

**Lebanon Township Environmental and Open Space Commission (EOSC)  
January 7, 2026 Meeting Minutes**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Petzinger at 7:03pm. Committee member Webb was 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 with the exception of January, June, July, September, and November.

**ROLL CALL**

<b>EOSC Member</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Roll Call</b>
Sharon Petzinger	Member, Chair, MRMC Councilor	Present
Celia Vuocolo	Member	Present
Constance Grill	Member	Absent
Linda Ryan	Member, EOSC Planning Board Member	Present
Marty Collett	Member	Absent
Nancy Roberts-Lawler	Member, MRMC Alternate	Present
Paige Buzard	Member	Present
Andy Kozlowski	Alternate I	Present
Vacant	Alternate II	n/a

**PRESENTATION OF MINUTES**

The December 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes were presented by Ms. Petzinger.

*Ms. Roberts-Lawler made a motion to approve the December 2025 meeting minutes as amended, seconded by Ms. Buzard, and unanimously approved.*

**UPDATES**

Ms. Petzinger stated that she, Ms. Vuocolo, and Mr. Kozlowski were appointed to the EOSC by Mayor Wojcik on January 5, 2026, and Mr. Webb was appointed as the new Committee Liaison for the EOSC. EOSC members introduced themselves to Mr. Webb.

Ms. Petzinger provided an overview of the Township Code of Conduct for Elected and Appointed Officials, and discussed the authority and responsibilities of the EOSC.

**TOWNSHIP CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTED & APPOINTED OFFICIALS**

- Comply with both the letter and spirit of the laws and policies affecting the operations of government;
- Are independent, impartial and fair in their judgment and actions;
- Use their public office for the public good, not for personal gain; and
- Conduct public deliberations and processes openly, unless required by law to be confidential, in an atmosphere of respect and civility

**EOSC AUTHORITY, RESPONSIBILITIES, and CONDUCT**

- We are appointed officials representing the Township, not activists. When acting in our official capacity, whether during regular meetings, running events, visiting a property, or speaking with the public, we are to do so in a professional and courteous manner.
- 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. We also have 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.

NJSA 40:56A-2:

- 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 (NJSA40:56A-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, marine resources and protection of flora and fauna (NJSA40:56A-6)

**BUSINESS**

November 2026 meeting date change

Ms. Petzinger stated that Tuesday, November 10, 2026 is unavailable because the Planning Board is meeting that evening. Other available days include Nov 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> (Vet Day, Office Closed) and 13<sup>th</sup>.

*A motion to change the November 2026 EOSC meeting to Wednesday, November 4, 2026 was made by Ms. Ryan, seconded by Ms. Roberts-Lawler, and unanimously approved.*

#### Draft South Branch Raritan Watershed Restoration and Protection Plan (WRPP)

EOSC members discussed possible comments on the WRPP to submit to Raritan Headwaters Association.

*A motion was made by Ms. Roberts-Lawler to approve the comments to the draft South Branch WRPP as drafted, pending Ms. Buzard's review of her comments and removal of EOSC member initials. The motion was seconded by Ms. Vuocolo and unanimously approved with one abstention.*

#### Trail Maintenance Plan

Ms. Buzard drafted a timeline for maintaining and/or creating trails on Township open space properties. EOSC members agreed with the timeline format to include with the trail maintenance plan, and suggested also including property maps with Block & Lot numbers and a link to the Forest Master Plan. Ms. Buzard will finish the draft timeline and send to Ms. Petzinger to be presented with the draft trail maintenance plan to EOSC members for review and approval at the next meeting.

#### 2026 EOSC Work Plan

Ms. Petzinger provided an overview of the anonymous survey EOSC members took prioritizing work to be done by the EOSC in 2026.

##### Highest Priority

- Update trail maps
- Hold a septic care workshop

##### High Priority

- Create and implement a trail creation and maintenance plan
- Increase hunter participation and harvest of does
- Host more educational presentations for residents

##### Medium Priority

- Implement the Anthony Preserve Forest Stewardship Plan
- Create educational materials for residents
- Assist with well testing
- Provide feedback on draft watershed plans
- Monitor and comment on proposed rule/policy changes
- Evaluate the deer hunting program and recommend changes

##### Low priority

- Hold a native plant swap (higher priority if plant swap combined with educational workshop)

EOSC members agreed with the priority and suggested creating a timeline. Members then discussed possible educational materials, including information about open space in the Township and adding information and the application for deer hunting to the EOSC website.

#### Annual Report

EOSC members reviewed the draft annual report and suggested changes based on the results of the work plan priority survey.

*Ms. Buzard made a motion to approve the 2025 EOSC Annual Report and send it to the Township Committee, seconded by Ms. Roberts-Lawler, and unanimously approved.*

#### ANJEC membership

Ms. Petzinger stated that the EOSC will need to renew its membership to ANJEC when the Township budget is approved, and choose seven EOSC members to be on the ANJEC list. EOSC members agreed that all members except Ms. Roberts-Lawler should be on the list.

#### Deer management presentation

EOSC members discussed inviting someone from Readington Township to present about deer management at the March EOSC meeting. Ms. Vuocolo agreed to invite the speaker. EOSC members then discussed other potential presentations during the EOSC meetings, with the septic workshop likely being held separately on a weekend:

- *Open space (April/May)*
- *Invasive plant ID/control (June/July)*
- *Bear education (Sept/Oct)*
- *Wildlife of Lebanon Township? CHANJ?*
- *Trail launch hikes (with birding)?*

#### **LIAISON UPDATES**

- MWA – Nancy Roberts-Lawler stated that the stream cleanup for the Musconetcong River will be held April 4, 2026.
- MRMC – Nancy Roberts-Lawler stated that the MRMC is bringing on a new liaison from National Park Service.
- RHA – Constance Grill - absent
- Highlands Council – Rich Webb – The Highlands Council is advocating for appointments.
- Planning Board – Linda Ryan – The Planning Board is discussing ways to enforce compliance with conditions outlined in the approval process/resolution.

#### **OTHER TOPICS/HIGHLIGHTS**

- Mr. Webb asked why the EOSC does not publish the agenda. Ms. Petzinger mentioned the EOSC has never published the agenda online to her knowledge, just the meeting dates and minutes, but will check with the Clerk about bringing this up to the Township Committee.
- Ms. Vuocolo asked about the next trail maintenance volunteer date. Ms. Petzinger stated it won't likely happen in the spring, especially on Anthony Preserve where DEP permission is needed prior to trail creation.

*The motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Roberts-Lawler, seconded by Ms. Ryan, and unanimously approved.*

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55pm.