



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

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

November 20th, 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 November 20th, 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; Christopher Gussman; Heath Hofmeister; Ben Harris
- Not in attendance: Juan Alvarez; Olga Metaxas; Adam Armahizer, Council Liaison

3) Flag Salute

4) Approval of Minutes from October 16th

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

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 reported that the last meeting earlier in November was short. The Raritan Mall redevelopment plan is coming up again, most likely during the January meeting. At the October meeting the board killed the big billboard sign, but there is some talk of revising ordinances to allow for a different design.

7) Public Comment

Ms. Saunders suggested that the group pick up the rain garden proposal again. Perhaps the grant writer could assist. St. Ann's had agreed to the idea in the past; the library is also a possible location, in addition to other sites around town. Ms. Saunders suggested the vegetated swales next to the train tracks. Mr. Hofmeister noted that we have to distinguish between borough property and right of way areas. Ms. Saunders suggested partnering with the Recreation Committee to offer some recreation activities related to gardening to provide maintenance. The borough administration is currently interviewing candidates for Recreation director and hopes to have the position filled by the beginning of the year. Mr. Harris suggested that the Garden Club of America has funding, along with the Rutgers rain garden rebate program on municipal projects; JFK School could be a good location for this. Ms. Stander also noted that the AARP gives funding for community-related projects.

8) Discussion Items

- Green Communities trainings: update (Adam and Emilie)
 - Ryan Bellinger has offered to come speak to the EC about this during our January meeting.

- Debrief from river clean up on 9/27 and yoga/mental health session on 10/11
 - Some volunteers from Duke Farms came again this year, along with a watershed ambassador. The event went well.
 - The yoga mental health session went well. There is interest in holding a meditation session in the near future. Ms. Stander reached out to the Somerville EC, which is interested in partnering with us. They have a community space that we might be able to use.
- Update and status of proposed revision of bylaws (Heath/Adam)
 - This is a question for Councilman Armahizer.
- Ordinance review planning update (Emilie)
 - Ms. Knowles is available to attend our January meeting to discuss her progress on our ordinance review. Ms. Stander added that we might suggest she review soil moving ordinances and potentially recommend adopting one.
- Social media update and planning (Ben)
 - Mr. Hofmeister added posts for the river clean up and the yoga event. The commissioners who are administrators on our social media accounts will review who currently has administrator access.
- Raritan Mall redevelopment
 - Update from Planning Board representative (see report from Planning Board section above).
 - Volunteers needed to work on site-specific checklist for Planning Board
 - Outreach to LSRP to better understand timing of remediation and construction
 - The subcommittee will schedule a meeting to generate a list of issues for the Planning Board to raise and questions to ask the LSRP. Once the subcommittee is ready, we can invite the LSRP to a future meeting. The subcommittee will report back to the full membership at the January meeting.
- Hydration station at JFK splash park or Nevius St bridge using Clean Communities funding: update (Heath)
 - Mr. Hofmeister spoke to Mr. LoMedico. It sounds like the new hydration station will be constructed in the spring.
- Cameras for real-time flash flood monitoring: update (Emilie)
 - Ms. Stander got a contact at the county emergency management office. So far she has not gotten a response, but she may get some assistance from Ms. Knowles.
- Remembrance for former EC member, Michael DeCicco
 - Proclamation and tree planting were both suggested at our last meeting.
 - We'll plan for a tree planting at the Elizabeth Ave park in the spring. NRCS offered to supply the tree. We'll look for a small plaque or flower vase with his name on it to install next to the tree.
- Plans for upcoming visits to EC meetings
 - Borough engineer: We should aim to educate ourselves about the MS4 watershed improvement plans before we meet with Mr. Brosnan. The group discussed setting up a shared document that we can all populate with potential questions for Mr. Brosnan as we watch the videos that Ms. Stander sent out. We should aim to invite him to our February meeting.
 - Angela Knowles, ordinance review consultant: we will invite her to our January meeting.
 - Ryan Bellinger, Green Communities municipal liaison: we will invite him to our January meeting.

9) New Business

- Preparing OPRA for 21 Orlando Drive
 - Mr. Hofmeister and Ms. Stander will prepare the OPRA request to be able to see the borders of the property. That will allow us to keep tabs as that development proceeds. We

may reach out to Duke Farms to also suggest they do their own patrols since their property abuts the development.

10) Adjournment

Mr. Harris made a motion to adjourn at 8:39pm; Mr. Hofmeister seconded the motion.