

**Minutes of the Parks & Environment Advisory Board
Meeting January 7, 2026, at the Canale Training Center**

In attendance:

Officers Present - Stephen Fiedler, Co-Chairperson,

Members Present - Dick Colby, Emma Witt, Joe Ambrose, Dan Crum,

Members Absent - Alex Perri, Co-Chairperson, Belinda Chester, Velecia Bush, Lisa March

Commissioner Representative – Richard Dase -absent

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

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM and a flag salute was conducted.

Guest Speakers: John Hooven, Forester, DelAtlantic Conservation District and Tyler Savage, member of the District Forestry Staff

Mr. Hooven and Mr. Savage made a presentation explaining the heat island effect, offering typical characteristics, symptoms, and remedies for the phenomenon. Solar radiation is readily absorbed by the hard dark surfaces found more often in urban environments such as rooftops, asphalt roadways and parking lots. Building walls and facades as well as the lighter surfaces of concrete roads and sidewalks also contribute to this effect.

Discussion was then had on possible ways to mitigate the effects of heat islands. These included using lighter colored paving materials, adding green roofs and most importantly adding more trees for canopy cover. Conversation then turned to a case study of Egg Harbor City and what they are doing to alleviate “hot spots” as wells as the role an approved community forestry master plan plays in the process.

The presentation ended on the topics of Atlantic white cedar regeneration and reforestation tactics in general. Mr. Hooven also noted there will be an Atlantic county local working group on January 29th from 4pm-6pm at the DelAtlantic Conservation District office in their Mays Landing office.

Round Table Discussion:

Dan Crum updated the group on one skunk and one raccoon, each of which tested positive for rabies.

Joe Ambrose mentioned FEMA and the fate of future flood insurance. He also mentioned he will continue traveling to local park systems in the area and report back to the group on his experience.

Dick Colby mentioned his list of topics for discussion this year. Eric Husta noted he would scan and attach the list of topics to the minutes if he didn't receive a digital copy.

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Steve Fiedler discussed the process of seeking a wild and scenic designation for the Mullica River. He mentioned the groups involved and the help he was receiving from individuals like Fred and Julie Akers, both of whom are familiar with the process utilized to achieve the designation for the Great Egg Harbor River.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 PM.

Our next meeting is currently scheduled for Wednesday, February 4th , at 7PM at the Canale Training Center in EHT.

cc: Dennis Levinson, County Executive
Jerry DelRosso, County Administrator
John Risley Jr., Chairman - Board of County Commissioners
Richard Dase, Board of County Commissioners – PEAB Representative
Greg Brookins, Department Head Public Works
All Advisory Board Members