

WWT ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

February 11, 2021

The February meeting of the WWT Environmental Commission was held on Thursday, February 11, 2021 via Zoom with Ephriam Buhks calling the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE

Pursuant to the Sunshine Law, a notice of this meeting's date, time, place and agenda was mailed to the news media, posted on the Township bulletin board, and filed with the Municipal Clerk.

ROLL CALL

Members: E. Buhks; L. Katz; T. Wahrman; A. Baig; E. Gordon; H. Shankar; S. Wolfe

Green Team: D. Kaye

Liaison: D. Dobromilsky Advisor: D. Parris; A. Shankar Council Liaison: A. Mandel

Guests: Linda Geevers and Sonia Gawas, Council Members; Mike Hornsby, Past EC Chair;
Sophie Glover, Watershed Institute; Girl Scout Troop #70053; Avanti, Girl Scout;
Miguel Vilaro-Munet; F. Guzik, Township Engineer

PUBLIC COMMENT –Members of Girl Scout Troop #70053, gave a brief overview of their group's Bronze Award Project, which concentrated on the topic of Environmental Problems. Caitlin created and is the webmaster of a website entitled "Recycling with Care". The website serves as a way to share information with others utilizing the virtual avenue during the current pandemic. The website provides information on all the Girl Scouts involved in the project, a recycling trivia quiz, environmental vocabulary and their Save the Environment presentation. Mira, a Green Team member at her school, shared some of their projects including collecting can tabs to be weighed and recycled to benefit the Ronald McDonald House, collecting plastic caps to be reused in art projects and growing green beans in their garden for Jewish Children & Family Services and the Food Bank. Serena reported that stores such as Walmart & Wegmans have signs to remind customers to be mindful of their waste and encouraging recycling. She also shared the group's Oath to Recycle which has been signed by multiple individuals. Ritika created the app "Click for a Cause" which allows individuals to select a location to clean up such as a park or beach, upload the details of the completed work into the app to earn points which are used for virtual rewards. This app can be used to make recycling fun for others. Aparna reused paper to teach younger troops how to make origami and encourage them to recycle.

Avanti, a Girl Scout, gave a presentation on her Gold Award Project in which she ran Zoom sessions to present information and encourage others to recycle and compost. The Governor recently passed the New Jersey Food Recycling Act which requires large generators of food waste such as hospitals, prisons and restaurants to recycle their food waste. Composting is a good option to recycle food waste where it can become decayed organic matter and used to help soil maintain nutrients, allow roots to spread and suppress plant diseases. This organic matter can be added to vegetable gardens, house or potted plants, used as mulch and spread around trees, and even used as fertilizer and spread across your lawn. She created her own composting bins from tubs by drilling holes in them and filling them with the proper materials. A total of 172 people have signed up and attended one of her Zoom sessions and she has sold 88 of her compost bins. With her proceeds, she purchased compost tumblers for Home Front and the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen which they have utilized and began composting. E. Buhks thanked them for sharing their presentations with the EC and invited others to do the same as well as these scouts to return with additional projects they tackle in the future.

Mike Hornsby, former chairman of the EC, spoke in support of the proposed Stormwater Management Ordinance. The Governor required climate-related vulnerability hazard assessments to be included in municipal master plans, specifically in the Land Use module for West Windsor. He also offered support and encouragement of the work of the Watershed Institute.

Stahena shared information on the National Wildlife Federation Community Wildlife Habitat project she partnered with Julia on for their Girl Scout Silver Award. The National Wildlife Federation partners with local communities to become healthier, greener and more wildlife friendly. Teams are typically resident led and

generated as grass roots efforts. Promoting native trees and plants in local gardening and landscaping and reducing the use of pesticides are the main focus. Julia stated they worked with members of the grass roots group Wild for West Windsor and raised the registration fee of \$99 to certify West Windsor. Any projects in West Windsor that relate to ecology and wildlife and meet the requirements can earn points towards the certification. Giving presentations, gaining partnerships with organizations with similar goals, and recruiting team members from councils and Environmental Commissions can earn points toward certification as well. They would like to invite E. Gordon and A. Mandel to join their team. With the additional of three members from Wild for West Windsor they will complete their team. They shared a spreadsheet of the certification requirements with EC members.

Sophie Glover, Assistant Policy Director of the Watershed Institute, stated they had recently completed an impervious coverage assessment of WWT which revealed almost 15% of the town is covered by impervious surfaces including parking lots, roads and roofs. Once a watershed area exceeds 10% of impervious coverage its water is considered impaired. This is not only a local concern but statewide as less than 1% of NJ waters meets fish consumption standard and only 24% meet recreation standards. Green infrastructure and natural solutions using plants and soil to capture and slow runoff has significant benefits including the reduction of flooding and the protection & enhancement of water quality. The State has mandated the use of these green infrastructures via the adoption of a new municipal stormwater ordinance by March 2021. She encourages WWT to utilize the example ordinance provided by the Watershed Institute and approve an updated Stormwater Management Ordinance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: none

CONTINUING BUSINESS: Township Council Update – A. Mandel gave an overview of recent changes and updates included on the WWT website. There is a new Welcome to West Windsor area which includes a Shop West Windsor section. A. Mandel, L. Geevers and S. Gawa, WW Township Council members, visited local businesses to take pictures, touch base with them and distribute a number of the BYOBag Campaign reusable bags. The information gathered was used to create a directory to encourage individuals to shop in WWT. L. Geevers stated they will also be including more homebased businesses and information on the two large, local malls. A. Mandel encourages the EC to utilize the WWT website to gather ideas which can be incorporated into the new EC website. E. Buhks thanked the TC for their assistance on all EC projects and for supporting local businesses.

Project Review – E. Gordon thanked the Girl Scouts for the informative presentations and their invitation to join their team. He gave a comprehensive overview on Sustainable Landscapes and recycling. Sustainable Landscapes can clean air and water, increase energy efficiency and restore habitats. WW encourages residents to restore wildlife habitats, maintain environmentally friendly lawns and minimize unnecessary waste by recycling. Invasive plants and animals are evident in WWT. A list can be put on the website to assist residents in identifying species, assessing the damage and educating on the threat they pose, how to avoid them and how to remove them. An abundance of information can be provided on lawns such as guidance on proper care and maintenance to ensure good health & deter invasive species. Composting can be encouraged with additional information as well. MCIA is responsible for the recycling in WWT and has an ample amount of information on what recycling is and why it is important. The EC can aid residents in maximizing efficiency, cost effective collection and resource conservation. E. Gordon would like to recruit the Girl Scout troops to collaborate together and provide the information they have acquired along their projects.

H. Shankar shared her presentation on research she gathered for solar energy. The solar energy is filtered through an inverter and meter to the house. Any energy not utilized by the home will be dispersed to the energy grid making it beneficial to the homeowner as well as the local community. There are optional battery systems which can store the energy to be used on days with less sunlight or during a power outage. Factors to determine if solar energy is beneficial to your home include the type of roof, which direction it faces and how much energy is consumed by your home. Google Project Sunroof is a tool that generates a google image of how much sunlight reaches your roof and the estimated savings you could receive from solar panels. Solar Farms are a possible alternative to those who live in a community setting such as apartments. They are erected in one area and can be utilized by multiple subscribers. Despite the potential benefits of installing solar, homeowners may be hesitate due to upfront cost, professional installation requirement and the delayed

profit turnaround. M. Vilaro-Munet offered to provide additional information based on his field experience with solar energy.

A. Mandel spoke about the growing number of electrical vehicles in the township and the installation of available public charging stations. The annual electric vehicle presentation in the township has been beneficial for the public to explore the vehicles in person. Information on how to locate public charging stations can be included on the website. The Planning Board has encouraged any apartment complex or residential home builders to include the infrastructure for electric chargers and commercial builders to include the infrastructure for charging stations.

A. Shankar presented a new layout for the EC website including a sample section specifically on the BYOBag campaign. Some of the pages to be included on the website are Initiatives, Main News, COVID-19, Tips, Archives and General Resources. D. Dobromilsky and A. Mandel had some discussion on keeping the integrity of the current EC webpage on the township website and maintaining continuity with the new information. A. Shankar will provide weekly progress reports as follow-up.

S. Wolfe reported on the BPU Home Performance Energy Star list of open projects which are available to be completed and assist in ensuring they are made more energy efficient at an affordable cost and reduce their carbon footprint. The projects can be both residential and commercial properties. He will continue to research the list to identify projects located in our area.

D. Dobromilsky gave an update on the BYOBag campaign. L. Geevers relayed a request for the school district for 900 reusable bags and printed inserts by the end of February to be distributed in March. D. Kaye will update the educational message to reduce the paper insert to one page which may be given to the group for distribution without having to be previously inserted in the bags. D. Dobromilsky will compose a progress report for Sustainable Jersey which is due by the end of the month.

NEW BUSINESS: Stormwater Management Ordinance – F. Guzik gave a detailed Engineering report describing the new proposed ordinance. The revised ordinance incorporates the required Green Infrastructure best management practices and nonstructural stormwater management strategies to reflect the State Stormwater Management Rules. These practices and strategies include treating stormwater runoff through infiltration into subsoil, through filtration by vegetation and/or soil and storing stormwater for future use such as irrigation or within a gray water system in the building. The proposed ordinance will be addressed during the township hearing and voted on at the Council meeting on 2/22. The new ordinance must be approved at that meeting in order to maintain the Township's compliance with their State NJPDES Stormwater Discharge Permit. F. Guzik stated that the ordinance may be revised as necessary if a future need arises or regulations are changed.

E, Buhks will provide further details at the next meeting on the upcoming Mercer County Green Fest event, Greening Together. He suggested the participation of the WW youth team and girls scouts.

Motion to adjourn by E. Buhks, seconded by A. Baig. Meeting was adjourned at 10:07pm

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Tomaro, Administrative Secretary
WWT Environmental Commission