

# MANCHESTER TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Tuesday, August 25, 2020  
Manchester Township Municipal Building  
1 Colonial Drive, Manchester Township, NJ

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Chairperson Middaugh called the Regular Meeting of the Manchester Township Environmental Commission to order with the following statement: "Adequate notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with Open Public Meetings Act. Public Law 1975, Chapter 231. Said notice was advertised in the Asbury Park Press and the Star Ledger."

Time: 5:00 PM

This was followed with the Salute to the Flag.

### ROLL CALL:

Peggy Middaugh	Present
William Cook	Present
William Foor	Present
Rory Wells	Present
David Kiernan	Present
Mary Demarest-Paraan	Present
Genevieve Stavalo	Absent

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

#### July 28, 2020 Regular Meeting

Mr. Cook made a motion to approve the July 28, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes, seconded by Mr. Wells.  
**Roll call vote:** Mr. Cook, Mr. Foor, Mr. Wells, Ms. Middaugh, Mr. Kiernan; yes. Motion carried.

### PRESENTATION:

#### Community Solar Project Presentation by Tom Brys of Maser Consulting

Solar facilities have been designated an "inherently beneficial use" as they are considered of value to the community and fundamentally serve the public good and promote general welfare. The township believes the Community Solar Project is the best use of the old Whiting Landfill and has the potential to convert the landfill from a liability to an asset. Community solar is designed with low and moderate household incomes in mind, however, any home or business in Manchester can apply to be a subscriber.

The project will involve first capping and closing the landfill with a geomembrane or earthen cap. To preserve the cap to the greatest extent possible, the panels will be installed on floating, non-penetrating ballasts therefore leaving a soft environmental footprint. Once the township gets approval from outside agencies, such as Pinelands Commission and NJDEP, who will be watching the project closely, the town hopes construction will begin before the end of the year. The project's duration will be 12-18 months, concluding approximately mid-2022.

## Q&A Session

Q: What will the impact of construction on current operations be?

A: The existing activities will be accommodated. Everyone will be well-informed where to go and where not to go by way of cones, signs and barriers. Some of the roadways will be improved, however, design layout is still in review with outside agencies.

Q: Will any trees need to be cut down?

A: The site improvement areas are mostly clear already. The cap serves a specific engineered purpose and cannot accommodate vegetation growing on top of it. Any trees outside the area of the solar footprint will not be taken down, however, if we encounter a windrow, we may have to manage the height of some trees.

Q: How will stormwater runoff be handled after the landfill is capped?

A: It will be handled with engineering and topographic management. Ditches, swales and drainage structures may be used. Stormwater will be retained or detained as guided by NJDEP and Pinelands Commission.

Q: What are the advantages/disadvantages of the earthen and geomembrane caps?

Geomembrane caps have very low permeability but require more maintenance. 50 years from now, infiltration issues can occur and liners need to be repaired. As for earthen caps, a common issue is black locust trees grow on top of them and blow over, leaving holes in the cap. Personally, I would like to see an earthen cap used. If Pinelands Commission and NJDEP feel comfortable that an earthen cap will satisfy requirements technically, that will be the likely option.

Q: Will the project site plan come before the Manchester Planning Board and when?

A: I believe the project will go in front of the Planning Board for cursory review once the township gets approvals from outside agencies.

Q: Will energy storage be on site?

A: Not right now but storage could be added when it gets to final design. It is not economically beneficial to add storage on site right now, but perhaps if incentives align.

Q: Who pays for the solar cap?

A: The township's tenant, NextGrid, will pay for everything related to the project.

Q: Is there a possibility for a pollinator garden on the site?

A: Yes, if the Environmental Commission is interested in cooperatively work with a bee keeper so a deal can be worked out. There isn't a lot of money in honey, although you have my support.

Q: Do either of the potential caps vent pollutants into the air or water?

A: No, there will not be emission of gas or pollutants as a result of the landfill cap installation. The landfill has been inactive for a long enough time that a majority of the decomposition that creates landfill gas has dissipated on its own. Capping the landfill will only improve the groundwater and atmospheric situation.

Q: Do the monitoring wells show everything is clear?

A: From what I understand, the readings look like what you would expect them to look like at this stage and are anticipated to continue to go down over time. In this particular circumstance, we don't have the presence of more biological material going into the landfill, so landfill gas is not a major concern.

Q: Will the solar panels be made in the USA?

A: That is ultimately up to the solar developer. We do not have the ability to require that panels be procured from the USA.

Q: How will the solar panels be disposed of at their end of life?

A: The project will be utilizing "Tier 1" solar panels which are not considered hazardous material by the NJDEP and can be landfilled. NextGrid is ultimately responsible for the removal and disposal of the solar equipment.

Q: What is the incentive for NextGrid to finance this project?

A: NextGrid stands to profit from a multitude of sources. They get to capture the economic benefits that go along with investing in solar as a renewable energy investment, 30% investment tax credit. The subscribers that enroll will be actively choosing to buy their electricity from community solar. They will have access to solar renewable energy certificates and can retire them as emissions credits or monetize them in the marketplace.

Q: Has the price of power been negotiated?

A: It is pending until approval by outside agencies. At this point we don't know for sure how big the development will even be.

Q: Will an earthen cap require the importation of dirt?

A: Possibly. Any material that is brought in has to be deemed acceptable by NJDEP and Pinelands Commission.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

##### **Presentation of the Green Amendment**

Maya van Rossum will give a presentation on the Green Amendment at the October 27, 2020 Environmental Commission meeting.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

##### **Pinelands Cert. of Filing - 457 Old Lacey Road**

No comments.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

##### **Brentwood Estates Subdivision**

The Brentwood application was not heard at the last Planning Board meeting. The applicant is revising their plans and the application will be heard at a future meeting.

##### **Natural Resource Inventory (NRI)**

The township NRI is on track for a fall completion. There will be a public hearing most likely in October.

**MEMBER REPORTS:**

Ms. Middaugh: The soil from the Dollar Store construction site on Lacey Road is going right into the street.

Ms. Demarest-Paraan: Perhaps that is a code enforcement issue.

Ms. Middaugh: At Harry Wright Lake there is massive erosion of the trail with runoff entering a pond that feeds into the lake. I think we should get a group of volunteers to come up with a permanent solution.

**PUBLIC FORUM:**

None

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, on motion by Mr. Wells and seconded by Mr. Cook, the meeting was adjourned. All in favor, motion carried.

Time: 6:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren Frazee  
Commission Secretary