

## MANCHESTER TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Tuesday, March 25, 2025  
Manchester Township Municipal Building  
1 Colonial Drive, Manchester Township, NJ

### REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Chairperson Fox 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: 6:01 PM

This was followed with the Salute to the Flag.

#### ROLL CALL:

Jim Sloan	Present
Doreen Sharry	Present
Sandra Drake	Present
Kathy Stricchiola	Present
Jim Gravatt	Absent
Anthony Nasta	Present

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

##### Motion to approve February 25, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Gravatt made a motion to approve the February 25, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes, seconded by Mr. Nasta.

##### **Roll call vote:**

Mr. Sloan-Yes  
Ms. Sharry- Yes  
Ms. Drake- Yes  
Mr. Gravatt -Absent  
Ms. Stricchiola- Yes  
Mr. Nasta -Yes  
Motion carried.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

##### **Discussion of PB-2024-22-Hope Chapel Town Square LLC-B66 L 1 2 & 4-Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan and Minor Subdivision- EIS and Stormwater Management**

The Commissioners discussed the project and the inaccuracies in the Environmental Impact Statement. According to the DEP website, there appears to be several endangered species in the area. They would like the applicant to submit a new EIS statement. Ms. Kisty will prepare a memo to the Planning Board to be shared at the Technical Review meeting for the application.

### **Ciba Geigy Litigation Update**

Councilwoman Zolezi introduced herself and explained that this is ongoing litigation between Toms River, DEP and BASF regarding remediation and appropriate utilization of the property. She does not think that the project proposed was the best idea and it needs work, which is the purpose of the litigation as well. She explained that the damage to the natural resources in the area was significant and the applicant needs to propose better remedies. The DEP said that the applicant needs a more established procedure and they need something that benefits more regionally. Ms. Zolezi said that there are updates on the DEP website and that the residents and Commissioners could look to the DCA and DEP for more information.

### **Townhall Tree Survey and Index: a comprehensive inventory and assessment of trees within the town hall grounds or surrounding areas, potentially used for planning, maintenance, or environmental purposes.**

Ms. Kisty explained that she and Councilwoman Zolezi had discussed potentially having a comprehensive inventory done of the trees on townhall grounds with small plaques on the trees giving information about the species, etc.

The Commissioners thought it was a good idea.

### **Forestry Stewardship Plan Development/Forestry Management Plan (Bob Beutel)**

Bob Beutel, a resident of Manchester introduced himself and explained that, before he retired, he was the Director of Public Works for Tenaflly for 20 years. He was in charge of the Sustainable New Jersey Program Certification for Tenaflly and the Community Forestry Program. He thinks it would be a good idea to have a tree plan for the Community. The Township would need to have a certified arborist. This would avoid engineering costs put on the residents when they need a tree clearing permit or reforestation plan reviewed. He explained that in the proposed tree regulations, hazardous and dead trees need to be determined by the arborist. This would be for protection of the existing trees.

Mr. Beutel also suggested that the Township set up a Shade Tree trust fund so that developers and home owners can opt to put money in the fund in lieu of replanting trees after taking them down. This saves money in the budget for trees. The Town would not need a Shade Tree Commission because they could reach out to the Ocean County Shade Tree Commission.

Ms. Kisty said that she would check with the zoning officer, Pasquale Popolizio, about the pending tree ordinance, the existing tree ordinance and the current fees for clearing.

Sergeant Robert Sharpy, of Manchester Township OEM, introduced himself. He said that the Townships current Wildfire Protection Plan covers the Town until 2033. Fire chiefs from all over met and discussed areas of concern for Forest Fire. They spoke about the most recent forest fire two years ago.

Sergeant Sharpy referred to the report that he provided the Commissioners on page 11 where it speaks about areas of concern, projects proposed to mitigate risk, who is responsible for the projects and the date by which they should be done. The report breaks down the fuel and structural threats. There are assessments done that determine what needs to be done. The example he gave were the fuel breaks that were done to give a reduction area to slow down a forest fire, if one were to be started.

Sergeant Sharry referred to page 20 of the report, which shows the individual projects to be done. He said that unfortunately, not many control burns were done due to budget cuts and droughts. The River Pointe community is requesting control burns, but can't because the state suspended them.

Doreen Sharry asked if there is a window of time in which control burns can be done. Sergeant Sharry answered that the window is usually between the first snow melt up to March 15<sup>th</sup>. Winds can cause them to cancel control burns as well. The state controls the burns too.

Mr. Nasta said that the firs company can go out in October and November, but hunting season interrupts that.

Sergeant Sharry said that it is up to the State Forestry and Wardens. He said that that the piece of property that runs along Ciba Geigy's fence is being targeted right now and it will be next once the suspension is lifted. He also stated that the evacuation route down Lake Road has been repaired in both Manchester and Lacey.

Finally there is Firewise meeting on May 6<sup>th</sup> and they will be working on the Wildfire protection plan for Sustainable NJ. The American Red Cross does an evaluation for retirement communities for fire safety.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

The Commissioners discussed the Earth Day Art Contest. Councilwoman Zolezi offered to fund the prizes for the winners of the contest. She asked that Ms. Kisty send the bill to her and her company, PureSoil. She would also like to invite other members of Council in the future and for the presentation of the prizes to the children at the May meeting.

### **Goals and Objectives for 2025**

The Commissioners discussed the Goals and Objectives briefly.

Ms. Kisty said that she spoke with Tracey from the Recreation Department about the Environmental Commission getting a table at Manchester Day. They would need to decide if there is a member that could man the table all day or for just a certain number of hours. Ms. Kisty also explained that the Township would be trying to put together a Green Fair, around May 20<sup>th</sup>, but the date was not set yet.

### **MEMBER REPORT:**

Jim Sloan touched a little bit more on the proposed Eagles nest after discussing it with some co-workers at the DEP. He said that they said that an Osprey is more likely to nest there than an eagle. You would have to contact Wildlife and game prior to the installation of it. The other problem would be sinking a pole high enough to go above the pitch pines out there. He said that in his professional opinion, he does not think it would be too productive.

Mr. Nasta said that he is working on the trail.

Ms. Stricchiola said that she believes in education. She said that her friend is involved in beekeeping. She would also like the Commission to be more involved with the schools.

Ms. Drake said that she will reach out to the council about getting Pine Lake tested.

Mr. Sloan will get information on euthanasia of the geese population.

**PUBLIC FORUM:**

Joe Markowski of 103 Eleanor Rd said that he worked with Sergeant Sharry on the Banquet. The Firewise program looks like a full time job for The Renaissance Community so they cannot convince anyone to take it on. He asked about the Townhall index and whether something was happening. The Commissioners said there was nothing happening yet.

Mr. Markowski asked about the South Hope Chapel Town Square project and Ms. Kisty explained where the property was and where to find the application documents on the website that have been posted for months.

Ms. Sharry asked if there were more Firewise Communities and Sergeant Sharry explained that most communities do not want to do it because there is so much work involved. He briefly explained the things that need to be done.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, on motion by Ms. Drake and seconded by Mr. Nasta the meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Amanda Kisty

Commission Secretary