

# WEST AMWELL TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING

## November 20, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.

### Meeting Minutes

#### Action Items

The following action items were agreed to in the meeting.

No.	Item	Owner	Detail
1	<b>Well Data</b>	Coyne	Mr. Coyne to find Township well data
2	<b>Outreach to conservation groups</b>	Coyne	Mr. Coyne to reach out to regional groups like Sourland Conservancy and The Watershed Institute
3	<b>Spotted Lantern Fly</b>	Beaumont	Mr. Beaumont to put together some learning materials on trapping Spotted Lantern Flies
4	<b>Dead/Dying Ash Tress</b>	Spille	Mr. Spille to speak to Township Committee about dying ash trees in the Commission and their threat to private property and electric lines

#### 1) Call to Order

The Meeting was called to order at 7:05pm.

Notice of this meeting has been provided to the Hunterdon County Democrat and was posted on the bulletin board at Town Hall according to the regulations of the Open Public Meetings Act. A copy of this notice is available to the public and is on file in the office of the Township Clerk.

#### 2) Roll Call

*Present:*

Jennifer Andreoli (Member), Dave Beaumont (Member), Mike Spille (Chair), David Clapp (Member)

*Absent:*

Joel Coyne (Member), Nella Hamtil (Member), Jill Haug (Member)

Also present at the meeting: John Dale (Township Committee Liaison)

#### 3) Opening Statement by Chairperson

Mr. Spille welcomed everybody back after a long hiatus due to covid19. While it has been a very trying year for everyone, on a somewhat positive side the drastic decrease in human activity seems to have lead to a proliferation of plant and animal life in the Township.

#### 4) Opportunity for Public Comment (*limited to 15 minutes*)

It is noted for the record that no members of the public were present at this portion of the meeting.

#### 5) Approval of minutes;

All four present members voted to approve the minutes.

#### 6) Old Business;

##### a) PFNA Contamination

Mr. Spille reviewed the records of PFNA contamination at South Hunterdon School. They definitely exceeded the updated NJ State DEP standards, but prior to those standards being tightened they were in compliance. The issue was fixed with a filtration system on site.

It is still not clear what is causing the contamination across the region. A review of NJDEP maps shows that it definitely only is appearing in developed areas, it does not seem to be appearing in undeveloped wooded areas.

**b) PennEast Pipeline**

The Supreme Court of the United States requested the US Solicitor General to provide an amicus brief addressing PennEast's petition for a writ of certiorari to overturn the 3rd Circuit court ruling against them. As a reminder, in the 3rd Circuit ruling, the court found that PennEast could not haul the Sovereign State of New Jersey into Federal court, as it was a violation of the 11th amendment. The court further found that the Natural Gas Act, which conveys eminent domain authority, was unclear on whether it was meant to over ride the 11th amendment or not. As a result of this ruling, PennEast is unable to take 42 properties along the route in NJ.

In other PennEast news, the Delaware River Basin Commission was still taking comments from the public, and has made no ruling (or even set a timeline) for considering PennEast's application. Mr. Spille and many others in the region who oppose the project have sent extensive documentation asking that the PennEast application to the DRBC be denied.

**c) Well Data Discussion**

This discussion has been postponed.

**d) FB Site Discussion**

Mr. Spille consulted with the Township lawyer on the topic of the Environmental Commission operating a Facebook Group to help more easily and inexpensively reach residents on topics of Environmental concern. The attorney indicated that this was problematic from a liability perspective and in terms of control municipal control within the law. There are also questions about whether or not public commentary could be allowed. For now it has been decided to table the proposal.

**e) Watchdog Function**

Mr. Spille also talked to the Township attorney about the possibility of the Environmental Commission assisting township residents in dealing with official agencies regarding environmental issues (e.g. NJDEP). The attorney responded that this, too, would be problematic from a liability perspective. This proposal has been tabled for now as well.

**f) Recycling Committee Cooperation**

Mr. Beaumont explained to the Commission members that recycling standards have changed dramatically in recent years, such that very little material is actually considered recyclable anymore. In fact, likely nearly all of our recyclable material ends up in landfills anyway. There are some exceptions, like glass. At this point only type "1" and "2" plastic is recyclable, and it must be thoroughly washed to qualify.

**g) Regional EC Websites**

This was covered in a previous meeting and no additional information has been gathered since then.

**h) Outreach to Conservation Groups**

This has been postponed to the next meeting.

**i) Discussion of EC Goals**

**7) New Business**

**a) Compressor Station Emissions**

A Delaware Township resident has contacted Mr. Spille and indicated that the Enbridge Natural Gas Compressor Station on Rt. 179 had a sporadic and perhaps troubling emissions history. He had purchased some equipment to help measure emissions from a distance, and they seemed problematic. He will gather his historical data and send it along once he has accumulated a long enough baseline.

**b) Spotted Lantern Fly**

It was noted that the Spotted Lantern Fly had arrived en masse in the Township over the summer. Nearly all Commission members had stories about finding large quantities of them in their yards. Mr. Beaumont indicated he had come across a simple method for killing these foreign pests that can be easily constructed. Mr. Beaumont will pull together some material on this topic.

**c) Dead & Dying Ash Trees**

Nearly all of the Ash trees in the Township are now dead and dying, and they are threatening residential structures and power lines. Mr. Spille indicated he would take this issue to the Township Committee, and in particular see what could be done with dead ash trees that are threatening power lines.

**d) New proposed website changes and continued updates**

The Township is working with Mr. Beaumont to move to a new web site that should be easier to use and update. The Environmental Commission will have a dedicated section it can own and update. Ms. Urbanski has agreed to take point on this, with Mr. Spille assisting. This should make it easier for us to get information out to the public in a timely manner.

**e) Sunoco Liquid Petroleum Pipeline in Pennington**

Mr. Spille indicated that Sunoco has found a liquid petroleum pipeline that runs through Jacob's Creek has become unearthened within the stream bed. This is an environmental safety issue that Sunoco needs to address quickly. The new plan looks to abandon that section in place and re-route the pipeline to avoid Jacobs Creek. Mr. Spille will monitor the project for progress and any issues it faces.

**f) Open Discussion**

No items were discussed in the open session.

**8) Discussion/Other Issues Not on Agenda**

None.

**9) Opportunity for public comment**

For the record it was noted that no public was present.

**10) Adjournment**

The Meeting was adjourned at 8pm.