

**Minutes of the Parks & Environment Advisory Board  
Meeting January 8th, 2025, at the Canale Training Center**

In attendance:

**Officers Present** - Stephen Fiedler, Co-Chairperson, Alex Perri, Co-Chairperson

**Members Present** - Dick Colby, Emma Witt, Joe Ambrose

**Members Absent** -, Lisa March, Dan Crum, Belinda Chester, Velevia Bush

**Commissioner Representative** - Andrew Parker -absent

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

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

**Guests:** Scott Stueber, Fisheries Biologist, NJDEP, Division of Fish and Wildlife

**Members of the public:** Steve Jasiacki, Chairperson Sustainable Margate, Sue Lazarchick, Ken Able, Professor Emeritus, Rutgers University, Department of Marine and Coastal Sciences

The meeting was called to order at 7:12 PM and a flag salute was conducted.

**New Business:**

The group reorganized with Steve Fiedler and Alex Perri remaining Co-Chairpersons with a unanimous vote.

**Guest Speaker:**

Scott Stueber, a fisheries biologist from NJDEP's Division of Fish and Wildlife gave a presentation on the oyster shell recycling program he has been working on since 2019. Scott originally presented to the group at our November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019, meeting where his presentation focused on the recycling and reuse of oyster shells on local oyster beds in the Mullica River. This is a healthy, self-sustaining population of local oysters the division is attempting to augment and enlarge in the hopes of one day using transplants from this area to jump start recovery efforts in other nearby depleted populations.

The program has been extremely successful with an expanded palette of partners and 13 local restaurants participating in the shell collecting program. The program has collected and recycled more than 400 tons oyster shells with 100 tons being collected in 2024 alone, making it the program's most productive year to date.

The shells are collected by volunteers and brought to a curing site where they are allowed to dry for 6 months, ensuring they are free from any type of bacteria or other contaminate. They are then taken by barge to the bed site where they are pushed off the deck with high pressure water cannons replenishing or expanding the shell area.

Scott concluded his presentation with an update on the implementation of educational programs in Atlantic City schools and the mention of a \$1.2 million dollar grant that will be used to greatly expand the scope of the recycling program.

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**Round Table Discussion:**

Steve Fiedler updated the group on a meadow building program called “Your Mud Matters”. A link to more information can be found here... [New Jersey Coastal Resilience Collaborative on LinkedIn: Jan. 13: 'Your Mud Matters: Turning Dredge Material into a Community...](#)

Steve Jasiiecki updated the group on his bid to ban uncollected saw dust generated from the cutting of composite construction materials. Many towns have passed resolutions supporting the idea.

Ken Able mentioned he has been working on the environmental impacts of offshore wind, climate change and sea level rise. He also briefly discussed a few of his long-standing research project, one of which included fish counts once per week on nighttime flood tides for 34 years.

Dick Colby noted a recent survey circulated by Green Acres containing a trail needs assessment survey. Eric Husta will forward a link to the survey which can also be found here... [Statewide Trail Needs Assessment for Trail Planners and Managers Survey](#). Dick also mentioned his desire to see the group host or organize at least one public lecture per year.

Emma Witt suggested the group try to get meteorologist, Joe Martucci to speak at one of the public lectures. Emma also discussed the possibility of this group being an avenue to get environmental ordinances and other pertinent, environmentally sensitive development applications and the likes, to the right group of review agencies to comment on such matters and applications. Mention was made of ANJEC already serving in a similar capacity.

Alex Perri noted the Absecon Green Team is looking for volunteers to help build their funded community garden with a targeted opening date of May 1<sup>st</sup>. He also updated the group on a new bike path extension from the playground at the corner of Crestview Avenue to the existing bike path in Pitney Park. Alex made mention of awarded grant funding that will be used for tree mitigation and site amenities such as a bike rack and cell phone charging stations.

Sue Lazarchick, a member of the public, asked if something could be done about the renovation of the lighthouse at Lake Lenape Park East and mentioned additional parking for Weymouth Furnace should be added on one of the adjacent parcels owned by the County.

New member Joe Ambrose asked for additional information on the Environmental Stewardship program offered by the Rutgers Cooperative Extension. Steve Jasiiecki gave him some insight while others suggested he speak to Belinda Chester, a member with direct knowledge of how the program works.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00PM.

**Our next meeting is currently scheduled for Wednesday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 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