



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

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

February 19th, 2026

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 February 19th, 2026 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: Heath Hofmeister, MLUB Liaison Chris Gussman, Ben Harris, Tony Sacino, Emilie Stander, Council Liaison Jake Martinez

Not in attendance: Juan Alvarez, Olga Metaxas, Vince LoMedico

3) Flag Salute

4) Approval of Minutes from January 15th

This item was tabled until next month.

5) Report from Borough Council

This item was tabled until next month.

6) Report from Planning Board

- Raritan Mall redevelopment project
This item was tabled until next month.

- 57-59 LaGrange site plan review

EC members reviewed the site plans and discussed the following comments to share with Planning Board:

- The EC strongly recommends additional soil and groundwater testing at 59 LaGrange for several reasons:
 - Soil testing was done at 57 LaGrange, and contaminated historical fill had to be removed. NJDEP maps show that fill extended across multiple properties bordering the train tracks in that neighborhood. We strongly recommend requiring the owner to hire an LSRP to look for, and conduct testing of, any historical fill present at 59 LaGrange. We note that the borough engineer has requested soil testing at 59 LaGrange multiple times in 2025 and 2026; we echo this concern and request.
 - The EC notes that previous documents, including an environmental review solicited by the owner as well as technical reviews prepared by the borough engineer, noted the presence of unlabeled chemical storage containers and at least one leaking 55-gallon container in the former building at 59 LaGrange. The borough engineer has requested the owner provide documentation of the identity of these chemicals and how they were disposed of prior to demolition. The EC echoes this request and further recommends soil and groundwater testing on the 59 LaGrange property to

provide peace of mind to neighbors and future tenants that there are no remaining soil and groundwater contamination issues on the site.

- Based on previous testimony by the owner, the water table on the site is too high to build basements in the proposed townhouses. Given this information, the EC is concerned that there is potential for documented past soil contamination to have migrated into the groundwater. We strongly suggest groundwater sampling of contaminants that were previously found in the soil (i.e., PAHs, cobalt, beryllium, etc.) as well as possible contaminants, particularly TCE, given past land uses at both 57 and 59 LaGrange.
- The site plans do not show the proposed location and design of the swale mentioned in the borough engineer's technical review. It would help to see a drawing of the proposed design. Will there be infiltration into contaminated soil under the engineered media? The owner should confirm that the native soil in this area is not contaminated.
- This section of Raritan qualifies as an overburdened community under NJ's environmental justice law. Could this statute compel the owner to do some additional soil and groundwater testing at 59 LaGrange?
 - The proposed design suggests that air conditioning equipment would be located in the backyard of each unit, in close proximity to the train tracks. We recommend the owner include additional air filtration inside each townhouse unit to remove air pollutants from train traffic that could be introduced into those units through the AC system.
 - Why was the developer exempted from the state requirement to provide EV chargers/make ready parking spaces for this development?
 - Why was the owner granted a waiver for the environmental review? Wouldn't the previous industrial use of 59 LaGrange and the historical fill be enough to trigger an environmental review, particularly of impacts associated with demolition and construction?

7) Public Comment

8) Discussion Items

- Proposed rain garden project and grant proposal development

The group discussed installing the rain garden and seating next to the pickleball court at Frelinghuysen Park.

Mr. Hofmeister shared that DPW can help with transporting materials, but labor like planting and spreading mulch should be handled by volunteers. DPW crews would be working during business hours. Mr. LoMedicao can speak to DPW's capacity to provide earth moving and other site preparation functions. Ms. Cornelson noted that park enhancement grants could be used to add more infrastructure in the future.

The group agreed that green infrastructure could work at Basilone Park, but that we would work towards that in the future and focus on Frelinghuysen now.

Ms. Cornelson shared that Recreation Committee is very supportive of the idea. Councilman Martinez is also supportive.

The group will put together a short concept paper to share with Councilman Martinez and Administrator Colvin that could be circulated to Council members before the next Council meeting on March 3. The goal would be for Council to approve at the Mar 3 meeting so we can submit the proposal to AARP on Mar 4.

Ms. Cornelson will check in with Mr. LoMedico about what the group discussed tonight.
- Event planning for 2026
 - Meditation workshop, scheduled for Sat, Apr 4, 11am, in Community Room, about an hour in length. Zen Center will provide cushions. Flyers are already up. Mr. Harris will put the flyer up on Instagram.
 - Spring cleanup on April 18, start time 10am in partnership with Raritan Headwaters (RHA).

RHA will provide all the materials and its own advertising. There's a request that the borough make a donation to RHA out of Clean Communities funding. Ms. Cornelson would like to bring volunteers back to Frelinghuysen for free food and celebration after the cleanup at noon. RHA will coordinate with DPW about trash pickup. Recreation Committee will set up the event in Community Pass so people can sign the waiver. They'll put together a flyer with all the logos on it.

- Spring tree planting and remembrance for Michael DeCicco
This item was tabled until next month.
- Rain barrel workshop
This item was tabled until next month.
- Hydration station installation
This item was tabled until next month.

- Social media update and planning

- Mr. Harris will post the flyer for the meditation event on the EC's Instagram account.

- Plans for upcoming visits to EC meetings

This item was tabled until next month

9) New Business

- Future of Green Team/Sustainable Jersey efforts
This item was tabled until next month.

10) Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:15pm.