

Lebanon Township Environmental & Open Space Commission (EOSC) Meeting Minutes

January 9, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

In the absence of a sitting Chair, the meeting called to order by Ms. Petzinger at 7:02pm. In addition to the members listed below, Committee Member Schmidt and Past EOSC Chair Mr. Duckworth were in attendance and three (3) members of the public were in the audience.

In compliance with the "Open Public Meetings Act", notice has been given that the Lebanon Township Environmental and Open Space Commission hosts its regular meetings on the first Monday of every month at the Lebanon Township Municipal Building. Notice of this new meeting time was published in advance of this meeting.

KICKOFF & ROLL CALL

EOSC Member	Role	Roll Call
<i>Vacant</i>	Chair, EOSC Planning Board Member	-
Sharon Petzinger	Member	Present
Warren Newman	Member	Absent
Erik Jan Henriksen	Member	Present
Nancy Lawler	Member	Present
Kathy Koch	Member	Present
Sharon Hardy	Member	Present
Marty Collett	Alternate I	Present
<i>Vacant</i>	Alternate II	-

PRESENTATION OF MINUTES

The September 2022 Regular Meeting minutes were presented by Ms. Petzinger. No revisions were suggested. Ms. Hardy made the motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Henriksen, and unanimously approved except for Ms. Lawler and Ms. Koch who abstained.

The December 2022 Regular Meeting minutes were presented by Ms. Petzinger. One revision was requested to add that the August, October, and November meeting minutes were approved. Mr. Collett made the motion to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Ms. Koch, and unanimously approved except for Mr. Henriksen and Ms. Hardy who abstained.

RESIGNATION OF EOSC CHAIR

Ms. Petzinger announced the resignation of the EOSC Chair and EOSC Planning Board Member, Adam Duckworth, on December 30, 2022. Mr. Duckworth has been an EOSC volunteer for 10 years, with the last 7 years serving as chair and EOSC planning board member. Under Mr. Duckworth's leadership, the EOSC has mapped and prioritized areas for acquisition, submitted comments on multiple county and state plans, submitted multiple articles in the township newsletter, received grants and acquired open space, and set us on a path to better

steward our lands in terms of deer and forest management. Mr. Duckworth has kept us on track, well-organized, and will be dearly missed.

Mr. Duckworth addressed the EOSC members about his resignation from the EOSC, endorsed Ms. Petzinger to be the next EOSC chair, and praised the EOSC members. Ms. Lawler spoke about how well Mr. Duckworth led the EOSC and liked that he took temperature of the room at the meetings. Mr. Henriksen commented that Mr. Duckworth added direction to the EOSC.

NOMINATION INTO MEMBER UNEXPIRED TERM

Ms. Petzinger presented the option to recommend Marty Collett, who represents the fishing community, from Alternate I to the Regular Member unexpired term. This position will ultimately be appointed by Mayor, but the EOSC can make a recommendation to the mayor. Mr. Collett accepted the recommendation. Ms. Lawler motion to recommend Mr. Collett from Alternate I to the Regular Member unexpired term, seconded by Ms. Koch and was unanimously approved.

NOMINATION OF NEW CHAIR

Ms. Petzinger asked all members present who would be willing and able to step up to the vacant EOSC Chair position. This position will ultimately be appointed by the Mayor, but the EOSC can make a recommendation to the mayor. Ms. Lawler recommended Ms. Petzinger because of her depth of knowledge, and Ms. Petzinger accepted the recommendation. No other member was recommended. Mr. Collett made a motion to recommend Ms. Petzinger as chair, seconded by Ms. Lawler, and was unanimously approved.

NOMINATION OF NEW EOSC PLANNING BOARD MEMBER - MS. PETZINGER

Ms. Petzinger asked all members present who would be willing and able to step up to the vacant EOSC Planning Board position, which will likely be the unexpired Class IV term which expires 12/31/24. This position will ultimately be appointed by the Mayor, but the EOSC can make a recommendation to the mayor.

A member of the Environmental Commission must also be a member of the Planning Board, as required by § 1 of P.L. 1968, c. 245 (N.J.S.A. 40:56A-1), Part 1, Chapter 45-25: The term of a Class II or Class IV member who is also a member of the Environmental Commission shall be for three years or terminate at the completion of his term of office as a member of the Environmental Commission, whichever occurs first.

Ms. Koch made a motion to recommend Ms. Petzinger to serve as EOSC planning board member, which Ms. Petzinger accepted, seconded by Mr. Henriksen and was unanimously approved.

EOSC VACANCIES

Ms. Petzinger discussed the two vacancies on the EOSC, likely to both be alternates if Mr. Collett is appointed into the regular member unexpired term. Members discussed ideas on who to recruit or how to get the word out, including inviting them to February EOSC meeting. There

was also discussion about creating a student member position. This was done in Morris Township but the EOSC needs more information before moving forward with it.

BUSINESS

2022 Annual Report

Ms. Petzinger discussed the requirement of the EOSC to create an annual report: Part 1, Chapter 32-6: The Environmental Commission shall keep records of its meetings and activities and shall make an annual report to the Lebanon Township Committee.

Ms. Petzinger volunteered to create a draft annual report based on meeting minutes and provide a draft to EOSC members for review by 1/23/23. The draft will be finalized and voted on during the 2/6/23 meeting and sent to Township Committee by the new chair. A discussion commenced about the best way members can comment on the draft report, and it was agreed Google Docs was the preferred method.

Comments on Green Acres Rules

Ms. Petzinger presented information about the recently reorganized and created Office of Transactions and Public Land Administration (OTPLA) to oversee certain functions related to NJDEP contracting and the legal administration of both NJDEP-owned property and publicly-owned preserved lands. More information about the structure and mission of the new office can be found on our web site at www.dep.nj.gov/otpla. As a result of the reorganization, the former Bureau of Legal Services and Stewardship in the Green Acres Program is now the Public Compliance Section in OTPLA. Functionally, this section is still responsible for monitoring and maintaining the post-funding compliance requirements of the Green Acres statutes and bond acts. The new section is part of the Commissioner's office and reports through the Deputy Commissioner.

Ms. Petzinger stated that OTPLA is seeking input on Subchapters 25 and 26 of the Green Acres Program rules, N.J.A.C. 7:36 as well as the "Hot topics" provided. They are hosting a virtual non-profit Green Acres funding recipients stakeholder meeting Wednesday, January 11, 2023 from 10 AM to 12 PM, which EOSC was invited to, and a virtual local government stakeholder meeting Wednesday, January 18, 2023 from 10 AM to 12 PM. There are also other Public stakeholder meetings: 1/24 (1-3), 1/26 (1-3), 1/31 (6-8). Written comments can also be emailed to otpla@dep.nj.gov with the word "Rulemaking" in the subject line.

Ms. Lawler stated she will attend the Wed 1/11 stakeholder meeting, take notes, and email the notes to the other EOSC members. Ms. Petzinger will email the Green Acres state statutes for EOSC members to review and will compile any comments and suggestions. EOSC members agreed to look at the notes and provide comments/suggestions.

Open Space - Updates

Committee Member Schmidt provided an update on open space appraisals and potential acquisitions:

The Township Committee engaged Norm Goldberg to update the prior appraisal on Lot 89 (Nicholson III, 18 acres) and Norm Goldberg and Webb Appraisal for B 49 L 72 (Piazza, 25-31 Anthony Rd, 47 acres). Norm Goldberg and Webb Appraisal will both appraise the Piazza property because the value is expected to be greater than \$250,000. Both appraisers indicated

the appraisal report will be done by the end of January. If the valuation is agreed upon, the next step would be to get both properties under contract.

A Pre-Appraisal Questionnaire was submitted to Green Acres for B 49 L 76 (Tullo, 43 Anthony Rd, 5 acres) at the end of December. It will probably take a few weeks before Green Acres approves it. The next step would be to hire an appraiser.

When an appraisal comes in, it will be sent to the landowner and the Township Committee. EOSC members can view the appraisal reports because they are public documents and can be distributed to EOSC.

NJWSA will reimburse half of transaction costs for appraisals, etc. of possible acquired properties even if they don't move forward.

Open Space – Action Needed

Ms. Petzinger provided an overview of actions needed on Township Open Space Properties: The Red Mill Race parking area needs to be looked at with Warren Gabriel of DPW. Existing impervious surface can be maintained but we need to know where the existing impervious surface is located or where we want it to be. While Mr. Chen has resigned from EOSC, he intends to be a volunteer for this project. Mr. Collett volunteered to work with Mr. Chen on this.

The new acquisition in Woodglen-Miquin Trail Connection (Vi's old property) needs to be posted. While Mr. Duckworth has resigned from EOSC, he has the signs and intends to volunteer to post the property.

There is a new possible acquisition for a subdivision of 37 Anthony Rd, B49 L75 (Huston, 18 acres adjacent to Piazza). The property is bisected by the Spruce Run that contains a dam on the property. Ms. Koch, Ms. Hardy, Committee Member Schmidt volunteered to contact the landowner to walk through the property and assess the dam. Ms. Petzinger will join if possible.

Committee Member Schmidt discussed these preservation opportunities with Jackie Middleton of Hunterdon Land Trust, and she indicated they would support the township in pursuing a County grant for these properties.

Forest Master Plan

Ms. Petzinger provided an update on the Municipal Forest Master Plan and asked about next steps to get the contract finalized so NJ Audubon can start. Committee Member Schmidt stated NJ Audubon should invoice the township and the township would draw down from the grant money. The contract should be sent to the township attorney for review, then to the Township Committee for approval.

Ms. Petzinger stated that with the resignation of Mr. Duckworth, there is a vacancy for the forest master plan subcommittee; Mr. Henriksen volunteered to be on the subcommittee.

Deer Hunting on Municipal Lands

Ms. Petzinger provided and updated on deer hunting. Permit bow ended 12/31/22, winter bow ends 2/18/23, and hunter reports due March 2023. Discussion was held on when the EOSC needs to revise and recommend the next deer hunting resolution, which was determined to be in May to be in from of the Township Committee for approval in June.

Ms. Petzinger stated that, with the resignations of Mr. Chen and Mr. Duckworth, there are now two openings on the deer hunting subcommittee. Ms. Hardy volunteered to join. Ms. Lawler stated that our NJWSA liaison, Mr. Zemlachenko, has left NJWSA.

ESEA

Ms. Petzinger stated that, at the last EOSC meeting, the Hunterdon County Environmental Science and Engineering Academy offered to help the EOSC on invasive species social media outreach. There was a discussion on whether EOSC should create a subcommittee to work with ESEA students. Ms. Lawler made a motion to create subcommittee to work with ESEA on invasive species social media outreach, seconded by Mr. Collett, and unanimously approved. Ms. Lawler, Ms. Koch, and Mr. Henriksen volunteered to be on that subcommittee.

Spring Newsletter

Ms. Petzinger stated the next newsletter deadline is February 1 and asked ideas to submit articles. Ms. Koch volunteered to submit information about the well testing event. Ms. Naccarato from the Rec Committee will likely submit information about the litter cleanup. There was discussion about what information can be obtained from the litter cleanup that can be used in a summer newsletter article. A spotted lanternfly newsletter article was also suggested for the winter newsletter. Ms. Petzinger volunteered to write that article.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Ms. Petzinger mentioned two upcoming events – the litter cleanup and well testing. Ms. Naccarato will help with the litter cleanup again this year, which will likely be in April. Ms.. Lawler volunteered to will assist Ms. Naccarato with the litter cleanup. Discussion was held on which dates and possible coordination with dumpster day and MWA cleanup.

Ms. Koch solicited dates in May for the well testing, possibly Sat 5/6 for pick up and Mon 5/8 for drop off. The dates need to be confirmed with RHA before it can be publicized.

LIAISON UPDATES

MWA: Mr. Henriksen stated the old graphite building has been torn down. MWA will do the clean-up, plantings, improve access, and let Bethlehem Twp take over. He mentioned salinity issues with road salt and a technical assistance grant with Asbury and walking traffic.

RHA: Ms. Lawler stated there is no report

Highlands Council: Committee Member Schmidt stated the Highlands Council may be approached to fund the revision/re-examination of the Township Master Plan.

OTHER TOPICS

Budget (correspondence) – The EOSC budget is due Feb 3, 2023. Ms. Petzinger will work with Committee Member Schmidt to fill out the form.

Ms. Petzinger asked members the preferred method of communication to provide agenda items for the draft agenda. The preferred method was via email with a text notification.

Ms. Petzinger stated the EOSC will continue to meet 1st Mon of month except for July & Sept, which will need to be rescheduled. Dates offered include Tues July 11, Tues Sept 5 or Tues Sept 12. Ms. Petzinger will email members the possible dates to be approved at the next meeting, which will be Mon, Feb 6.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Koch made the motion to open public comment, seconded by Ms. Lawler, and unanimously approved.

Mr. Adickes asked members to speak louder if not using microphones

Mr. Duckworth mentioned the NJWSA Spruce Run Watershed restoration planning he was involved with as an EOSC member. Kathy Hale & Kyle Clonin are the points of contact, and there was discussion about volunteer time equivalents on their initiative.

Ms. Hardy asked about RHA and climate data collector stations.

Ms. Koch made motion to close public comment, seconded by Ms. Hardy, and unanimously approved.

Mr. Collett made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Hardy, and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:48pm.