



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

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

June 17th, 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 Public Library at 6:00 p.m. on June 17th, 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, Olga Metaxas, Tony Sacino, MLUB Liaison Chris Gussman, Emilie Stander, Council Liaison Jacob Martinez

Not in attendance: Ben Harris, Vince LoMedico, Juan Alvarez

3) Flag Salute

4) Approval of Minutes from May 21st

Ms. Metaxas made a motion to approve; Mr. Sacino seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with no revisions.

5) Report from Borough Council

Councilman Martinez reported that the proposed ordinance revisions are being reviewed by the borough engineer to make sure they conform with the upcoming NJPACT REAL changes. Once he has completed his review, the borough attorney will prepare them for Borough Council to review. The goal is to bring them to the next Borough Council meeting. There is only one Council meeting in July.

6) Report from Planning Board

Mr. Gussman reported that the next Planning Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday of next week, June 24. Mr. Gussman will not be able to attend. The proposed billboard on Route 202 will likely be on the agenda. Attendees commented that it would have been better to identify just one location where the billboards would be allowed rather than multiple locations in the borough's enabling ordinance. Others pointed out that they are requesting variances beyond what is allowed in the enabling ordinance; Planning Board/Borough Council should therefore be asking for concessions. Meanwhile the lawsuit filed by the developer against the Borough is still pending and will not move forward until September. It would seem that the Planning Board should not move forward with considering the application until the lawsuit has been resolved, but it is likely the application will continue to move in the meantime. Some mentioned light pollution as an issue, and indicated that the lumens produced by the billboard should be less than what is allowed by DOT for lighting on Route 202.

7) Public Comment

The group discussed the proposed Technical Review Committee, and some shared concerns that the makeup of the committee does not appropriately reflect the community's interests and input.

The group also noted that Council has not formalized the relationship with its LSRP yet.

Ms. Brown shared her observations on the LaGrange property that the owner's LSRP showed up last week. Ms. Brown informed the owner's LSRP that the borough's LSRP is supposed to be on site to observe any testing as per the agreement with the borough. Christopher Ward from RT Environmental is the LSRP that the Borough is beginning to work with, but he was on vacation at the time. Ms. Brown notified the mayor and the attorneys for the borough and the Planning Board. Mr. LoMedico arrived onsite soon after, and then everyone left without the owner's LSRP doing any testing. All the additional testing was supposed to be done before the June Planning Board meeting, so now that timing is off. Ms. Saunders shared that Mr. LoMedico asked her and the EC to recommend a rain chain product for the back entrance of the municipal building. Mr. Hofmeister suggested finding an aluminum, copper, or brass product and to avoid a product with a copper coating, which is not likely to hold up long term. Also a copper product could end up being a target for theft, so it would make sense to avoid that material as well. Ms. Saunders will send out a few options for the group to review. Ms. Brown noted that the barrels behind the existing building at the Raritan Mall are still in place, and one of them is rusting. Mr. Timms noted that the Raritan Mall owner is suing the insurance company, and documents from discovery are publicly available. They indicate that borough professionals may not have been doing their due diligence in monitoring commercial activity on the site.

8) Discussion Items

- Ordinance review efforts: See the Borough Council report above.
- AARP grant: planning and next steps
 - Update on Council resolution and grant paperwork requirements
 - Council passed the resolution to accept the grant.
 - The CFO got the account set up to receive the funding.
 - Mr. LoMedico signed the grant agreement, and so all the paperwork got submitted on time.
 - Debrief from presentation to senior group
 - Mr. Hofmeister and Ms. Stander presented the concept to the senior group on June 10, and they were very supportive. Several members signed up to help put plants in the ground and take care of them. Members shared their input on design considerations for the shade structures and benches, including wanting arm rests that are not composed of metal, shade structures that are sturdy and durable, etc.
 - Rutgers RCE survey for rain garden planning
 - Mr. LoMedico signed Rutgers' proposal and established the purchase order, so the relationship with Rutgers is finalized.
 - Rutgers staff will come out to Frelinghuysen Park on Thurs, June 18 to conduct the survey.
 - Select canopy and bench products for purchasing
 - Subcommittee members and Mr. LoMedico will be on site during the survey to measure out dimensions for the shade structure and benches. This will enable potential vendors to put together quotes for shade structures and benches.
- Update on collaboration with RVCC students on communication about flooding
 - This item was tabled until next month.
- Event planning
 - Refurbish day before bulk pickup
 - The group discussed publicizing the idea that people put their stuff out on Wednesday for people to come pick through, and whatever isn't taken by Wednesday night then people would have to put their bulk stickers on for Thursday morning pickup. Next steps are to discuss the mechanics with Mr. LoMedico and figure out how to get the word out.
 - Mr. Sacino suggested putting free stickers or signs on those items.
 - Ms. Stander suggested eventually organizing upcycling events in which people who

- are handy and have tools could help people rehab stuff they picked up.
- Compost or rain barrel workshop
 - Our champions for these two events are not available, so we should put these events on the back burner for now.
- Fall clean up after Basilone Parade?
 - The Basilone Parade is scheduled for Sunday, Sept 20 at 1pm.
 - We should schedule the cleanup for Sat, Sept 26 with a rain date of Sun, Sept 27.
 - We will reach out to Duke Farms to partner. We will inform Mr. LoMedico of those plans.
- Green Communities: next steps
 - The group agreed to revisit this project after the rain garden and shade structure go in.
- Social media update and planning
 - Mr. Hofmeister and Mr. Gussman will get together to figure out how to connect the Instagram and Facebook accounts so that postings go up on both together.
- Tree removal ordinance
 - Mr. LoMedico reported that this effort is on pause until the ordinance revision proposal is resolved.
- Hydration station
 - Mr. LoMedico reported that the station is in hand, it just needs to be installed.
- Plans for upcoming visits to EC meetings
 - Borough engineer, Joseph Brosnan; Mr. Gussman said that Mr. Brosnan is interested in meeting with us, but he has not yet committed to a date. Mr. Gussman will try for our July meeting.
 - LaGrange LSRP; we would like to have the borough's LSRP meet with the EC during one of our upcoming meetings.

9) New Business

- Communication with Board of Health
 - Ms. Stander shared that a staff member from the County Department of Health recommended reaching out to the Borough's Board of Health in order to collaborate on environmental issues that intersect with public health, such as dust/asbestos/toxic gas exposure during remediation of brownfield sites, like LaGrange and the Raritan Mall. The Board of Health has the ability to create ordinances.
- Next steps would be to visit their meetings or vice versa so we can determine how we might coordinate our efforts.

10) Adjournment

Ms. Metaxas made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Gussman seconded. The group adjourned at 7:58pm.