



## **Environmental Commission Virtual Meeting Minutes – April 19, 2021**

Present via Zoom Meeting: Ed Komczyk, Marilyn Quinn, Rich Rodack, Miriam Reichenbach, Eric Agren, Russel Price, Jr. Ahmad Tamous (Ahmad joined the meeting in progress at approximately. 8 PM.)

Alternates: Carl Ford, Ken Miller

WD Twp Representative: Adam Reid

Student Representative: None

Public – Tyler Rost reported that an unidentified caller listened to the meeting

Guests: None

Call to Order: Miriam Reichenbach called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

**Secretary's Report - March Meeting Minutes** – Draft meeting minutes were proposed for review by Rich and a motion was made by Miriam to accept them for review. The motion was seconded by Marilyn. There were no changes suggested. The draft minutes were approved by a voice vote with no objections.

**Secretary's Report - Correspondence received** – Rich mentioned the letter he picked up from the WDEC mailbox at the township office. It was a letter from T&M Associates to the WDEC notifying the commission of a Treatment Works Approval application that was being submitted to the NJDEP to construct and operate a replacement sewer pipeline located at Westwood Court and crossing the Matthews Branch. The application was being submitted on behalf of West Deptford Township. Rich emailed a copy of the letter to the WDEC.

### **Old Business**

Township Liaison Report: Adam Reid provided an update on the items below:

RiverWinds Illegal Wildlife Feeding – Nothing new to report. Adam said he has not seen the draft language for the proposed signage yet.

Grass Mowing and Wildflowers – Adam said the township bought the wildflower seed and said it may be planted in April or May. He said the wildflower area would be fenced in.

West Deptford Well #8 Treatment System Update – Adam read an excerpt from the township engineer's report stating that the treatment system was "operating to waste" before the system is officially brought online. This mode of operation allows for testing of the influent and effluent water to ensure the system is operating properly and meeting applicable regulatory standards. Adam reported that the test results were good.

Follow-up on Sherwood Tree Cutting– Adam reported that the township cleared the trees and limbs from the area in order to keep the stream clear of debris to prevent flooding in the area. Ed said he would relay the information to the citizen that inquired about the work.

Follow-up on WDEC New Projects Discussion – In furtherance of last month's discussion regarding potential projects, Adam suggested that the commission consider stewarding the planting of the Salem oak seedling in Rivergate Park. Attendees agreed that it was a good idea. Initial thinking was that the planting area would be fenced in and identified with a memorial plaque. It was also suggested that the tree be temporarily cared for by either Carl or the WD parks employees until it grew to a suitable size to be permanently planted at Rivergate park, with a possible tree planting ceremony to be conducted. Adam also reported that he thought a lot of work has been conducted at the park, but has not yet visited the park. Rich suggested perhaps, as part of the park revitalization, that the commission fund the design and construction of a butterfly garden. Others thought it was a good idea. Action Item: Adam said he would contact Remington and Vernick to get their feedback on feasibility and scoping of the project.

**Student Representative Report:** Jake was not present at the virtual meeting but provided an update via email to Miriam prior to the meeting. He reported the high school has gone back to in-person school attendance, however, students have the option of opting for virtual instruction if they wish to do so. Jake said that he saw work at Birchly Court neighborhood progressing and it appeared that top soil was being excavated and removed from the site along with trees and fencing. With regard to recycling at the high school, he said there were recycling bins near printers and in classrooms, but not in the cafeteria.

**Chairperson's Report:** Miriam reported on the items below:



Transco Gas Compression station - Miriam talked about a letter she received notifying her of Transco's proposed construction of a natural gas compressor station near the intersection of Grove and Mantua Grove Road. She stated further that there are multiple binders of information located at the library and she went through them to determine the extent of the work. Apparently the project is under the jurisdiction of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and it would review Transco's application. It is not clear when construction would start or whether any other regulatory agencies would be involved in reviewing and approving the project. Adam said to his knowledge the only correspondence the township received regarding the project was last year when Transco's consultant sent a letter to NJDEP requesting a Letter of Interpretation for wetlands delineation for the project site. After discussion the group thought it best to determine if the township has any opportunity for input or review of the project. Action Items – Ed is going to drop off the letter at the township for Adam. Adam will seek guidance from the township's solicitor as to opportunities the township may have to review the project and provide input. Rich also asked that Adam send a pdf of the letter to WDEC members.

Wrap-up of Earth Day activities – Tree seedling and LED light bulb distribution – Miriam thanked WDEC members for their efforts on Friday and Saturday in preparing for and distributing the LEDs and seedlings. Remaining LEDs were donated to the senior center and remaining seedlings were donated to Carl's land trust organization. Action Item - Miriam said she would write thank you notes to RiverWinds personnel that helped us make the event successful.

Two improvement items were captured for next year as follows: 1. Bring small pencils or pens for people to use to write the names on the bags for the individual trees they select and 2. Bring spray bottles to keep the roots moist during the event.

Nature Trail Tree Signage Project – Miriam solicited feedback on how best to proceed with project implementation. After discussion by the group it was decided to proceed as follows: Action Items: Ken to drop off the tree signs with Bill Gigliotti of the township. Adam will contact T&M to get their tree person to come out and identify the trees so the signs are placed in the correct locations. If possible, WDEC member will accompany the person during the tree identification.

Other – Discuss Future in-person WDEC Meetings – After discussion, it was decided that May's meeting would be conducted virtually and the commission would revisit the June meeting format at the May meeting. As an aside to this discussion, Tyler reported that a representative from Solvay contacted him and said they would like to address the WDEC. It was decided that it may be better to have the representative meet face-to-face and Miriam asked Tyler to ask the representative if potentially meeting in June would be acceptable.

#### **New Business:**

Communication with Residents: Nothing new to report, beyond communication of the April Earth Day activity by Miriam

LNG Project Update – Marilyn said that interested parties opposing the project sent a signed letter to President Biden 4/14/21.

Solvay NJDEP Natural Resource Damages Lawsuit – Nothing new to report on the lawsuit. Marilyn said that she has spoken to several persons regarding PFOS contamination, including Columbia University students, an Italian journalist, and Professor Laumbach from Rutgers University.

Grants: Nothing new to report

**Planning Board** - Eric talked about the following project:

Proposed Amazon Parking Lot 1927 Nolte Drive – Eric reported that the parking lot project was on the Planning Board agenda for its April 27<sup>th</sup> meeting. He said that the commission's comments regarding the project were submitted to the applicant for consideration.

**Financial Report:** Eric said the trust fund balance as of April 19th is \$14,406.74, no change from last month. He said the new township budget is set to be adopted on April 21<sup>st</sup> at which time the environmental commission will receive an allocation of \$4,400

**Public Comment:** An unidentified person was present but did not identify themselves, nor comment.

**For the Good of the Order:** Rich talked about a Philadelphia Inquirer article regarding proposed wind farms to be constructed off the NJ coast and the concerns the commercial fishing industry and fishermen in general have regarding the potential impact on their livelihoods and recreational opportunities

**Adjourn:** A motion was made by Russel to adjourn and it was seconded by Rich. Miriam adjourned the meeting at 8:20 P.M.

#### **Dates to Remember**

May 17

EC virtual meeting, 7:00 P.M.

 5/18/21  
Signed and submitted by Richard Rodack, WDEC Secretary