

**Madison Environmental Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**August 25, 2022**

A meeting of the Madison Environmental Commission was called to order by Chairperson Claire Whitcomb at approximately 7:35pm.

Statement of Compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act was read by Claire Whitcomb: 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.

Present: Claire Whitcomb, Brian Monaghan, Joan Maccari, Stephan Stocker, Bridget Daley, Ann Huber, Rachel Ehrlich (Borough Council Liaison)

Absent: Kirsten Wallenstein, Trina Mallik, Ellen Kranefuss

Guests: Gene Cracovia, Chris Holland, Jim Burnet, Robert Landrigan, Robert Vogel, Kate Duignan (new Madison resident), Kathi Caccavale, Mary Ellen Hennessy-Jones, Suzanne Schreiber

The primary item of business was a presentation by Borough staff and discussion around the preferred proposed sites (2 sites at MRC) for new combined basketball and pickleball courts in the Borough. Bob Landrigan led the presentation with some background on the popularity of pickleball, the proposed sites, and the Borough staff's desire to get as broad input as possible on the sites. It is planned to review all the work with Borough Council at the meeting on Sept 25<sup>th</sup>. Jim Burnet indicated that the arborist report on the ash and pin oak trees was sent to Claire and Gene late today.

Claire, Kathi and Gene presented several slides which they prepared on issues which MEC is asking the Borough to take into consideration on plans for the courts. There was extensive discussion around these points:

- MRC as an important aquifer recharge area.
- Concern more broadly than about tree loss
- Increase in stormwater run-off
- Increased pollutants from water running across court surfaces made with toxins.

Solutions proposed by the MEC include:

- Build rain garden at bottom of area
- Town-wide tree planting campaign supported by pickleball and basketball players – Kirsten had prepared a draft campaign document which was shown to the staff

The MEC had a number of questions:

- Cost.

- Safety
- Lighting. Borough staff indicated lighting would be on timers, could be pointed toward the tennis courts (Site 1) and yellow-toned.
- Wildlife. Claire indicated that the area is habitat for the Indiana bat, and asked that be taken into consideration as well.
- Tree replacement. If the town leads by example and follows the shade tree ordinance, about 40 trees would need to be planted at the wooded site. Site 2 (parking lot location) likely would involve no tree loss.

Questions also were raised around the construction footprint, particularly at Site 1, what re-grading needs to be done at Site 1, impact of bringing heavy equipment into the area on tree roots.

This portion of the meeting ended with Bob Landrigan asking Claire forward MEC questions and comments to the Borough staff.

Other items:

1. Eco Garden Tour will be held on Sept 17<sup>th</sup>, starting at noon with registration at at Claire's home. Several organizations will have tables and there will be plants for sale. Seven gardens will be on the tour, including the BOE habitat masterminded by Joan and Bridget.
2. Bridget is organizing a lunchtime learning session with Douglas Tallamy for Borough employees and commissioners (Planning Board, ZBA etc).
3. Rachel and Mary Ellen gave a brief update on the Climate Action pilot.
4. Kathi indicated there is now a Rosenet page with information on rain gardens, which Joan and Bridget helped to create.
5. Rachel mentioned the new solar page on Rosenet, created by Michael Pellesier and Peter Fried, which is substantially more thorough and informative than the prior version.

Minutes from the July 28, 2022 meeting were approved with the following changes:

- The BOE HQ planting had 45 volunteers for planting (rather than watering)
- The name of the project is Madison Public Schools Pollinator Habitat. [It will be on the Sept 17<sup>th</sup> EcoTour.]

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Ellen Hennessy-Jones