

**Avalon Environmental Commission
November 16, 2021**

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 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 October 19, 2021 meeting was made by Brian Reynolds and seconded by Dave Coskey. Approved by all.

Review of AEC Work Plan for 2022: Donna Rothman presented the Avalon Environmental Commission Work Plan to all present members, which includes a four-part lecture series at the Pollinator Garden again in 2022. Discussions with Scott Wahl have taken place regarding potentially creating paths in the pollinator garden to be accessed primarily during the lectures. A meeting will take place December 2, 2021 with Pat Sullivan to discuss the location of the path. Another program to be continued in 2022 is the Beachside Science lecture series at Surfside Park; however, one session will be eliminated for a four-part series to start in June in collaboration with The Wetlands Institute. The Avalon Free Public Library has agreed to co-sponsor the programs again in 2022. New for 2022, the Grasses in Classes program will begin on December 3, 2021, with the mature culms being planted in the dunes on April 14, 2022, weather permitting. The Armacost Park Restoration Plan has been listed as a high priority; however, this is a long-term project, as the majority of the restoration initiatives will most likely not be implemented until after the pipe is replaced. The Restoration Plan begins with the elimination of phragmites. Brian Reynolds noted Dr. Lenore Tedesco has announced working with Stone Harbor to eliminate phragmites from the bird sanctuary, and suggested the Borough utilize her as a consultant when trying to eliminate them from Armacost Park. Donna Rothman indicated that Dr. Tedesco has been named as an expert to be consulted with; however, Dr. Tedesco is not using hydrology for the phragmites at the bird sanctuary.

Donna Rothman spoke more on the proposed Avalon Environmental Commission Work Plan and noted the Dune Grass Plantings remain a high priority with two plantings per year. In 2021, the spring planting saw approximately 100 volunteers, while the fall planting saw approximately 70 volunteers. It is intended to continue the New Jersey Tree Recovery Free Seedlings Program, which was done during the Garden Club Plant Sale, but will instead take place during Community Connections if that event is resurrected in 2022, for which volunteers are welcomed. A new idea to create and distribute a landscaping pamphlet featuring plants appropriate for Avalon's ecosystem was presented. The development of an Environmental Resource Inventory/National Resource Inventory is included in the work plan. This initiative is a long-term project that would require a number of volunteers. Lomax Consulting has accumulated lots of GIS data over the years that would provide a good starting point for this initiative. The ERI/NRI would become an addendum to the Borough Master Plan.

Other items included in the Work Plan and discussed by the members included the emphasis on continued attendance at various seminars and forums for both continued education as well as obtaining a minimum of 10 CEU's to maintain the Community Forestry Management Plan; a suggested contest for

homes that are the most environmentally-friendly or landscaped with the best combination of native and ornamental plants; an analysis of the recently completed tree inventory to determine where trees should be planted and the trees more likely to succeed in each area; the development of a Side Streets Tree Program, which would be a pilot program encouraging homeowners to plant trees in between the sidewalk and curb providing guidance to those homeowners on the benefits of trees and the type of trees to be planted. A program of this nature could possibly be partially paid for through a grant from NJSTF. Another proposed project included a Tree Memorial Program. Details of such a program will be developed by the Tree Committee.

Steve Malyszka suggested moving all dune grass plantings to the spring to avoid nor easter concerns, with Donna Rothman expressing interest in that suggestion. Discussion concerning living bulkheads took place. Donna Rothman noted the Bay Park Marina project will be a pilot program for living shorelines to evaluate their performance. Steve Malyszka noted all new construction on the bay requires that a bulkhead be constructed. Dave Coskey added Stone Harbor Borough Council is considering increasing the required height for bulkheads.

Review of homeowner letter re: Offshore Windfarm Forum: Donna Rothman noted during the July meeting, a letter received from a homeowner requesting the Environmental Commission's position on wind farms was discussed. A letter of response was sent indicating no position would be taken by the Environmental Commission until the Environmental Impact Study is released and reviewed. The homeowner has responded thanking the Avalon Environmental Commission for working with the Borough's best interest at heart.

Rain Barrel Discussion: Donna Rothman evaluated the interest of the Environmental Commission members in implementing a rain barrel program, and noted different watershed programs provide free rain barrels. It may be possible to find a source that would supply free barrels and accessories, with a minor fee charged for the necessary faucet and netting. The use of a rain barrel could save approximately 1,300 gallons of water per year. The Stone Harbor Environmental Committee has contacted the Borough to determine if there is interest in developing a Seven Mile Initiative with rain barrels. Joe Dvorak spoke in favor of this concept and noted a rain barrel and explanation is located at Judy Groff Park. He further recommended discussing water saving initiatives with the Department of Public Works to lead by example. Kevin Coyle further suggested holding a rain barrel demonstration during dune grass planting events and having a rain barrel installed near Community Hall. The discussion could include drip watering systems versus sprinklers and what can be done to improve water conservation on Borough property.

ANJEC Games for Community Connections: Donna Rothman gave an overview of environmental games available through ANJEC, which could be used during Community Connections, and polled the Environmental Commission members on their thoughts of renting some games. Dave Coskey suggested the games could also be used during the Beachside Science lecture series. Brian Reynolds noted Community Connections is an event sponsored by AHLOA with speakers and many other tables. He expressed concerns about space and noise pollution for the event. Donna Rothman mentioned there are quieter and smaller game options. The goal of the games would be to get attention and potentially promote education.

Floodplain Management Plan Evaluation Report: Donna Rothman sought comments on this document, which was emailed to all members, and announced any comments the members would like to be made should be emailed to her. Those comments will be forwarded as a whole to Thomas Thornton, the Borough's Engineer. Claire Driscoll expressed happiness with the concepts about the turtle habitat and the pollinator garden.

Pollinator Garden: Claire Driscoll announced the Grasses in Classes program will begin December 3, 2021 at 8:00 am. The program will educate four classes, amounting to 49 students. Each student will plant two culms one pot. The pots will be stored at the Avalon Free Public Library, and will be color coded per class.

Tree Committee: Joe Dvorak happily reported the tree inventory of all trees within the Borough of Avalon is complete. Trees were identified by genus, diameter at breast height, condition and street location. James Craft has offered to comb through the data to consolidate it, employ consistency, and understandable format. He thanked the volunteers for their hard work in getting the inventory completed.

Armocost Park: Steve Malyszka noted no progress until the roadwork and pipe have been replaced in the park. Donna Rothman pointed out the Floodplain Management Plan Evaluation Report includes the replacement of the bulkhead on 72nd Street, which is where the pipe for Armocost Park ends.

Bay Issues: Kevin Coyle gave an update on the Bay Park Marina project, noting discussions are taking place with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection regarding the elevation of the building at Bay Park Marina, and solutions to other potential problems. Construction is expected to begin in October of 2022. Steve Malyszka stressed the importance of including flood gates at Bay Park Marina during the project.

Other Updates: Joe Dvorak reported watching the BOEM Environmental Impact discussion where members of the public could make statements, with a five-minute limitation. Many comments were made from the carpenter's union, and suggestions were made to move the windmills farther out to sea. No commitment date was provided for the EIS study completion.

Adjournment at 5:08 pm.