



# B O R O U G H O F R A R I T A N

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

### Regular Meeting

August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025

### MINUTES

1) Open Public Meetings Statement:

In accordance with Section 5 of the Open Public Meeting Act, Chapter 231, Public Law 1975, be advised that adequate notice of this Meeting of the Environmental Commission of the Borough of Raritan, County of Somerset was made by posting on the Raritan Borough website indicating that this Meeting would take place at the Raritan Municipal Building at 7:00 p.m. on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025. In addition, a copy of this notice is and has been available to the public and is on file in the Office of the Municipal Clerk.

2) Roll Call

- In attendance: Juan Alvarez; Emilie Stander; Heath Hofmeister; Ben Harris
- Not in attendance: Olga Metaxas; Tony Sacino; Christopher Gussman; Adam Armahizer, Council Liaison

3) Flag Salute

4) Approval of Minutes from July 17<sup>th</sup>

Mr. Alvarez made a motion to approve the minutes; Mr. Harris seconded. The minutes were approved with no revisions.

5) Report from Borough Council

There was no report from Borough Council.

6) Report from Planning Board

There was no report from Planning Board.

7) Public Comment

Mike Pepe from the School Board was in attendance. The board has a business office that prepares grant proposals. The group discussed potentially applying for DEP's school tree planting grant (Trees for Schools) and looking to see when the next solicitation will come out. Mr. Harris asked if the school board is taking advantage of Clean Communities funding for education. Mr. Pepe will look into it.

8) Discussion Items

- Green Communities trainings – looking for a volunteer (Adam)
  - Councilman Armahizer was not present so this item was tabled until next month.
- Planning upcoming outreach events
  - Composting workshop, Oct 4
    - Location: Recreation has given permission to use the pavilion at Frelinghuysen
    - Purchasing materials: could ask participants to bring two tubs, could purchase a couple sets for whoever doesn't have them, purchase bait worms, something for stirring, bring a drill, bricks to separate the tubs, Uncle Jim's Worm Farm for online purchases; Mr. Hofmeister will reach out to DPW and Finance to figure out how to purchase the materials; per person: two totes, one lid, worms, 1-2 bricks; alternatively purchase the materials in cash (not credit card purchase) and bring the receipt to Finance

- Advertising: Mr. Harris will create a flyer and post on social media, Mr. Alvarez will print out color flyers, Ms. Stander will create the Google registration form for people to sign up and will share the link with Mr. Harris; Mr. Harris will create an informational document for participants.
  - Tree planting at Elizabeth Ave park
    - Funding: DPW has exhausted the Shade Tree Commission funding for this year, but we could still do a planting with our own budget. Or perhaps the Commission will get more funding next year.
  - River clean up, Sept 27/28: Event will be on Sept 27, rain date Sept 28
    - Mr. Pepe will notify the school board to invite district students to attend
    - Mr. Alvarez will update the flyer
    - Mr. Hofmeister will ask DPW to purchase more grabbers
    - Ms. Stander will look for the canopy; she will arrange to transfer the t-shirts, table, and canopy to another member to bring on the day of
- Update and status of proposed revision of bylaws
  - Did the new lawyer have a chance to review? (Adam)
  - Councilman Armahizer was not present so this item was tabled. Mr. Hofmeister will touch base with Mr. Colvin.
- Ordinance review planning (Emilie)
  - Ms. Stander will reach out to Ms. Knowles to find out what she has already accomplished for the borough and what still needs to be done.
- Social media update and planning (Ben)
  - Mr. Harris is making good progress.
- Raritan Mall redevelopment
  - Volunteers needed to work on site-specific checklist for Planning Board
  - Outreach to LSRP to better understand timing of remediation and construction
  - This item was tabled until the group can touch base with Mr. Gussman.
- RVCC tree/forest health communication materials (Emilie)
  - Mr. Harris will work on the edits and distribute to the group.
  - Mr. Alvarez will print it when it's ready to post at public locations and distribute at events.
- Hydration station at JFK splash park or Nevius St bridge using Clean Communities funding
  - Mr. Hofmeister spoke to Mr. LoMedico about this and he suggested starting with JFK splash park since the plumbing is already there.
- Plans for upcoming visits to EC meetings
  - Ed Carrington (Duke Farms): Mr. Harris will find out Mr. Carrington's availability for the next few months.
  - Borough engineer
  - Outreach to scouts

#### 9) New Business

- Cameras for real-time flash flood monitoring: initial discussion and brainstorming
  - Ms. Stander will reach out to a contact who was at Somerset County Office of Emergency Management to see who we might talk to at the county.
- Microforest or rain garden at small open space on Orlando Dr
  - It looks like Somerset County owns it this parcel, so we will not pursue that area. It does look like the borough owns a parcel along the river across from the Lena. It would be worth planting some trees there.
- Mr. Hofmeister coordinated with Councilman Agrawal to arrange for a free yoga session on the Nevius St bridge on Sat, Oct 10. He will get the flyer to Mr. Harris to post on social media.

#### 10) Adjournment

Mr. Alvarez made a motion to adjourn at 8:38pm.