

**Avalon Environmental Commission
September 21, 2021**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm by Chairwoman Rothman.

Pledge of allegiance.

Chairwoman Rothman read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement.

Roll call: **Present:** Dave Coskey, Kevin Coyle, Claire Driscoll, Joe Dvorak, Steve Malyszka, Brian Reynolds, Donna Rothman
 Absent: Beth Tipping

A motion to approve the minutes from the July 20, 2021 meeting was made by Steve Malyszka and seconded by Joe Dvorak. Approved by all.

Offshore Windfarm Forum: Donna Rothman announced there are five members of the Environmental Commission enrolled to attend this event, and thanked those willing to attend.

Master Plan Discussion – pages 32-44: Donna Rothman stressed the importance of having a broad knowledge of the initiatives included in the Master Plan to better serve the Borough of Avalon by understanding the goals of the Borough.

The members of the Environmental Commission reviewed the Master Plan, and had brief discussions about the following topics: bike lanes and their location; issues with cyclists causing traffic hazards and potential solutions to these hazards; traffic patterns and potential hazards on Dune Drive; information initiatives with regards to water conservation; the source of the water supply data provided by the County; planned pump stations in the south end to relieve flooding; town-wide tidal and rainwater flooding issues; a suggested program requiring bulkheads; a recommendation for floodgates at Bay Park Marina; tonnage calculations for solid waste, recycling, and construction debris; wireless technology, infrastructure, and the Borough's plans for implementation as it relates to 5G; historical preservation and conservation; the specific Master Plan goal of "conservation to prevent urban sprawl"; green energy, such as the proposed installation of solar panels on public buildings; and potential incentives for private property owners to convert to solar energy.

Letter to DEP – re: 4555 Dune Drive: Donna Rothman reported the property in question is located in the high dunes. The comment period for the DEP permit associated with this property ended before this meeting; therefore, a letter was sent on behalf of the Environmental Commission expressing the environmental concerns in connection with this property. This property is located at the highest elevation in the Borough of Avalon, and possibly Cape May County, near the hardwood swamp. The letter stressed the importance of preserving the high dunes and all wildlife therein.

Steve Malyszka suggested making an application to Green Acres requesting that they buy the property in question, with Donna Rothman responding the purchase of the property would be cost prohibitive for Green Acres funding.

Pollinator Garden Update: Claire Driscoll happily reported the Pollinator Garden lecture series was a huge success, which saw approximately 30 to 40 attendees per session. The new program, Grasses and

Classes, will teach fifth to eighth grade students of the Avalon School system how to plant dune grasses in specialized containers which would allow the root system to be seen. The grasses will be planted with the students on December 3, 2021, and the planting in the dunes is scheduled for April of 2022.

Donna Rothman thanked Dave Coskey for the fabulous photos taken during the Pollinator Garden Lecture series, while Claire Driscoll commended the Public Works Department for the maintenance of the pollinator garden.

Potential Programs for 2022: Donna Rothman asked the Environmental Commission members if the Pollinator Garden and Science at Surfside Park lecture series' should continue next year, with all unanimously agreeing they should be continued. A discussion regarding potential future topics took place.

Tree Committee: Joe Dvorak reported scheduling of a potential fall tree planting is in progress; however, there is trouble obtaining the necessary trees for the planting. The tree inventory is continuing to move forward, with a completion date estimated for the end of September, 2021. The Tree Committee has suggested the addition of four trees to the Acceptable Plant Materials List, those being Wild Persimmon, London Plane, Japanese Lilac, and Black Cherry. Wild Persimmon is a native plant in the dunes, and thrives in environments with a high water table. While many property owners may be averse to planting fruit trees, the male plant does not produce fruit. The London Plane also thrives in town, and would be a great addition to the list. Japanese Lilac was planted through the CSIP program, which is an attractive plant that has thrived. The Black Cherry is also a plant species found in the dunes, and is a very hearty plant that does well in these conditions.

Donna Rothman noted as part of the Community Forestry Management Plan, plantings of these species will be monitored, and it will be interesting to study the planting successes throughout town in the different climate centers, while also helping to beautify Avalon. An educational campaign could also be done to educate the environmental benefits of these plantings.

Joe Dvorak added all planting information is put into a database to determine the benefits and sustainability of each planting.

Armacost Park: Donna Rothman announced an upcoming meeting to discuss Armacost Park and the installation of the pipe extension, which should help alleviate the phragmite overgrowth. Further discussion took place regarding studies concerning salt water spray to control phragmite growth and potentially utilizing the method in the future.

Other Updates: Donna Rothman mentioned an upcoming meeting with Scott Wahl regarding the new Environmental Commission website. She also indicated a tree existing on 22nd Street near Harbor Avenue was possibly planted by Charles Lindburgh. The tree is 5.8 inches in diameter at chest height, and is rumored to have been planted by Mr. Lindburgh around 1969. She is actively trying to find some evidence backing up this claim. She further reported her recent boat ride with Dr. Tedesco from the Wetlands Institute to see the dredging research projects in the salt marsh to improve bird habitat and raise certain islands in the back bay. Donna expressed interest in arranging a boat trip for members of the Environmental Commission, as well as other interested parties and asked for help in getting access to a boat that could accommodate such a trip. Kevin Coyle volunteered to check out several options.

Adjournment at 5:15.