

**Lebanon Township Environmental and Open Space Commission (EOSC)
January 9, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting called to order by Ms. Petzinger at 7:10 pm. No members of the public were in the audience. Committee Member McKee was also present.

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	Absent
Nancy Roberts-Lawler	Member, MRMC Councilor	Present
Constance Grill	Member	Present
Sharon Hardy	Member	Present
Linda Ryan	Member, EOSC Planning Board Member	Present (remote)
Vacant	Alternate I	-
Nina Weiland	Alternate II	Absent

PRESENTATION OF MINUTES

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

Ms. Ryan and Ms. Hardy suggested edits to the minutes. Ms. Hardy made a motion to accept the December meeting minutes as amended, seconded by Ms. Grill, and unanimously approved.

UPDATES

Ms. Petzinger welcomed Committee Member McKee as the new Township Committee liaison for the EOSC. All of EOSC’s recommended appointments were appointed at the January 3, 2024 Township Committee meeting. There was no open space coordinator appointed yet, however. Members discussed the status of the four potential properties for open space acquisition. The Township Committee will discuss next steps for the Piazza/Adickes property on January 17, 2024.

BUSINESS

2023 Annual Report

Ms. Petzinger presented the contents of the draft 2023 EOSC annual report created by herself, Ms. Grill, and Ms. Weiland. EOSC members suggested edits to the report.

Ms. Hardy made a motion to send a PDF version of the 2023 annual report as amended to the Township Committee, seconded by Ms. Grill, and unanimously approved.

2024 Budget

Ms. Petzinger presented the contents of the draft 2024 EOSC annual budget. EOSC typically is allocated a \$1,000 annual budget and did not use much of last year's budget. Unfortunately the EOSC was not allowed to join ANJEC or book a roadshow for 2024 using money from the 2023 budget during the 2023 calendar year so that will need to be part of the 2024 budget. In the absence of a spring newsletter the EOSC will need to print and send a mailer about the forest goals for the municipal forest plan to residents to solicit feedback. There may also be a need to print and send mailers to advertise the well testing event in the spring, septic workshop, or forest plan stakeholder meetings. For that reason the 2024 budget has increased.

EOSC members discussed ways to save costs and trim the EOSC budget. All members agreed to remove the well testing kit awards from the budget. Mr. McKee will look into whether money from the newsletter budget can be used to send the mailers. Ms. Hardy will check with Ms. Koch and/or Raritan Headwaters to determine how the well testing was advertised in 2022 when there was no newsletter. Mr. Collett was not present to discuss the T-shirts or trail markers.

Ms. Roberts-Lawler made a motion to approve the 2024 EOSC budget as amended and send to the CFO, seconded by Ms. Grill, and unanimously approved.

Stormwater Management Example Ordinances

Ms. Petzinger spoke about a number of model ordinances for Tier A on the NJDEP Municipal Stormwater Regulation Program website (<https://dep.nj.gov/njpdcs-stormwater/municipal-stormwater-regulation-program/example-ordinances/>). These ordinances are intended to assist municipality permittees in developing their own regulatory mechanisms for stormwater management and may be required if Lebanon Township's current ordinances do not meet the minimum standards of the permit. Six out of the eight example ordinances were in the purview of the EOSC:

1. Pet waste: Lebanon Township does not currently have pet waste ordinance.
 - The example stormwater ordinance will mandate all pet owners and keepers to dispose of pet waste on any property (public & private) not owned by that person, which is the minimum requirement in the Tier A permit.
2. Wildlife feeding: Lebanon Township currently has an ordinance that prohibits wild waterfowl feeding in the entire township.
 - The example stormwater ordinance will prohibit feeding of all wildlife (except baiting for hunting) on township-owned property, which is the minimum requirement in the Tier A permit.
3. Litter control: Lebanon Township currently has an ordinance in place that appears to meet the minimum requirement in the Tier A permit.
4. Improper disposal of waste: Lebanon Township currently has an ordinance that prohibits illegal dumping.

- The example stormwater ordinance includes storm drains to meet the minimum requirement in the Tier A permit.
- 5. Yard waste: Lebanon Township currently does not have a yard waste ordinance.
 - The example stormwater ordinance will prohibit moving yard waste into the street (unless for collection) to meet the minimum requirement in the Tier A permit.
- 6. Privately-owned salt storage: Lebanon Township currently does not have a salt storage ordinance.
 - This example stormwater ordinance is new and outlines how de-icing materials are to be stored.
 - The minimum requirement in the Tier A permit is an ordinance that requires piles of de-icing materials not be stored in a permanent structure be covered when not in use and secured in a way to prevent its exposure to rain, snow, etc.
- 7. Tree removal-replacement: Lebanon Township currently has a tree removal ordinance which requires permits to remove trees on lands > 5 acres except with forest plans, etc. Tree removal on single family dwellings <5 acres where slopes are <25% and 100 ft from existing residence where slope is >25% are allowed. Excludes dead/diseased trees.
 - This example stormwater ordinance is new and requires planting replacement trees (with monitoring to ensure survival) or requires a fee to be paid for each tree removed if 4 or more trees are removed within a 5-year period. Excludes hazard trees with proper justification and the municipality needs to make list of tree species and planting standards.
 - The minimum requirement in the Tier A permit is to control tree removal and replacement to reduce stormwater runoff and pollutants and promote infiltration of rainwater into the soil.

Committee Member Mckee suggested the EOSC send a memo to the Township Committee outlining our concerns and suggestions regarding the example ordinances by March.

New Forestry Bill

Senator Smith introduced S4262 in the NJ Senate on December 28, 2023 concerning management of publicly owned forest land, which includes forests owned by local governments. The bill will mandate:

- NJDEP to conduct a comprehensive survey, mapping, and planning process for all public forest lands every 10 years. Includes inventories of biota and indigenous history/culture. This will also include:
 - Forests suitable for Natural Areas System or Natural Heritage Priority sites
 - Areas where afforestation and reforestation should occur to help achieve greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals
 - Areas suitable as carbon reserves where mature forests are protected to become future old growth with little to no habitat manipulation

- Areas where active management is needed to promote future carbon sequestration, maintain biodiversity, or address current and future threats to ecological health
- Areas with invasive species issues/concerns
- Areas susceptible to wildfires
- Areas affected by presence of deer
- NJDEP to establish a program to designate appropriate forested areas as Carbon Reserve Forest to protect maturing forests to provide for development of old growth forest and be managed in a way to allow natural processes to proceed with little to no habitat manipulation.
- Prohibiting forest plans on all public forests from including commercial profit as a goal. The sale of wood products would only be allowed when wood is removed for an ecological, climate change-related, or other noncommercial goal.
- A moratorium on approving forest plans that will end 1 year after effective date of bill or DEP adoption of new rules/regs, whichever is sooner, with the exception of an emergency as deemed by the NJDEP Commissioner, which includes the imminent threat of fire or damage from invasive species
- NJDEP to adopt new rules governing forest plans for public lands 3 years after effective date of bill. Forest plans for public lands will have 5 aims: carbon sequestration & storage, ecological health and biodiversity, climate resiliency, protection of water and soils, and recreation.
 - The rules for forest plans will be consistent with determinations from the survey, mapping, & planning process
 - Forest plans will need to conform to the new rules 3 years after effective date, or when the new rules are adopted.
- NJDEP to measure the deer population and develop programs to effectively reduce deer populations on public forest lands. This would include a pilot commercial sale of venison, study the viability of reintroducing natural predators, implementing fertility control measures, and revise rules on deer baiting and feeding.
- NJDEP to develop and administer a program for prescribed burning on public and private lands within 18 months after the bill's enactment, which will require NJDEP to conduct prescribed burns or vegetation removal on public or private land determined to be in danger of wildfire.

This bill is based on the NJ Forest Task Force report. It has been referred to the Senate Environment and Energy Committee and while no hearing date has been set, a hearing date can be announced quickly.

EOSC members suggested the sub-committee that worked on the NJ Forest Task Force review previous comments and concerns to draft comments on the introduced bill.

LIAISON UPDATES

- MWA – Ms. Roberts-Lawler stated the flow workshops are continuing and the next one is on Jan 31, 2024.
- RHA – Ms. Hardy stated there is nothing to report
- MRMC – Ms. Roberts-Lawler stated there is a new councilor orientation to be held on Jan 20, 2024.
- Highlands Council – Committee Member McKee stated there is nothing to report.
- Planning Board – Ms. Ryan stated the re-exam report for the master plan was approved and the Planning Board will discuss the forest goals on February 6, 2024.

OTHER TOPICS/HIGHLIGHTS

- Member Roundtable – Ms. Roberts-Lawler and Ms. Grill will not be able to attend the February EOSC meeting.

Ms. Hardy made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Ryan, and unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm.