

**Lebanon Township Environmental and Open Space Commission (EOSC)  
July 1, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting called to order by Ms. Petzinger at 7:09 pm. Committee member McKee was also in attendance. 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**

<b>EOSC Member</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Roll Call</b>
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	Absent
Vacant	Alternate I	-
Nina Weiland	Alternate II	Present

**PRESENTATION OF MINUTES**

Voting on the April 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes was tabled due to lack of quorum.

The May 2024 Regular Meeting minutes were presented by Ms. Petzinger.

*Ms. Roberts-Lawler made a motion to accept the May meeting minutes as amended, seconded by Ms. Weiland, and unanimously approved.*

**UPDATES**

Ms. Grill provided an update on the well testing. In total 65 kits were sold and 62 were returned for testing. The results were consistent with the results from 2023. Fewer wells tested positive for lead but more wells test positive for gross alpha. For next year’s well testing, Ms. Grill suggested providing a full list of testing options to the public ahead of time. EOSC members discussed the results and suggested Ms. Grill provide an update to the Township Committee at the next committee meeting.

Ms. Roberts-Lawler provided an update on the plant swap. Musconetcong Watershed Association, NJ Audubon, and others were present to educate attendees about native plants. Six people attended and stayed the entire time. Ms. Roberts-Lawler recommended advertising more, conducting it earlier in the year, and trying to make sure there are no other events the same day.

## **BUSINESS**

Potential New Alternate: Ms. Petzinger stated that Ms. Vuocolo is interested in the vacant alternate EOSC position and presented the information in Ms. Vuocolo's resume.

*Ms. Weiland made a motion to recommend Ms. Vuocolo be appointed to the EOSC alternate position, seconded Ms. Roberts-Lawler, and unanimously approved.*

Green Acres Rules: Ms. Petzinger stated that the Green Acres rules will expire the end of 2025 and be revised prior to re-adoption. These rules, however, are only about funding for park development and acquisition – the rules related to compliance (Sections 25 & 26) will be separated out as a new chapter and already had stakeholder outreach which EOSC commented on. Green Acres requested substantive comments within 30 days of their May 28th webinar so any comments by the EOSC need to be submitted ASAP. EOSC members discussed the information from Green Acres and provided comments.

- New OSRP requirements will be proposed and need to be met to obtain Green Acres acquisition funding. The requirements are not fleshed out but will include more public participation, environmental justice, climate resilience. *EOSC Comments: Need to consider rural areas that lack substantial overburdened communities and/or public transportation and may not be able to adequately address environmental justice concerns.*
- Planning incentive awards will have expirations and deadlines for deliverable deadlines, still to be determined. *EOSC Comments: Green Acres should allow extra time and/or no-cost extensions because appraisals can take a long time as many certified appraisers are booked.*
- Increase public engagement for OSRPs and park development projects. *EOSC Comments: Local government commissions/boards only meet once a month and projects then need final approval from township committees. Requiring more than that will require more time/effort and risk not meeting the proposed new expirations/deliverable deadlines.*
- Should Green Acres extend project periods beyond 2 years? *EOSC Comments: Yes! The annual funding round deadlines for Green Acres is in Feb. which can be missed when there is turnover in staff/committees.*
- Existing structures will need to be reviewed by the state prior to pre-appraisal to determine if they are historic. Green Acres will reimburse demo costs of structures but the funding application will need to be submitted within 6 months of closing on the property. *EOSC Comments: The 6-month time frame may be feasible but it will depend on the time of year and potential for turnover in committee members. Retaining options for extensions, esp. prevailing wage would be beneficial.*

- The Stewardship Program in Green Acres will be codified with the focus on natural resource protection, improvement, and restoration. Trail maintenance/creation may also be included and Green Acres is looking for suggestions on what else the stewardship program should fund. Currently Green Acres does not fund tree removal unless it is to protect other trees. In general, they want to minimize tree clearing while recognizing the need for it in some instances. *EOSC Comments: Currently it is difficult to find any information about the Green Acres stewardship program, what it entails, etc. Green Acres should ensure the application for Green Acres funding is simple and requirements to apply do not cost too much time or money to fulfill. For example, there should not be a requirement to conduct plant and wildlife surveys prior to a park development project.*
- Should language be added to rules to restrict tree clearing in development projects? Trees are important for carbon sequestration and Green Acres rules do not allow for unacceptable levels of environmental damage/impairments to natural resources. *EOSC Comments: Tree clearing should be covered to protect public safety along trails and parking areas as well as forest stewardship, especially for long-term conservation.*

*Ms. Roberts-Lawler made a motion, seconded by Ms. Grill, to form a subcommittee consisting of Ms. Petzinger and Ms. Ryan to draft comments based on the discussion during the July EOSC meeting and send to Green Acres.*

#### **LIAISON UPDATES**

- MWA – Ms. Roberts-Lawler stated they are completing their vision plan and she submitted comments on behalf of EOSC. Ms. Petzinger requested a copy of the comments submitted for the EOSC’s record.
- RHA – Ms. Hardy stated there is nothing to report.
- MRMC – Ms. Roberts-Lawler stated there is nothing to report.
- Highlands Council – Mr. McKee stated there is nothing to report.
- Planning Board – Ms. Ryan was absent.

*Ms. Hardy made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Weiland, and unanimously approved.*

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43pm.