

## WWT ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

March 9, 2023

The March 2023 meeting of the WWT Environmental Commission was held on Thursday, March 9, 2023 via Zoom with Ephraim Buhks calling the meeting to order at 7:31pm.

### STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE-x

Pursuant to the Sunshine Law, a notice of this meeting's date, time, place and agenda was mailed to the news media, posted on the Township bulletin board, and filed with the Municipal Clerk.

### ROLL CALL

Members: E. Buhks; E. Gordon; I. Singh; S. Parratt; L. Katz; H. Shankar  
Liaison: D. Dobromilsky Advisors: D. Parris Council Liaison: Andrea Mandel  
Guests: S. Anand, Girl Scout Eleni Litt, Rutgers Steward

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – S. Anand, a Girl Scout, gave a presentation on her Girl Scout Silver Award project on Native Plants for the Community. S. Anand stated she raises monarch butterflies as a summer hobby to help increase their population and observed the lack of naturally growing milkweed, where these butterflies lay their eggs. She provided information on how native plants play an integral part of insect and bird populations as they provide both food and shelter. She has participated in the WW Community Day and the Farmer's Market to achieve her educational aspect of the project, as well as developing a native plant website to provide further outreach to the community. L. Katz requested she share her website for EC members to visit and gain additional information. E. Buhks requested she send her presentation to him so it can be added to the EC website. He suggested she include resource information for community members to learn where to purchase native plants. E. Buhks thanked S. Parratt for mentoring S. Anand on her project.

J. Maingi, a Girl Scout, was unable to attend the meeting to give a presentation on her Girl Scout Gold award project on Spotted Lantern Fly Traps Education. E. Gordon volunteered to share information as he was a mentor on the project. The project consisted of providing information on two separate methods that can be used to trap Spotted Lantern Flies. One method consists of wrapping a sticky tape around the trunk of the affected tree and the other consists of a metal trap the flies climb up and fall into and are unable to get out.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** September 8, 2022 E. Gordon motioned; S. Parratt seconded;  
Minutes were approved as presented.

### CONTINUING BUSINESS: Project Review/Update:

Community Park Pollinator and Rain Garden – S. Parratt, Rutgers Master Gardener and WWT resident, gave a brief update on the Rain and Pollinator Gardens. He performed routine maintenance to remove the old stalks in order to provide the space and opportunity for new growth in the returning plants. He installed stakes around the new cedar trees to protect them from potential damage by mowers. He provided a brief description of some additional proposed projects to undertake going forward including the revitalization of the stormwater basin near the skate park to potentially transform it into a large version of a rain garden, installing an additional rain garden along another area of the sidewalk which has continuous standing water issues, and replacing an unused lawn with a wildflower meadow and path leading to the trail in the woods. After some group discussion regarding potential cost barriers and feasibility, it was determined to pursue the third proposal of the wildflower meadow installation. S. Parratt will gather additional information and develop a more in-depth project plan that will be presented to EC members at a future meeting. H. Shankar suggested having scouts be involved by volunteering in the project and requested guidance be developed by S. Parratt and D. Dobromilsky. There was additional discussion on the potential use of environmentally friendly alternatives for fireworks to alleviate cleanup and debris caused by traditional methods used in the past. D. Dobromilsky stated he would discuss the issue with the Recreation Director and report back to EC on information he obtains.

Scout Projects/Arbor Day – D. Dobromilsky reported that the Arbor Day Celebration will take place on April 29, 2023 at 9:30am at the Ronald R. Rogers Arboretum. The Shade Tree Commission will once again host its annual Art Contest with submissions to be on display and prizes to be awarded at the event. The EC will participate and assist by having Scout educational presentations on spotted lantern flies and their other various projects, providing tree planting and maintenance information, and tree sapling giveaways. E. Buhks requested he share the event flyer with EC members.

Township Council Update – S. Gawas was unable to attend the meeting and requested A. Mandel provide an update to EC members. The Council is continuing to review budgets for the upcoming year. There has been discussion about developing alternative options to fund and provide ongoing maintenance required by EC and Girl Scout projects in recent years, such as rain and pollinator gardens, where the township Public Works department may not have the manpower, time, or knowledge to provide in-depth maintenance. D. Dobromilsky stated that further information and planning will be conducted to determine what requirements are needed going forward to maintain these projects, especially ones where the original developer/installer is no longer available, and explore if professional assistance by contractors will be necessary in the future.

Planning Board – A. Baig was unable to attend the meeting. D. Dobromilsky reported that at the February 15, 2023 PB meeting there was an application heard for the Trustees of Princeton University-Campus Operations Building, PB22-06, which is seeking to construct a +/-5,733 square foot campus operations building, with a gravel parking area and a gravel/reinforced turf access drive, that will support the University's nursery operations and grounds maintenance. It was approved with the condition that confirmation will be provided pertaining to conservation areas on the property being properly maintained. At the March 1, 2023 PB meeting, a resolution of memorialization was approved for PB22-07 Nassau Park - Floor & Décor Outlets. There was a public hearing held for the Draft Farmland Preservation Plan Element of the Master Plan which is an inventory of farm properties and a map illustrating significant areas of agricultural land. The Conservation Element of the Master Plan which is also due for an update has been under review by the PB planner and will require EC involvement. D. Dobromilsky requested to have a few EC members volunteer to assist with the review process, especially regarding geology, air quality, and the green belt. D. Parris volunteered to provide assistance, particularly with geology, and S. Parratt volunteered to assist with open space and the green belt. E. Buhks will serve as backup as necessary.

Solar Lighting – H. Shankar forwarded the pertinent information she gathered to D. Dobromilsky on the solar lighting installation project she has been researching. D. Dobromilsky thanked her for all her effort in contacting several vendors. After reviewing the information with her, it was determined to pursue the option where the device could be installed on the park signs as opposed to a ground installation to avoid potential damage by mowers. They would like to utilize approximately \$500-\$1,000 of EC funds to purchase a pilot device at this time and determine if this option meets the needs as discussed. If successful and the budget allows, they could purchase additional devices to install in other locations.

Energy Efficiency – L. Katz reported that recently attended a webinar presented by Sustainable Jersey and the NJ Board of Public Utilities on Community Solar Projects. They have a new finder accessible on their website which identifies current projects that residents can apply to receive energy billing and solar installation discounts. Some of these are income-restricted and others are open to all. He will continue to review details of the recent renovations and updates to the municipal building with D. Dobromilsky and township staff to determine if any could be utilized in the next submission process. A. Mandel stated the township will be hosting a ribbon cutting ceremony on March 29, 2023 to commemorate the completion of the renovations to the municipal building. An invitation will be sent out to the public and she will request it be shared with all boards and commissions as well.

Environmental Commission Seminars – E. Gordon stated that Sustainable Jersey is offering several upcoming seminars on its website on March 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> that can be utilized by environmental commissions. Topics addressed will include guidance on forming better commissions, how to get involved, best practices, and various others which could be utilized as a refresher for continuing members and beneficial for new members to familiarize themselves with the purposes of an EC. All seminars are recorded therefore if EC members are not able to attend live he encourages them to view them at their leisure.

Recycling – I. Singh has been compiling a list of several concerns and questions he has come across with regard to regulations and best practices for recycling. He requested a suggestion of who he can discuss these with to further work on his project. A. Mandel suggested he get in contact with the township Recycling Coordinator. E. Buhks recommended forwarding the list of concerns to him and D. Dobromilsky so they can discuss and provide guidance on how to proceed. D. Dobromilsky also suggested reaching out to the Mercer County Improvement Authority. A. Mandel reminded members to utilize the Recycle Coach app which also contains very helpful information and features.

Greening Together 2023 – E. Buhks reported that Greening Together 2023 is a week-long environmental celebration sponsored by the Mercer County Sustainability Coalition consisting of various events held throughout several municipalities and organizations within Mercer County. A variety of events, including stream cleanups, community recycling and shredding events, educational seminars and presentations will be held. It will also include the WWT Arbor Day celebration on April 29, 2023 at the Ronald Rogers arboretum. The premiere event will also take place on April 29, 2023 featuring a Bike Rodeo and EV meet-up at Lawrence High School. A. Mandel and E. Buhks requested D. Dobromilsky share the information on the WWT and EC website.

E. Litt, Environmental Steward, stated she is conducting her Nature Journaling class at the Art Council for the second time. She invites all interested parties to attend and hopes to continue expanding on the topics and opportunities explored. H. Shankar inquired if the classes would be available online in the future; E. Litt stated it is not currently available online but it is an option she is interested in exploring going forward. She also expressed interest in the Green Team and stated she would contact E. Buhks to discuss further involvement.

Motion to adjourn by S. Parratt, seconded by L. Katz. Meeting was adjourned at 9:32pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Samantha Tomaro, Administrative Secretary  
WWT Environmental Commission