

Madison Environmental Commission
Meeting Minutes
July 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, Joan Maccari, Trina Mallik, Brian Monaghan, Nicole Wood, Ellen Kranefuss, Claire Whitcomb
4. **Absent:** Ann Huber
5. **Guests:** Maureen Byrne as BC Liaison, Kathleen Cavaccale, Lisa Jordan, Stephen Stocker, Kirsten Wallenstein, Renee Shalloub, Brett Cheadle, Dylan MacDonald
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:**

MEC e-newsletter: Bridget continues to collect, coordinate and edit copy for the MEC e-newsletter, which she publishes almost weekly through the Constant Contact mailing list. Roughly 2,000 people are receiving it. Renee suggested she might extract a few main points from the newsletter and put it out on Twitter. Ellen will post recent newsletters on sustainablemadisonnj@gmail.com and also archive old issues. For the most recent newsletter, Nicole provided information about the harmful effects of pesticides. Joan loaned her expertise for this topic and provided Nicole with useful facts and resources. Nicole noted that she observed pesticide use at the MRC meadow; Stephen noted they were used for two invasive species and the spray was organic, not synthetic.

Plastic Bag Ban: Walgreens now has paper available; Stop ‘n Shop may need a nudge to shift from using up current supply to using paper or reusable Maureen will speak with Lisa about Farmers Market vendors adopting use of paper more readily. MEC intern Tina Munter is working on tallying results of the recent plastic bag survey relative to shifts from coronavirus.

Sustainable New Jersey: Kathy relayed that SNJ provided input that the solar ordinance as written needed more language stating purpose. The Planning Board has also made revisions to include more solar friendly elements.

Master Plan: Claire discussed with Mayor Conley the idea to develop a green committee to bring together individuals across various green groups who can give input on a potential Climate Action Plan within the MP.

8. New Business:

Rain barrels: The idea of a potential community forum on use of rain barrels was raised. Rutgers holds a class on putting them to use. Stephen added that they are simple to implement and inexpensive products such as Rough Riders at large hardware stores can easily be converted to rain barrels. He is happy to speak or give input if there is a forum organized.

Pesticide use by landscapers – There is a heavy load of chemicals used by landscapers to maintain weed free yards. It was suggested we begin collecting data from various landscapers and documenting it for consumers who want to be informed. Send all information collected to Claire for the time being.

Multi-town sustainable meeting – To keep moving forward with progress on initiatives, there will be an October meeting. Chatham has posted a survey to gather data on areas of interest in topics such as green buildings, sharing of knowledge between towns, how to strengthen an ordinance, CAP and safe playing fields.

Virtual Town Swap: The Madison Virtual Town Swap was officially launched on Facebook on July 22, 2020. It is for Madison residents only; 267 have joined to date with 12 waiting for approval. The flyer will be sent to churches in Madison to help get the word out. A Spanish version of the flyer will also be developed for possible use in the utility bill. It is anticipated that more volunteer administrators will be needed as membership requests grows.

Green Infrastructure: MEC summer intern Dylan MacDonald has visited many of the municipal buildings and visually documented the flow of water from downspouts with regard to how we might increase green infrastructure. If most storm water goes directly to storm drains, there is less opportunity for groundwater recharge. This project needs continued attention; there is opportunity for another volunteer to continue the work after Dylan returns to school in the fall.