

**Lebanon Township Environmental and Open Space Commission (EOSC)
December 4, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting called to order by Ms. Petzinger at 7:04pm. No 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
Marty Collett	Member	Present
Nancy Roberts-Lawler	Member, MRMC Councilor	Present
Kathy Koch	Member	Absent
Sharon Hardy	Member	Present
Linda Ryan	Member, EOSC Planning Board Member	Present
Constance Grill	Alternate I	Present
Nina Weiland	Alternate II	Present

PRESENTATION OF MINUTES

The November 2023 Regular Meeting minutes were presented by Ms. Petzinger.

Ms. Ryan and Ms. Hardy suggested edits to the minutes. Mr. Collett made a motion to accept the November meeting minutes as amended, seconded by Ms. Hardy, and unanimously approved with 1 abstention.

UPDATES

Ms. Petzinger welcomed Ms. Grill as a new member and discussed EOSC responsibilities and etiquette. EOSC members are appointed officials representing the township, not activists. When acting in our official capacity, whether during regular meetings, sending emails, running events, visiting a property, or speaking with the public, we are to do so in a professional and courteous manner, regardless of whether members of public are present. When investigating properties to purchase or reviewing permit applications from the DEP, planning board, or board of adjustment, we are to treat each property consistently and fairly, without bias. If we have a direct or indirect personal or financial interest in any matter, we are to recuse ourselves from that matter. We have statutory authority and responsibilities as an environmental commission that we must adhere to and existing documents, such as the LT Master Plan, OSRP, NRI, as well as county, Highlands, and state plans to guide our decisions and help us prioritize our actions within our statutory authority.

NJSA 40:56A-1: Environmental commission is established for the protection, development or use of natural resources, including water resources, located within its territorial limits.

1. Conduct research into the use and possible use of the open land areas of the municipality and may coordinate the activities of unofficial bodies organized for similar purposes.
2. Advertise, prepare, print and distribute books, maps, charts, plans and pamphlets which in its judgment it deems necessary for its purposes.
3. Keep an index of all open areas, publicly or privately owned, including open marshlands, swamps and other wetlands, in order to obtain information on the proper use of such areas.
4. From time to time recommend to the planning board or, if none, to the mayor and governing body of the municipality plans and programs for inclusion in a municipal master plan and the development and use of such areas.
5. Acquire, maintain, improve, protect, limit the future use of, or otherwise conserve and properly utilize open spaces and other land and water areas in the municipality (NJSA 40:56A-3).
6. Keep records of its meetings and activities and shall make an annual report to the governing body of the municipality (NJSA 40:56A-4).
7. Study and make recommendations concerning open space preservation, water resources management, air pollution control, solid waste management, noise control, soil and landscape protection, environmental appearance, and protection of flora and fauna (NJSA 40:56A-6).

Ms. Petzinger provided an overview of the township emails and OPRA. All EOOSC official business via email is subject to public disclosure. Township emails are to be used for all EOOSC-related business. Some members discussed issues accessing and forwarding emails. Ms. Roberts-Lawler and Mr. Collett volunteered to help members having issues.

Ms. Petzinger provided an update on the Highlands Best Management Practices (BMPs). The Township Committee will vote on Dec. 6, 2023 on whether to adopt a resolution opposing the Highlands BMPs. The EOOSC subcommittee helped draft some points to be included in the resolution.

BUSINESS

Expiring terms

Ms. Petzinger stated that three regular member and one alternate term expires Dec. 31, 2023 (highlighted in yellow) and asked members if they wished to renew their terms.

EOOSC Member	Role	Term expiration	Term length
Linda Ryan	Member, Planning Board	12/31/2023	3 years
Sharon Petzinger	Member, Chair	12/31/2025	3 years
Warren Newman	Member	12/31/2025	3 years
Marty Collett	Member	12/31/2023	3 years
Nancy Lawler	Member	12/31/2024	3 years
Kathy Koch	Member	12/31/2023	3 years
Sharon Hardy	Member	12/31/2024	3 years
Constance Grill	Alternate 1	12/31/2023	2 years
Nina Weiland	Alternate 2	12/31/2024	2 years

Ms. Ryan stated she wishes to renew her term. Mr. Collett stated he wishes to renew his term. Ms. Grill stated she wishes to renew her term. Ms. Koch notified the EOSC via email that she will not renew her term. Ms. Grill stated she is willing to be a regular member. Ms. Weiland stated she wishes to remain as Alternate II.

Ms. Roberts-Lawler made a motion to recommend Mr. Collett and Ms. Ryan for term renewal in 2024, seconded by Ms. Hardy, and unanimously approved.

Ms. Roberts-Lawler made a motion to recommend Ms. Grill move into the vacant regular member position in 2024, seconded by Mr. Collett, and unanimously approved.

2024 Budget

Ms. Petzinger stated the EOSC annual budget is typically \$1,000 but will likely need to increase the budget to \$3,000 or more for 2024. The budget is due Feb. 2024 so the EOSC will vote on the budget at the January 2024 meeting. There are three reasons to increase the budget:

1. The EOSC was unable to use 2023 funds to join ANJEC in 2024. The ANJEC membership cost will increase to \$515 but they are honoring 2023 prices for us in 2024. ANJEC membership (\$470) plus the roadshow (\$300) would cost \$770, which is most of EOSC's current annual budget.
2. The newsletter editor resigned and the EOSC may need to send out information on draft forest goals to residents prior to the hiring of next newsletter editor. Mailers could cost \$85-\$130 plus \$1,500 postage. Depending on the status of the newsletter editor, the EOSC may send other mailers to inform residents about the draft forest plan, invasive plant workshops, well testing, and other events as needed.
3. The EOSC may host stakeholder meetings in 2024 to discuss the draft forest master plan, which could include costs for refreshments, facility rental, etc.

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

2024 Meeting Dates

Ms. Petzinger stated that the EOSC needs to determine the meeting dates for 2024. The Township Re-org meeting is Jan 3, so the first 2024 EOSC meeting needs to be after that. EOSC members agreed to continue to meet the first Monday of the month except Sept. and April.

Possible meeting dates to be sent to the Township Clerk:

- Mon, Jan 8, 2024 or Tues Jan 9?
- Mon, Feb 5, 2024
- Mon, Mar 4, 2024
- Mon, April 1, 2024 or Tues April 9?
- Mon, May 6, 2024
- Mon, June 3, 2024
- Mon, July 1, 2024
- Mon, Aug 5, 2024
- Tues, Sept 10, 2024
- Mon, Oct 7, 2024
- Mon, Nov 4, 2024
- Mon, Dec 2, 2024

Ms. Grill and Ms. Roberts-Lawler stated they will be unavailable to attend Feb 5, and Ms. Weiland is unable to meet on Tuesdays through Feb. Ms. Ryan will look into the planning board schedule to determine conflicts with Tuesday meeting dates.

Annual Report

Ms. Petzinger stated the annual report is mandatory and should be completed and approved by EOOSC at the Jan. 2024 meeting. The annual report should include a member roster, meeting dates, list of activities and accomplishments, and goals for the coming year.

Ms. Weiland and Ms. Grill volunteered to be on the annual report subcommittee with Ms. Petzinger.

Subcommittees

Ms. Petzinger stated that there will be a lot of projects that need help in 2024 in Ms. Koch’s absence. Members reviewed and updated the subcommittee list. Ms. Weiland volunteered to help with the litter cleanup. Ms. Grill, Ms. Ryan, and Ms. Hardy volunteered to help with the well testing. Ms. Petzinger volunteered to help with open space.

Project	Responsibilities	Members	Status
Deer Hunting	Work with Township Committee to revise deer hunting resolution and advertise permit lottery	Sharon H., Sharon P., Linda	Ongoing
Forest Task Force	Participate in (Nancy) and provide information about the needs of LT as it pertains to forestry and legislation about forest activities	Nancy, Sharon P.	Completed 2022
Highlands BMPs	Review the Highlands BMPs and inform Township Committee about potential impacts to the Township	Nancy, Sharon P., Linda	New 2023
Invasive species	Work with ESEA to provide education and outreach materials to residents via social media, etc. each month	Nancy, Nina, Constance	Ongoing
Litter Cleanup	Help solicit and manage volunteers for the annual litter cleanup in April	Sharon P., Nina	Ongoing
LT Forest Master Plan	Work with NJA, Township Committee, Planning Board, and NJWSA to create a municipal forest master plan	Nancy, Sharon P., Constance	Ongoing
Plant Swap	Work with Rec and volunteers to set up a plant swap for township residents and educate attendees about native plants, invasives, and backyard habitat	Nancy, Linda, Nina	New 2023
Red Mill Race	Work on improving parking area and access to Red Mill Race Preserve	Nancy, Marty, Kathy	Discontinued

Well Testing	Help RHA solicit residents and collect water samples in Lebanon Township	Constance, Linda, Sharon H.	Ongoing
Open Space	Post signs, walk boundaries, scout properties, maintain open space	Marty, Sharon P.	Ongoing
Application Review	Review complete applications and provide comments and questions to the Planning Board.	Sharon P., Nancy, Linda	As needed

Possible Open Space Violation

Ms. Petzinger stated a complaint from NJ Water Supply Authority was forwarded to the EOSC about possible illegal dumping on Anthony Preserve. Members discussed the process for handling illegal dumping on township open space property and suggested Ms. Petzinger notify law enforcement.

LIAISON UPDATES

- MWA – Ms. Roberts-Lawler stated there is nothing to report.
- RHA – Ms. Koch was absent and will not renew her term. Ms. Hardy agreed to be the new liaison.
- MRMC – Ms. Roberts-Lawler stated the next meeting is Dec. 12.
- Highlands Council – Committee Member Schmidt was absent.
- Planning Board – Ms. Ryan stated the re-examination report for the master plan was approved at the last meeting. The goals are the same and no changes were recommended. The stormwater ordinance was reviewed for plan consistency, was deemed consistent, and is now under review by the Township Committee. The Planning Board does not want to comment on the Highlands forestry practices until they are in public comment and may wait to meet with the Highlands Council liaison. The next Planning Board meeting will be Jan. 16, 2024.

OTHER TOPICS/HIGHLIGHTS

- Ms. Weiland provided an FFA update. The first invasive species pamphlet was posted on Facebook. The STEM college and career fair was moved from Jan 19 to Mar 1, 2024. The FFA is currently selling potpourri to support travel to conferences. The next Chapter meeting is Dec. 13, 2023.
- Ms. Roberts-Lawler stated that the Rutgers Cooperative Extension is hosting a green infrastructure champions program, which include 10 free webinars. Anyone who attends 5 webinars will receive a certification.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public were in attendance.

Mr. Collett made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Hardy, and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 9:06pm