

**Lebanon Township Environmental and Open Space Commission
(EOSC) Meeting Minutes
May 1, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting called to order by Ms. Petzinger at 7:09pm. In addition to the members listed below, Committee Member Schmidt was in attendance and 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.

ROLL CALL

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

PRESENTATION OF MINUTES

The April 2023 Regular Meeting minutes were presented by Ms. Petzinger. Ms. Hardy suggested minor changes to the text. Mr. Collett made the motion to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Ms. Koch, and unanimously approved.

UPDATES

Ms. Petzinger introduced a new format for the public to provide comments that will be used on a trial basis to address the public’s desire to comment prior to voting matters. This format emulates the NJ Fish and Game Council and NJ Highlands Council meetings in that the agenda would note which topics are voting matters with public comment and include a public comment period for those specific voting matters prior to the vote.

Ms. Petzinger provided an update on the Lebanon Township Municipal Forest Master Plan. The contract to hire NJ Audubon has been approved and their forester and staff will start as soon as possible. Ms. Lawler mentioned she was contacted by NJ Highlands Council staff for an update. Ms. Lawler will try to set up meeting with NJ Audubon and Ms. Petzinger.

Ms. Lawler provided an update on the Red Mill Race parking area. The ANJEC grant application for the Red Mill Race parking area was approved and submitted by the deadline. During the planning process, some questions about fencing and liability were raised by Committeeman Wunder. Ms. Petzinger mentioned there may be a state statute that releases the township of liability, but discussions should continue to find a solution.

Committeeman Schmidt provided an update on Open Space. Green Acres is still pending completion of their review of the appraisals and conducted site visits today.

BUSINESS

Recommendation for Vacant Alternate Position

Ms. Petzinger introduced Nina Weiland (pronounced Wyland) as a potential alternate pending mayoral appointment. Ms. Weiland is with the HC Environmental Sustainability and Engineering Academy (ESEA), which is part of Future Farmers of America. She organizes a lot of events and participates in competitive events. Ms. Weiland is currently a Voorhees High School junior and is passionate about the environment. She stated she would like more community experience, and wants to learn more about local policy. She is an active volunteer for the EOSC and says she enjoys coming to the meetings.

Ms. Lawler is Ms. Weiland's mentor with ESEA and will abstain from voting on whether or not to recommend Ms. Weiland for approval as an alternate member. Ms. Petzinger mentioned Ms. Weiland is under 18 but Ms. Petzinger received parental permission for her to join the EOSC. Ms. Petzinger also stated there are no age requirements listed in the Township ordinance or state statutes related to the appointment of environmental commission members. The EOSC is also advisory only. Ms. Ryan mentioned there may be other township or legal requirements that preclude Ms. Weiland from voting as an appointed official.

Ms. Koch made a motion to recommend Ms. Weiland for mayoral appointment to the vacant alternate II position of the EOSC, which would expire on 12/31/24, seconded by Ms. Hardy. The motion was approved with Ms. Lawler and Ms. Ryan abstaining.

ESEA Invasive species outreach

Ms. Weiland provided an overview of ESEA students' plan to draft social media posts to help the community learn more about invasive species to prevent spread. They intend to draft one post per week and include control methods and possible native replacements to invasive plants.

Ms. Petzinger asked if there was anything the EOSC needed to do, and the committee then discussed how the EOSC can post to social media accounts. Ms. Lawler stated the best way may be to have the students write a short article, then EOSC members can voluntarily use their personal social media accounts to post on community groups. The subcommittee will plan to meet and figure out the best way and place to post these articles on the Township website. It was mentioned that tick diseases may be another good topic to post about.

Ms. Weiland mentioned there is a wilderness safety event on June 3 that is open to all Voorhees students.

Deer Hunting Resolution (voting matter with public comment)

Ms. Petzinger gave an overview of the current deer hunting resolution and potential changes to that resolution for the 2023/24 hunting season. The bow hunting season dates and new lottery dates were changed to correspond with the state seasons with the lottery falling on the same weekday of the new calendar year. Based on a previous suggestion from a resident, a clause was also added to allow an apprentice hunter to hunt with a permitted mentor hunter for no extra fee and/or additional permit. Ms. Petzinger then solicited other ideas to modify the resolution in an effort to increase deer harvest numbers.

Discussion followed with some suggestions made to revise the resolution, including: add the NJAC citation for apprentice hunting; include language that the apprentice be part of the mentor hunter's permit; perhaps change the permit application to include mentorship, and address the insurance coverage of apprentice.

Other suggestions to increase deer harvest numbers other than revising the resolution were also discussed. Suggestions included: enhance and post parking areas to open space properties open to hunting; check properties to ensure all no-hunting signs have been removed; advertise more, including posting flyers at hunting shops; and create boundary maps of open space properties that also indicate parking areas.

Public comment period: There were questions about firearm hunting and whether surrounding towns allow hunting with firearms. Ms. Petzinger replied that while the hunting ordinance allows for bow and firearm hunting, the township resolutions have only allowed bow hunting thus far. The committee noted that firearm hunting may be explored in the future, but there should be outreach to neighboring residents prior to that.

Mr. Collett made a motion to accept changes to resolution to include new lottery dates and bow hunting season dates (pending final seasons posted by NJFW), addition of a mentor/apprentice permit option at no extra charge, address the addition of apprentice hunters with proof of insurance, and ensure compliance with NJ apprentice license code and local laws, ordinances, etc. Seconded by Ma. Lawler and approved with Ms. Koch abstaining.

Ms. Ryan offered to join the deer hunting subcommittee to help revise the resolution. Ms. Petzinger will reach out to the police chief for his feedback on the proposed changes to the resolution.

LIAISON UPDATES

- MWA - absent
- RHA – Ms. Koch mentioned the stream cleanup was held on April 15, 2023. The well testing will be held on Saturday May 6, 2023 from 9am-12pm for the well test kit pick up. The following Monday will be the water drop off from 7-930am. Open to everyone.
- Highlands Council – Mr. Schmidt mentioned the Highlands Council approved/released policy guidance on warehouses.
- Planning Board – Ms. Ryan stated the Planning Board is starting to look at the township's master plan. Funding from the Highlands Council is also available for work on the master plan. The planner will put a proposal together to do a review. There is also money from Highlands Council to work on the warehouse ordinance, which will be discussed at the Planning Board meeting tomorrow.
- MRMC – Ms. Lawler stated that North Jersey RC&D is working on a cover crop program. It is typically done around Labor Day with aerial seeding to help increase organic matter. She will write an article about it in the fall newsletter. Ms. Lawler also mentioned that Central Jersey Trout Unlimited noted less garbage at Point Mountain fishing sites during the recent river cleanup.

OTHER TOPICS/HIGHLIGHTS

- The permits for deer hunting on township open space lands should be advertised in the summer newsletter since the first permit application deadline is in August. Ms. Petzinger volunteered to submit it.

- Correspondence: The EOSC received an email from a resident concerned about mile-a-minute. Ms. Petzinger submitted an article about it in the summer newsletter and will forward it to Nina and subcommittee as a template they can use when writing about invasive plants.
- The last septic workshop for Lebanon Township residents was held on Oct 2 2016.
- Ms. Koch mentioned the horseshoe crab work in Cape May County.
- Ms. Petzinger mentioned picking up 138 alcohol containers on Musconetcong River Rd near Point Mountain.
- Ms. Lawler found alcohol containers in Hackettstown as well.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Anthony Ianucci mentioned the amount of Fireball containers found during the litter cleanup.

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

Ms. Hardy made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Koch and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm.