

**Minutes of the Parks & Environment Advisory Board
Meeting November 6th, 2024 at the Canale Training Center**

In attendance:

Officers Present - Alex Perri, Co-Chairperson

Members Present - Dick Colby, Dan Crum, Emma Witt, Belinda Chester

Members Absent - Stephen Fiedler, Co-Chairperson , Lisa March

Commissioner Representative - Andrew Parker -absent

County Staff - Greg Brookins, D.H.P.W. - present

Secretary - Eric Husta, D.D.P.R. – present

Guests: None

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM and a flag salute was conducted.

Old Business:

Talk continued about previously discussed topics, including a presentation on the properties making up Weymouth Furnace, further discussion on NJDEP’s tree ordinance, and updates on the NJ North South Long Trail.

New Business:

The group discussed possible topics for future meetings. These included the reconstruction of the trestle bridge over the Great Egg Harbor River, Atlantic County master plan revisions, inviting Jason Howell from the Pinelands Preservation Alliance to speak, a representative from the animal shelter, the Rutgers bioblitz coordinator, and a field trip to the ACUA landfill.

Alex Perri discussed the importance of invasive species management. He has been working on removing porcelain berry in Cape May County and took time to mention a new IMAP program which aids in locating invasive species, in effect creating “citizen scientists”.

Alex also expressed his desire to get municipalities to form environmental commissions and mentioned the idea of hosting some sort of forum to introduce people to the idea. He was concerned with the recent clearing for the new housing development along Westcoat Road in EHT and would like to hear directly from representatives from EHT on how this project was approved.

Discussion was also had on the current state of the ACUA landfill and what happens to the waster after capacity has been reached. Eric Husta agreed to reach out to the SWAC to see if a representative could attend a future PEAB meeting.

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Belinda Chester mentioned the start of the next Master Gardener program will be January 8th, 2025. The program has been revamped and will be given in person this time around. The Master Composter program will begin in February along with the Environmental Stewards program.

Dan Crum mentioned a Cooper's Hawk took a squirrel in his yard.

Dick Colby mentioned the elections that took place the previous night. He also expressed concerns over the NJDEP's new tree protection which he feels is overreaching.

Eric Husta mentioned he would reach out to Steve Evert to get an update on the oyster replenishment project he has been working on.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM.

Our next meeting is currently scheduled for Wednesday, January 8th at 7PM at the Canale Training Center in EHT.

cc: Dennis Levinson, County Executive
Jerry DelRosso, County Administrator
Maureen Kern, Chairperson - Board of County Commissioners
Andrew Parker, Board of County Commissioners – PEAB Representative
Greg Brookins, Department Head Public Works
All Advisory Board Members