

## **Minutes for the Environmental Commission January 11, 2018**

The meeting commenced at 7:05 pm.

Members present: Beaumont, Clapp, Hamtil, Urbanski, Van der Veen, Zuzov.

Members excused: Andreoli, Coyne, Haug, and Piel.

Approval of minutes: October 12, 2017: Approved with no changes.

### **Opportunity for Public Comment:**

Fairfax Hutter presented herself as an AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassador. She has been involved in stream assessments and had concerns as to the Alexauken Creek on Alexauken Creek Road where JCP&L had previously “trimmed trees.” She is also involved with the Delaware River Basin Commission, and the NJDEP with stream monitoring standards. She also had concerns as per the Alexauken Creek Fish and Wildlife Management Area, having hiked such, noticed the smell of raw sewage near the failing dam, and was approached by hunters with the same concerns. Her concerns were relayed to the DEP. Subsequently, the SADC sent out a member to assess the possibility that the contamination may be coming from nearby Fulper farms. Dave Clapp performed the investigation. The manure pit was examined and found to be in compliance. It was noted that the horse farm nearby had supposedly placed a pipe to convey manure to the Alexauken. This is to be further investigated.

Also discussed was the failed dam and the possibility to correct it, without needing an historic evaluation.

**We welcomed new member Nella Hamtil** – Nella was given the Environmental Commissioners Handbook and an updated CD. Nella signed the Oath of Allegiance.

**Environmental Commission Report of Activities for 2017** - Cathy had prepared the report and it was endorsed by the members. It will be presented to the Township Committee on January 17 and posted on our webpage.

### **Environmental Commission Report of Activities for 2017**

#### **Testing of well water**

We worked with Raritan Headwaters to provide well water testing for the township residents.

May 13, Saturday, handed out flyers at the municipal depot.  
 May 20, Saturday, sold kits at the municipal building.  
 May 22, Monday, kits were returned at the municipal building.

The turnout was excellent.

## THE ONLY SURE WAY TO KNOW YOUR DRINKING WATER IS CLEAN: TEST IT.

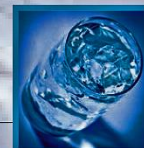


**Raritan  
Headwaters**

Protecting water, and so much more.  
[www.raritanheadwaters.org](http://www.raritanheadwaters.org)

### The Environmental Commission of West Amwell Township is providing access to this inexpensive well test program for Township residents.

This program provides an inexpensive and convenient method for residents to have their water analyzed for different water quality parameters. We will be working with Raritan Headwaters Association for this well-testing program. These tests are for private use only.



### Here's how you can take advantage of this program.

Testing kits (including a container and easy-to-follow directions) will be available for sale (see chart below for pricing) on **Saturday, May 20 from 8:00 am until 12:30 pm at the Township municipal building**. Then participants will return the completed kit to the municipal building on the following Monday, May 22 from 8:00 am to 10:00 am. The kits will be picked up by Raritan Headwaters Association and taken immediately to Garden State Laboratories, a NJ certified lab. Your test results will be sent to you in about 14 days.

TEST	REASONS TO TEST	POSSIBLE SOURCE
Basic Kit (includes total Coliform and Fecal Confirmation) - \$60	Recommended by HC Health Dept. to test annually. Cloudy water. Recurrent gastrointestinal complaints from people drinking water.	Cracks in well casing, faulty seal or seepage near well. Septic system problems. Storm runoff
Nitrate - included in the Basic Kit	Cloudy water. Recurrent gastrointestinal complaints from people drinking water. High levels are harmful to infants and pregnant women.	Cracks in well casing, faulty seal or seepage near well. Septic system problems. Seepage from fertilized land.
Iron - \$15	Discoloration of laundry or plumbing fixtures, rust stains. Bitter or metallic taste.	Naturally occurring deposits. Industrial wastes.
Manganese - \$15	Discoloration of laundry or plumbing fixtures, rust stains. Bitter or metallic taste.	Naturally occurring deposits. Manufacturing and agricultural runoff.
Lead - \$25	Can cause physical or mental development problems in infants, children. Kidney problems or high blood pressure in adults. Harmful to children and pregnant women.	Corrosion of household pipes, fittings, solder. Soft water may be more corrosive.
Arsenic - \$35	Can cause increased risk of cancers, gastrointestinal ailments, diabetes and cardiovascular impacts.	Naturally occurring deposits. Wood preservative.
Volatile Organics (62 chemicals) - \$95	High levels can cause liver, nervous system disorders, irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure, anemia and cancer.	Underground storage tanks, gas stations, landfills, hazardous waste sites, and septic systems.
Pesticides (18 chemicals) - \$135	High levels can cause birth defects, cancer and damage to the nervous system.	Farm, golf course, residential runoff.
Radon - \$50	Exposure to radon in drinking water can lead to lung cancer. Can be ingested or inhaled as gases are released from the water into the air.	Naturally occurs, produced by the breakdown of uranium in soil, rock and water. Can enter the home through well water.
Gross Alpha - \$80	Exposure to gross alpha emitters in drinking water can lead to lung cancer. Can be ingested, or inhaled as gases that are released from the water into the air.	Erosion of natural deposits of minerals that are radioactive, may emit alpha radiation, which can enter the home through well water.

## Stormwater

Stormwater Subcommittee appointments - Cathy, Joan, Joel, and Rob as consultant.

Flyers were prepared for resident education and were included with the mailing of the tax bills.



**WHEN YOU'RE  
WASHING YOUR CAR  
IN THE DRIVEWAY,  
REMEMBER YOU'RE  
NOT JUST WASHING  
YOUR CAR IN THE  
DRIVEWAY...**

Pollutants end up flowing into storm drains, and directly into our streams and rivers. This polluted storm water also threatens the lives of the animals and birds that live in our area.



### **Why should you care about clean water?**

Rain washes pollutants into storm drains and directly into our lakes, rivers and the ocean. So what can you do? Take your car to a car wash where the water gets treated and recycled.

Storm water pollution is one of the greatest threats to New Jersey's clean water supply. Clean water provides access to safe drinking water, places for recreation, commercial opportunities, healthy wildlife habitats and adds beauty to our landscape. Rain washes pollution from roads, parking lots and lawns into storm drains, then directly into our streams and rivers.

Did you know that more than 60% of water pollution comes from things such as motor oil, fertilizers, pet waste and detergents? By sharing the responsibility and making small, easy changes in our daily lives, we can keep common pollutants out of storm water. And out of our beautiful waterways.

### **Protecting our wildlife.**

Many types of litter have been found in the stomachs of marine life, birds and other animals, because they thought it was food. Birds and marine life have also been found trapped or tangled in plastic bags, fishing line and other discarded items. Littering hurts everyone.

### **Stormwater Education for the Township Committee:**

Presented to the Township Committee on 11/15. Joel and Cathy were present, with Joel doing a PowerPoint presentation. It was well received.

### **319h grant**

The detention basin retrofit on the municipal property was redone in May. The original design had failed. EC had many conversations with Princeton Hydro to try to rectify the failure.

The detention basin/rain garden at the municipal property was then replanted with 700 plants, including Riverbank Wild Rye, Boneset, Rose mallow, Blue flag Iris, Soft Rush, Blue Vervain, Purple Coneflower, Oxeye Sunflower, Black-eyed Susan, and Little Bluestem. Cathy was there for the planting.

The vegetative swales were redone in the fall. They had been mowed by the DPW because of the thistle infestation.

The project for the Kiriluk erosion problem was finally approved by the NJDEP. The one year extension was also approved. We worked with the NJDEP and Princeton Hydro with permitting and design for the Kiriluk property.

### **Sustainable Jersey certification**

The topics discussed in detail as per their submission were: Clustering Ordinance, Create Green Team (Resolution, members), Environmental Commission (Ordinance, annual reports, by-laws), Farmland Preservation Plan, Energy efficiency for municipal facilities, Innovative Community Project 2 (Well water testing), NRI, Pledge Supporting New Jersey Wildlife Action Plan, Recycling (Map, info, tonnage reports), Sustainable Land Use Pledge, Tree Protection Ordinance, Wind Ordinance, Non mandated recycling (brush, Christmas trees). WAT was certified by Sustainable Jersey for 2017.

### **Stream Corridor Ordinance amendment**

Done for clarification, with no changes to the ordinance.

### **Emerald Ash Borer**

Dave Clapp marked 50-60 ash trees at Hewitt Park, along the hedgerows and driveways which may pose a hazard to park users. Serious consideration was given to trees which might not be able to impact any residents and fall within the forested area. Fallen trees, if not a liability, contribute to the vibrant ecology of the forest/wooded areas. Mayor Dale said that the DPW would remove the marked trees over the next few years.

Information about the borer was posted on the website.

### **Tree Cutting ordinance**

A resident of Barry Road, adjacent to the preserved Hunter property, asked that we consider a tree cutting ordinance. Members discussed this and eventually agreed that this was not appropriate for



the Township. Members felt that cutting of trees which negatively affects neighboring properties should be dealt with in some fashion and will be researched in the future.

**319h grant** – Members discussed the Kiriluk property. Dave Clapp spent much time reviewing the proposal from Princeton Hydro and concluded the need for fencing for the Alexauken with funding from CREP (90% Federal, 10% State) to address this serious problem. Contact with Kiriluk is advisable, but we will wait to see the outcome of the 319h grant project. Discussed was an alternative water supply for his cows.

**ANJEC dues** – Members questioned the need to pay the dues and what benefit it was to West Amwell. Decision to postpone this, as we currently have nothing budgeted.

**Proposed new beekeeping regulations** – Janice and Cathy spoke about the proposed regulations. There is much concern that the proposed regulations will seriously restrict residents from keeping bees, with so much over regulation by the state, based on one complaint. Cathy provided a draft letter and it was approved by the members (with an abstention from David Clapp).

*Joseph Zoltowski Dir. of Division of Plant Industry NJDA proposedrulesPlantIndustry@ag.state.nj.us*

*The West Amwell Township Environmental Commission would like to comment to the State Department of Agriculture on the proposed regulations on bee-keeping.*

*From the State of New Jersey, Department of Agriculture:*

*“Without a healthy honey bee population, successful fruit and vegetable production would be at risk. New Jersey's 20,000 bee colonies, valued at \$350 per colony, represent a \$7 million honey bee industry for the state and contribute to successful production of nearly \$200 million worth of fruits and vegetables annually. The New Jersey Department of Agriculture's Division of Plant Industry protects the pollination needs of the fruit and vegetable industry by ensuring that the honey bee population, both native and migratory, is free of injurious honey bee pests and diseases. The Division requires control actions when contagious diseases and pests are detected.”*

*The point of the regulations as proposed is to restrict beekeeping to areas where agriculture is permitted, or only in areas that are zoned for agriculture, as well as apply existing animal control measures to bees and beekeeping to accommodate lot size and population density, restricting the amount of hives a beekeeper is allowed and essentially making urban beekeeping, and most suburban beekeeping, illegal. This ignores the years of experience and science pointing to the benefits of beekeeping, for the bees as well as the environment, in urban and suburban areas.*

*The proposed regulations would do more to hurt the bees than help them.*

*The Proposed New Rule violates the intent of Public Law 2015, c76. The intent of this law was to promote well managed beekeeping while reducing nuisance complaints made against*

*beekeepers. NJSA 4:6-23 was written with NJ Beekeepers Association as a stake holder with emphasis on many different things to promote beekeeping, not to downsize it.*

*Consider this: Honeybees and the other pollinators and the invaluable pollinating services they provide us with helped produce approximately \$19 billion worth of agricultural crops in the U.S. alone in 2010; that's estimated to be one-third of everything we eat. To say we rely on the pollination efforts of bees to sustain our modern food system is an understatement.*

*The beekeeping industry is responsible for one-third of the food we eat.*

*More than 100 agricultural crops in the United States are pollinated by bees. Examples of bee pollinated crops include watermelons, cantaloupe, citrus and apple. Although some of these crops are pollinated by bee species other than honey bees, honey bees are the only ones that can be easily managed, moved around and are known to exploit a wide variety of crops.*

*Honey bees are disappearing globally at an alarming rate due to pesticides, parasites, disease, and habitat loss. If these little insects that help provide so much of the food we eat were to vanish, what would we do without them?*

*The West Amwell Environmental Commission is opposed to the proposed regulations as they are seriously restrictive of beekeeping, as they ban beekeeping on residential lots of one-quarter of an acre or less. This flies in the face of the NJDA guidance for years which stated no more than three hives per 1/4-acre. Beekeepers with hives on 1/4-acre up to five acres are limited to two hives. Beekeepers with hives that were in place as of July, 2015 and are in excess of the two allowed, would have to apply for a waiver.*

*These proposed regulations did not consult the NJBA and other bee professionals in a meaningful manner for their feedback. The proposal is riddled with inaccurate bee information...and these proposed changes were written as a result of one complaint about one beekeeper who kept the bees in a poor fashion.*

*Cathy Urbanski, Chair, for the West Amwell Township Environmental Commission*

**It was noted that Zuzov's mother was responsible for making the honeybee the NJ official insect.**

**Raritan Headwaters** – Asked that we consider well water testing again this year. Members agreed that this should be done every three years. Cathy provided an assessment from Raritan Headwaters from the 2017 testing. EC members agreed that the results need further interpretation and should not be posted on the website as there could be much confusion to the public.

**Sustainable Jersey**- West Amwell Township was certified by Sustainable Jersey with the following topics submitted:

Clustering Ordinance, Create Green Team, Environmental Commission, Farmland Preservation Plan, Energy efficiency for municipal facilities, Innovative Community Project 2 (Well water testing), NRI, Pledge Supporting New Jersey Wildlife Action Plan, Recycling, Sustainable Land Use Pledge, Tree Protection Ordinance, Wind Ordinance, and Non mandated recycling. Certification is for three years.

Members discussed what was involved to attain the certification. Members were offered SJ pins, but all declined and decided to offer to the residents as per the table in the municipal building.

#### **Texas Eastern Compressor Station upgrade –**

Enbridge Energy (Texas Eastern), which owns a natural gas compressor station in West Amwell had made the following comments to West Amwell: This Project will result in the retirement and replacement of two natural gas combustion turbines at the compressor station. The two new turbines will utilize current technologies that will achieve superior performance and result in a significant reduction of air emissions. These new turbines will be housed in a new building. We will also be making other facility and equipment modifications that support the flow of natural gas through the compressor station, in addition to removing existing buildings from the facility that are no longer necessary. In addition to the environmental benefits of replacing the existing turbines, the new turbines and other improvements will allow Texas Eastern to deliver additional natural gas to local distribution companies in New Jersey.

Members questioned the delivery of additional natural gas to local distribution companies in New Jersey and how this was tied in with PennEast and their proposed Lambertville lateral pipeline.

**Emerald Ash Borer and JCP&L** – Cathy noted that JCP&L is targeting all of the ash trees that might impact their power lines. The tree service that they have selected is courteous and will really help WAT with diseased tree removal. This is a great service.

**Stormwater Subcommittee** – Appointments for 2018: Coyne, Urbanski, Van Der Veen, and Piel, as consultant.

#### **Members then discussed the following:**

PennEast alternate route as proposed by Mike Spille and the status of the pipeline.  
Updates for the NRI, last done in 2015.  
The grant for the Kiriluk farm.

**There was no further comment from the public.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Minutes prepared by C. Urbanski.

