**WATERFORD TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION (WTEC)**

**MINUTES - March 21, 2024**

**Members:** Rick Yeatman - Chairperson, Terry Ciarlante - Clean Communities Coordinator, David Demsey, Craig Buffington, Gabrielle DeSorte, Mike Ward, Jennifer Treloar, Bob Doney - Township Liaison

**Green Team Members:** Rich Casian, Ed Paul

**Meeting called to order** at 7:06 PM. This meeting was held in the Waterford Township Municipal Courtroom. The Sunshine Rule was announced and the Pledge of Allegiance recited.

**Roll Call:** Rick Yeatman, Terry Ciarlante, David Demsey, Craig Buffington, Gabrielle DeSorte, Ed Paul, Jennifer Treloar, Bob Doney. Absent: Mike Ward, Rich Casian

**Reading and approval of minutes:** Minutes from the February 2024 meeting were read and approved. In the Chair's report, Hamilton Gazette should be corrected to Hammonton Gazette.

**Chair’s report**: Rick Yeatman:

The state is repairing a broken drainage pipe at Atco Lake. There has been much discussion about what is going on there on social media and the township was not notified first.before work began. Bob Doney will check with Mike Hogan about changes to the lake as a result of the work.

**Membership & leadership**: Dave Demsey reported that Ryan Holbrook is interested in serving on the WTEC, he is to send a letter of interest to Bob Doney.

**Goals for 2024:**

**Lithium batteries:**  Discussed goal of addressing lithium batteries. Lithium batteries should not be put in the trash. One suggestion was establishing battery collection at Public Works Department. Bob Doney has discussed this with Andy Wade, they don’t see an easy solution. Whatever the solution is, it needs to be monitored. Ed Paul suggested accepting lithium batteries at events we are at. Rick Yeatman suggested publicizing on social media that lithium batteries should not be disposed of in regular trash, and that Home Depot and Lowes will accept the batteries. Social media suggestions: the WTEC Facebook page, the fire department, the various Waterford Township Facebook pages. Bob Doney suggested using fear; Craig Buffington suggested we post videos of lithium batteries catching fire.

**Paper Shredding Event**: We are still looking for a vendor who will shred on site. No date set yet, we are hoping for Saturday, May 18th. The county will reimburse up to $1000 towards shredding. Last year, TAB did it. Ed Paul is looking into other vendors.

**Trash Cans at Wharton Forest Entrances:** Dave Demsey has been cleaning up trash in Wharton State Forest. He reports the most common item is alcoholic beverage containers, most likely due to concerns about open containers. Dave would like to put up 55 gallon drums on township property outside the entrances for visitors to easily dispose of trash. He estimates we need less than ten. Discussion ensued over logistics, who would empty trash, and if we should sort between trash and recyclables. Solution arrived at: a trial run at the three most used entrances, Arrowhead, Tremont, and Burnt Mill. Use township trash cans, secure them to trees, and have Public Works empty them. Part of the trial run is seeing how quickly they fill up.

**New Recycling Opportunity** - TREX benches. Dave Demsey got the idea from a Medford Township Environmental Commission member, Paula, with Open Trails NJ. She is willing to join us and answer questions about how Medford has implemented the program. Rick Yeatman suggested that we collect materials weekly from businesses that we ask to put materials aside. Bob Doney observed that this is a lot of effort for a bench. There was a general consensus that with the amount of horse farms we have, this is worth pursuing further. Dave Demsey and Rick Yeatman will research further.

**Clean Communities Report**: Terry Ciarlante: Account balance is $46,898.37. Bob Doney will double check balance with Dawn LIedtka, town clerk. Since the February meeting, Terry went to Sustainable NJ & Clean Communities events, and took lots of helpful courses. Social media report: our Facebook page has 486 followers, up by 200 over last year.

Rick Yeatman mentioned that Yale Schools has a secure program for recycling cell phones, should we ever consider a phone recycling event.

**Township Committee Liaison Report:** Bob Doney: The Conifer project is well underway. The social media misperception of the project was discussed, along with the missed opportunity of having a grand opening.

**Land Use Board Liaison Report:** Rick Yeatman: Rick put in the grant application for assistance with spotted lantern flies. He would like to put a notice in town mailings. Bob Doney suggested creating an email address or text number for lantern fly reporting. Rick will discuss with Mike Ward.

Oasis requested a number of variances for cannabis cultivation. They appeared organized and were approved. Bob Doney that this was a first step of many.

**Trails Ambassador Report;** Rick Yeatman for Rick Casian: Rick Yeatman asked if anyone had a list of sign locations. He will follow up with Public Works and Rick Casian about the list.

We currently have two cameras to monitor unauthorized dumping in Wharton Forest. Rick Yeatman suggested purchasing at least three more. Dave Demsey noted that we need to make sure the cameras have night vision and should check reviews before ordering. Craig Buffington made a motion that we purchase three cameras, Dave Demsey seconded, motion passed unanimously.

**Old Business: Environmental School Programs**. Bob Doney & Jennifer Treloar

The DEP has a lot of material online. Bob Doney needs to bow out. Bob noted that the DEP has educators willing to come in and do these programs. Terry Ciarlante and Jennifer Treloar will look into this further. Ideally, we won’t limit ourselves to library programs, but include school programs for the 24-25 school year.

**New Business: Spring Cleanup** - April 20, 2024

Dave Demsey reports that there are a number of local groups who have committed to participate this year - Pine Barrens Venom Jeep Club, Tabernacle Cub Scouts, Open Trails NJ, American Legion, and Louden Fire Department. Rick Yeatman requested that he circle back and get headcounts so that we have enough food and supplies. Craig Buffington reports that we have Gun Club approval for the date. We will not have tree saplings to give away this year. We believe we have enough bags, vests, and trash grabbers.

We still need a list of clean up sites, Bob Doney suggested we all email Rick Yeatman with our lists of roads that need attention, everyone agreed to do so.

**Pinelands Commission notifications** - there were none to report

**Meeting open to the public** - no members of the public present

**Comments from members**: Bob Doney mentioned that the Fishing Contest will be June 1, 2024 at Atco Lake. We should be there between 7 - 7:30 AM, it starts at 8 AM.

Craig Buffington raised the question if we have a list of roads that have been adopted by local groups. There was discussion about which roads have been adopted by various groups, but no one had a list.

**Motion was made to adjourn** by Craig Buffington, seconded by Dave Demsey. Meeting was adjourned at 8:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Treloar, WTEC member