to approve by: Joann, seconded by: Jim
Aye ___7___ Nay _____ ABS _____ (Nell had not yet joined)
2. Public comment: no public has joined
3. Administrative Items
 - Kieran updates others on efforts to get agendas and minutes up on the Borough website. There is some progress, agendas should be up soon. Zoom links can only be given out by requested and not posted publicly.
 - 2025 PEC Budget Discussion: All members agreed with line items. There were suggestions to tweak the language to make the wording more accurate. This proposed budget is an increase from last year and includes fees for speakers for public events and fees for PEC members to attend educational activities.
4. New Business
 - **Community Engagement:**
 - i. Fall Community Event (Jim/Dan)
 - Jim and Dan gave an update on the survey that went out through the Pennington Borough email list. The response rate was very good, there were 213 responses. Jim reviewed results and an email will be sent to the same email list with the results.
 - The three topics that garnered the most interest were: 1). Beyond Recycling. 2)Green scaping and lawn alternatives and 3) Stormwater and waterways. It was decided to present these three topics in three separate events over the next 18 months. The first

topic will be recycling, the second is green scaping and the third is stormwater.

- The winner of the \$10 Terra Momo gift card was selected at random, and this was recorded
- There were also many important concerns expressed in the open comments section. These will be analyzed and mentioned in the report out.

- **Strategic Projects**

- i. ANJEC Open Space Community Grant Award Update

- Kieran and Joann gave an update on the progress to date. The Pennington Eagle Scouts are eager to work on the project and one scout is getting his paperwork together in order to lead the project.
 - There will be a tour for PEC Saturday October 26 to look at the native trees and plants to be identified, and to get an idea of the native trees that may need to be purchased.

- ii. Community Energy Planning Grant (CEPG) Drop-in Session.

There was a preliminary session to learn what to expect at the Sustainable Jersey Intake Meeting: SJ will provide energy use data for Pennington Borough, Municipal-specific planning templates, and an overview of available resources. The SJ point of contact who will be available to assist throughout the entire planning process will also attend.

- **Continuous Learning:** Various members attended regional events this past month. Key takeaways were discussed:

- 1). ANJEC Environmental Congress (Joann) Skip the Stuff:

Legislation would direct restaurants to only give out single-use plastic cutlery and condiments if requested. ANJEC has a model municipal ordinance

<https://cleanwater.org/skip-stuff-new-jersey>

- 2). ANJEC Stormwater Webinar Series (Jim & Nancy)

This series is available on the ANJEC YouTube channel, “ANJEC views”

<https://stormwaterutilities.njfuture.org/what-are-the-key-benefits-of-a-stormwater-utility/>

3). “After Hurricane Helene: How NJ Can Prepare for Future” presentation (Nancy) A one page summary of the NJPACT REAL regulations that are proposed was shared. Comments are still being accepted.

4). “Knowing Native Plants Program with Ed Lignowski” presentation (Nell)

This presentation can be accessed here

<https://youtu.be/QLIBfHq Lmc?si=-VvGMtHqbalOc-b1>

- **Communications** (Nancy/Yasmine/Nell)

Communications efforts will follow topics that we are promoting through the educational events and those topics that came up in the comment section of the survey (noise and lighting)

5. Other Business

- Discussion about adoption of the “National Wildlife Federation Community Wildlife Habitat Program” (Kieran)
- After discussion, there was a motion proposed by Kieran J, seconded by Nell vote to approve and join as an educational endeavor. The motion was “To recommend to borough council that Pennington Borough should join along with Hopewell township in promoting to our community the National Wildlife Foundation’s Community Wildlife Habitat Certification, with a focus on the educational elements of the program.” Motion was passed with 7 ayes 1 abstention.

6. General Updates:

- Borough Council updates (John Valenza) No update
- Planning/Zoning Board updates (Andy Jackson)
Old Wells Fargo building area added to list of areas in need of re-development.
- Open Space updates (Nancy Fishman) No update
- Carbon Neutral Workgroup updates (Brian Friedlich) as above
- Green Team & Sustainable Jersey updates (Joann Held)
Burlington County Recycling Center: Offers tours of their sorting facility. HV Green Team may arrange a tour

Last Recycling event at Pennington Farmers Market will be on October 26.

Exploring a means to host another Styrofoam collection.

7. Future Agenda Items

- Junior PEC members
- Sustainable Jersey Certification

8. Adjournment: _9:05 PM

Next Meeting: November 18, 7:30pm