

Madison Environmental Commission
Meeting Minutes
April 23, 2020

1. **Call to order** by Chairperson Claire Whitcomb – Virtual Meeting via Zoom Conferencing.

2. **Announcement of meeting notice**

Statement of Compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act: Read by Claire Whitcomb, Chairperson.

This meeting of the Madison Environmental Commission complies with the Open Public Meetings Act. (P.L. 1975 c. 231) Notice of this meeting was provided to the Madison Eagle, Daily Record, Star Ledger, and to tapintomadison.com. Copies of this notice are posted on the bulletin board at the main entrance of Hartley Dodge Memorial and were made available to the general public.

3. **Present:** Bridget Daley, Ellen Kranefuss, Joan Maccari, Trina Mallik, Brian Monaghan, Claire Whitcomb, Stephen Stocker
4. **Absent:** Ann Huber, Nicole Wood, Maureen Byrne as BC Liaison
5. **Guests:** Brett Cheadle, Lisa Jordan, Kirsten Wallenstein
6. **Events:** All previously scheduled public environmental events sponsored or supported by the MEC have been cancelled and/or postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

7. **Continuing Business:**

Mailing List: Bridget is working on transitioning current MEC mailing list to the email platform Constant Contact. She is developing use of Constant Contact through Madison's existing platform to coordinate communication, manage spam, etc. Questions came up as to whether there is a section in Constant Contact for notations and event attendance. Bridget to follow-up but noted individuals can be tagged and grouped in subsets within Constant Contact.

Water Filling Stations: Kirsten notes that education regarding plastic bottle use at town fields has helped increase use of re-useable bottles. Water filling stations are key to a larger shift. Currently, only 5/22 Madison fields or venues have existing water filling stations. Three sites (MRC, Dodge Field, Sonny V. Little League Field) have been selected for water station installations in part because they have snack huts. Claire will reach out to Tom Salaki and Melissa Honahan to find out more about plans for replacing/rebuilding current huts.

Master Plan: Trina inquired about updates how sustainability elements are being included in the master plan and how the town may need to interact with state master plans.

Shade Tree Ordinance: There have been ½ dozen uses of the Shade Tree Ordinance; some residents do not know about the ordinance and confusion exists about the need for permits. Brian added that the number of non-native species being planted on municipal property has been reduced from 50 to 13+/-.

Community Garden: Stephen noted Food Pantries are taking fewer deliveries due to their reduced operations from the coronavirus. The Interfaith Food Pantry is able to take slightly more deliveries than some others.

8. New Business:

Native Plants: Joan is sharing her native plant expertise with the launch of a digital newsletter: “What’s Blooming in Madison”. Bridget will be working with Joan to coordinate a day of the week to send it through Constant Contact. The content of the newsletter also dovetails well with other work in town around native plants such as Tom Salaki’s plans to plant natives in town parks and gardens. Discussion ensued about whether a native plant ordinance is needed. Brian noted that since municipal plantings are approved/selected by town committees oriented to native plantings, there is less need on an actual ordinance. As residents become increasingly aware of native planting on municipal (and residential) properties, they may be more inclined to ask garden centers to carry native species – hence possibly negating the need for an ordinance.

Residential Composting: Bridget has written a news release about the opportunity for Madison residents to sign up for curbside pick-up through Java’s Compost. A webinar on composting will be offered by Java Compost either on April 28 or May 5. In addition, an article will appear on Rosenet about composting. Bridget learned that The Farm at Green Village carries many types of backyard composters so interested residents have many choices if they choose to buy one.

Gardening InfoLine: Claire noted an increased interest in gardening in the community. Bridget suggested a gardening info phone line might be established for residents who have questions but have limited community interactions right now due to the coronavirus. Brian indicated he would be willing to draft something and MEC members can help with digital distribution.

Sustainable Madison Certification: Lisa updated the group that extensions have been granted due to the coronavirus. Brett was slated to do a tree inventory but that project has shifted due to the coronavirus. He pivoted and completed a brief analysis of flood risk in Madison (points available for this action) and indicated the tools on njfloodmapper.com could help determine ways to get resilience. This also has implications for the Master Plan as it ties into storm water management projects and changing state regulations. He expressed interest in pursuing this topic after the completion of his semester and would be willing to devote more time to this and other MEC projects as an intern this summer.