



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

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

October 16th, 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 October 16th, 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: Emilie Stander; Tony Sacino; Heath Hofmeister; Ben Harris
- Not in attendance: Juan Alvarez; Olga Metaxas; Christopher Gussman; Adam Armahizer, Council Liaison

3) Flag Salute

4) Approval of Minutes from September 18th

5) Report from Borough Council

Councilman Armahizer was not present so there was no report from Borough Council.

6) Report from Planning Board

Mr. Gussman, our representative to the Planning Board, was not present so there was no report from the Planning Board. Mr. Gussman reported earlier that the Planning Board is meeting next Wednesday, and so far there is only one small item on the agenda.

7) Public Comment

Ed Carrington from Duke Farms shared that there's a new science director, Hila Shimon, at Duke Farms who is a conservation specialist. This is in concert with Duke Farms' strategic move toward more science and conservation work and demonstration of green technologies. He shared his awareness of the Raritan Mall redevelopment project and offered Duke Farms' space and convening role as a neighbor to provide support. Sarah DeVito, volunteer coordinator, offered help with events in the future. Duke Farms has 75 volunteers that may be interested in getting involved with additional community events. DF also holds professional programs that provide various kinds of certification programs for professionals. Ms. Stander asked if the reforested floodplain areas on DF property would be open and accessible to the public. Mr. Carrington shared that they hope to welcome the public into the trail network through that area. Ms. Stander suggested that the EC and DF could partner to offer guided hikes for borough residents through the area. Mr. Hofmeister asked about the earth work that's happening in the reforested areas. Mr. Carrington confirmed that they are vernal pools that are in construction. Mr. Harris asked if there's a monitoring plan in place. Mr. Carrington shared that the Trustees are considering this but are looking for the resources to make this happen. Ms. Stander suggested that RVCC could potentially help with this.

8) Discussion Items

- Green Communities trainings: update (Adam and Emilie); this item was tabled until next month.
- Debrief from river clean up on 9/27 and yoga/mental health session on 10/11; ; this item was tabled until next month.
- Update and status of proposed revision of bylaws (Heath/Adam)
 - Councilman Armahizer previously shared that he will bring the revised bylaws to Council for consideration since the new lawyer has not provided any feedback.
- Ordinance review planning (Emilie)
 - Ms. Knowles provided a contract for her ordinance review effort. Ms. Stander will doublecheck with Councilman Armahizer that we are approved to proceed with the contract.
- Social media update and planning (Ben); this item was tabled until next month.
- Raritan Mall redevelopment; this item was tabled until next month.
 - Update from Planning Board representative
 - Volunteers needed to work on site-specific checklist for Planning Board
 - Outreach to LSRP to better understand timing of remediation and construction
- Hydration station at JFK splash park or Nevius St bridge using Clean Communities funding: update (Heath); this item was tabled until next month.
- Cameras for real-time flash flood monitoring: update (Emilie); this item was tabled until next month.
- Plans for upcoming visits to EC meetings
 - Ed Carrington (Duke Farms): Mr. Carrington attended this meeting as a member of the public.
 - Borough engineer

9) New Business

- Visit from Matt D'Allesandro (NRCS) (Tony)
 - District Manager, Somerset/Union Soil Conservation, subdivision of Dept of Ag in NJ; based at 4-H building in Somerset County
 - The EC and NRCS have already collaborated on fish stencils on catch basins.
 - Minimize soil loss from construction sites is their key regulatory mission, to support water quality, public education
 - Grant opportunities through NRCS
 - NRCS can provide seedlings for plantings in town and public events
 - Funding for their office comes from developers' fees, interested in using some of that funding to support local communities
 - NRCS and Rutgers soil scientists have assisted with soil analysis at Somerset County Parks properties that were having problems with compaction, high water tables, etc.
 - 21 Orlando Drive apartment complex: the developer went outside the boundary of disturbance into Somerset County Parks Commission property, NRCS has issued a notice of deficiency and the developer will need to remediate to bring the site back to original condition. The EC and public can help by being eyes in the field. NRCS has to sign off on the developer's land management efforts before they can get a certificate of occupancy. The size of the soil disturbance was extensive enough to violate regulations overseen by both NRCS (soil disturbance) and DEP (stormwater discharge).
 - Somerset County government has a permit to remove 34 trees from an access road in Washington Valley Park, but they actually removed 300-400; Bridgewater Township is now suing Somerset County. NRCS will investigate; this is part of their regulatory purview; they may have to involve DEP if there are environmental areas of concern.
 - Some towns have a soil moving ordinance, which would be very helpful. This dictates importation of clean fill. A black market of dirty fill has become a big problem in NJ, which

- NRCS has been involved in with the Attorney General's Office.
- Raritan Mall redevelopment: suggests pushing for project phasing
- Public comment for revision to Ortho hazardous waste permit (Emilie and Adam)
 - The group reviewed the draft public comment that Ms. Stander offered. Mr. Harris made suggestions that we amend the draft to include recommendations for sampling after large rain events, hydric soils, and sampling by DEP or an organization overseen by DEP through a QAPP. Mr. Hofmeister made a motion to approve the public comment language with the suggested revisions. The group unanimously voted to approve the public comment. Ms. Stander will make the revisions and submit the public comment on behalf of the group.
 - Ms. Stander will send a link to the EPA website about the permit revisions to the group.
 - Ms. Saunders offered to help review flow conditions in the stream next to JFK, as high flows could be an indicator of groundwater discharge to the stream
 - Duke Farms may be willing to submit a public comment as well. Ms. Stander will share the link to the EPA website.
- Remembrance of former EC member, Michael DeCicco
 - Ms. Stander recommended a proclamation commending Mr. DeCicco for his service to the borough that would be read at a Borough Council meeting.
 - We could also plant a tree in his name with a plaque. NRCS may be able to donate one.

10) Adjournment

Mr. Harris made a motion to adjourn at 8:28pm, Mr. Sacino seconded the motion.