

**Lebanon Township Environmental and Open Space Commission (EOSC)
Meeting Minutes**

July 11, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting called to order by Ms. Petzinger at 7:02pm. In addition to the members listed below, Committee Member Schmidt was in attendance and 2 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. This alternate meeting date was posted on the township calendar, website and the front door of the municipal building.

ROLL CALL

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

PRESENTATION OF MINUTES

The May 2023 Regular Meeting minutes with changes suggested previously by Ms. Ryan were presented by Ms. Petzinger. Ms. Koch made the motion to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Ms. Hardy, and unanimously approved.

UPDATES

Ms. Petzinger provided an update on the Lebanon Township Municipal Forest Master Plan. NJ Audubon contacted started the forest inventory on the properties Monday, July 10, 2023. The EOSC should start thinking about draft goals and how/when to incorporate public and stakeholder input on the draft goals once we review the data. The Township Committee will need to be notified of meetings. Ms. Lawler volunteered to contact the Highlands Council staff to update them on the progress.

Ms. Petzinger provided an overview of the Red Mill Race Preserve parking area. The Township engineer met with Committeeman Wunder to review what is needed to construct off-street

parking. The engineer suggested a wetland determination and boundary survey be done. The estimated cost for design and permitting was \$17,000 and the Township Committee voted to not move this project forward. According to previous research done by EOSC members, existing impervious surface should be exempt from DEP and Highlands permits. If this is not the case and the parking area project will not move forward, then the EOSC needs another project idea for the Eagle Scout.

Ms. Lawler stated there are no updates about ESEA invasive species outreach initiative, but the Hunterdon Chapter of the NJ Native Plant Society may be willing to post information from the ESEA on their Facebook page.

Committeeman Schmidt provided an update on open space. The pre-appraisal was approved for the Huston property, the appraisal value has been submitted for the Tullo property, but still no appraisal value on the Adickes-Piazza property. The Green Acres grant Lebanon Township applied for has been approved, pending signature from the governor's office.

BUSINESS

EOSC Vacant Alternate Position

Ms. Petzinger introduced Constance Grill, who is interested in volunteering for the EOSC and possibly also in the vacant alternate position on the EOSC. Ms. Grill has been resident for a long time and lives near the Hagedorn Preserve. She is interested in invasive plants, preserving the natural environment, and is currently restoring her property. Ms. Grill has a Ph.D. in nutrition biochemistry, focused on breast cancer treatment, and has recently retired. She discovered the EOSC through the newsletter and wants to volunteer, is interested in the alternate position if possible, but will volunteer either way.

Ms. Hardy asked MS. Grill how she manages her 4-acre property/forest. Ms. Grill stated she manages invasive plants only, mows it only once every year, and encourages the growth of native plants, oaks, etc. She also maintains an area as meadows for pollinators and birds. Mr. Collett asked Ms. Grill what sparked her interest and love for environment. Ms. Grill stated she grew up on a farm in Neshanic that had cows, horses, pigs, chickens, grew hay/oats, and was involved in 4H. Ms. Petzinger asked Ms. Grill how she sees volunteering for the EOSC. Ms. Grill responded she is willing to help with trail maintenance and things like that, but also wants to use her brain and expertise to help.

Deer Hunting Resolution

Ms. Petzinger provided an overview of the 2023 Deer Hunting Resolution. The Township Committee voted to approve an alternate version of the draft resolution EOSC presented, which will now allow a permit holder 21 and older to "mentor" a licensed hunter under 18 years of age. The Township Attorney believed the ordinance needed to be changed to create an official "mentor hunting program", but the passed resolution allows it for this season only. The EOSC and Township Committee need to figure out how to best advertise it. A press release and

legal notice approved by the Township Attorney needs to be published on the website and submitted to the local newspaper.

Ms. Petzinger noted that the people in EOSC who had taken the lead on the deer hunting ordinance in the past are no longer with the EOSC. Committeeman Schmidt suggested contacting former Committeeman and EOSC liaison Marc Laul for guidance. Ms. Petzinger volunteered to contact Mr. Laul.

LT open space public access improvements/maps

Ms. Petzinger mentioned that the EOSC received feedback that some of the Township's open space lands which are open to hunting still have no hunting signs, and there are access issues that include lack of parking, not knowing where parking is, and inability to cross streams to access certain areas. Ms. Petzinger suggested members of the EOSC should check out the signage, especially on Anthony Preserve, and form a subcommittee to explore this, locate and get coordinates for parking areas, determine where roadside parking and access are feasible, and plan out where we may want some trails to be.

Mr. Collett and Ms. Petzinger agreed to be on the subcommittee.

Mr. Collett suggested that the access points should be mapped. Mr. Schmidt mentioned that street parking is legal so those areas can be mapped without designated parking areas. Mr. Collett stated that there is access near the guardrail, but it is not safe to park there. There may be areas for parking along the road in other locations. Ms. Petzinger will look into whether the public can access Anthony Preserve through Shady Lane, which is a private road, and find out from hunters where they accessed the properties they hunted. Ms. Petzinger suggested that the permit exemptions for the existing parking areas on Red Mill Race Preserve may be worth pursuing once more with the Township Committee, who can ask the Township Engineer to consider exemptions for the existing parking areas.

Mr. Collett made a motion to authorize the EOSC subcommittee to draft a memo requesting the Township Committee to ask the Township Engineer to revisit the existing parking areas at Red Mill Race Preserve, permit exemptions, etc. This memo will be reviewed and approved by EOSC members at the next EOSC meeting on August 7, 2023. The motion was seconded by Ms. Koch and unanimously approved.

LIAISON UPDATES

- MWA – Ms. Lawler mentioned that MWA was holding a fundraising event at Czigmeister for the month of July, earning \$1 for every pint of hard seltzer sold. There is a table set up on the premises for people to learn more about MWA.
- RHA – Ms. Koch mentioned that 77 people showed up for the well testing and 83 kits were sold. Reports of the results should be available in August.

- MRMC – Ms. Lawler mentioned that MRMC members were asked to man the MWA table at Czigmeister as well.
- Highlands Council – Mr. Schmidt – Nothing to report
- Planning Board – Ms. Petzinger read an update provided by Ms. Ryan via email. The Township received funding from the Highlands Council for work on the Master Plan. Work on the Master Plan was to begin after the last meeting and the Planner advised that the initial draft will take approximately two (2) months. Ms. Ryan will keep the EOSC advised on master plan updates and solicit input on relevant portions of the Master Plan as well. A potential change to the Township ordinance to prohibit warehousing is being looked at by the Planner, the Planning Board attorney and the Planning Board.

OTHER TOPICS/HIGHLIGHTS

- The deadline for the Fall Newsletter is August 1. Committeeman Schmidt volunteered to draft an article about the Green Acres grant to purchase open space for Lebanon Township. Ms. Hardy and Ms. Koch volunteered to draft an article about septic tanks. Ms. Lawler volunteered to draft an article about the yellow plane that spreads cover crop seeds through NJ RC&D.
- Ms. Koch mentioned that runoff coming down the hill from the recent storm caused a lot of sedimentation on Raritan River Rd and in driveways along that road. The river never breached its banks so it is not from the river. She suggested that the stormwater grates be cleared prior to storms, not just after them. Committeeman Schmidt mentioned that there is a stormwater grant to plan for the tier change, but the DPW has in their budget to clear storm drains. He will check with Mr. Gabriel.

Mr. Collett made a motion to open the public comment period, seconded by Ms. Koch, and unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were made.

Mr. Collett made a motion to close the public comment period, seconded by Ms. Koch, and unanimously approved.

Ms. Lawler made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Hardy, and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:57pm.