

**HARDING TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
7:30 P.M. – MUNICIPAL BUILDING
October 6, 2021**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Harding Township, NJ Environmental Commission (EC) was called to order at 7:30 PM by Mr. Symonds, Chairman. The following statement was read: "This regularly scheduled meeting of the Harding Township Environmental Commission is held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Adequate notice was given in announcements sent to the *Observer Tribune* and the *Daily Record*, filed with the Township Clerk and posted on various bulletin boards".

ROLL CALL

On a call of the roll, the following were present:

Members Present:	Hugh Symonds, Chair James Novotny, Vice Chair Kate Barry Richard Clew Alf Newlin
Excused:	Brenda Catalanello William Seifert
Absent:	Christina Juliano Lisa Welsh
TC Liaisons:	Nicolas Platt
Also Present:	George Byrnes, Commission Secretary Emile DeVito, New Jersey Conservation Foundation

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Novotny made a motion to approve the amended minutes of the September 1, 2021, meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Clew. On a voice vote, all eligible voters were in favor and the minutes were approved.

PROJECTS – MAJOR

Trapping

Mr. Platt gave an overview of the history and reasoning behind the original fox and coyote anti-trapping ordinance that was passed by the TC in 2018. Mr. DeVito explained the with the removal of many predators from the area, the white footed mouse population has exploded. These are the main reservoir for lyme disease, which has helped it's spread of prevalence. Mr. DeVito stated that we need more predators in the ecosystem to help curb the white footed mouse population. Mr. Clew asked if there was any statistics or evidence to support that the anti-trapping ordinance is working. Mr. DeVito said that three years is not enough time for any hard conclusions, but that it is the correct process and should lead to the desired results over time. Mr. Newlin asked if there was any evidence that the current ordinance has been harmful, which Mr. Platt stated there has not been any evidence to that end.

Mr. Symonds made a motion to make a resolution that the EC supported the continuation of the fox and coyote anti-trapping ordinance: for the benefits it has to conservation, the ecological balance of the township, and the health of the residents; and in light of there being no evidence that it is harmful; the

EC supports the continuation of the ordinance that was passed in 2018.

Invasive Species

Mr. DeVito stated that the Phillip Alampi Research Lab had been about to start a pilot program on the control of Japanese Knotweed prior to Covid-19, but that is hopefully starting up soon. Mr. DeVito also stated that the best option for the control of the spotted lanternfly was better funding of the Phillip Alampi Research Lab.

Rolling Knolls

Ms. Barry stated that there were no new updates with regards to Rolling Knolls.

LIAISON REPORTS

BOA – Mr. Symonds reported that the cell tower application is still continuing, but it could be resolved in two more meetings, and there was a variance hearing for a house addition on Sand Spring Road.

Planning Board – Mr. Clew reported that the KRE application was finalized. The budget and professionals were also discussed.

HOST – Mr. Novotny stated that HOST is in the process of buying another property on Van Beuren Road. The use of Harding's Open Space was also a topic of discussion.

Shade Tree – Mr. Novotny stated there was no meeting.

Township Committee – Mr. Platt stated that the township had hired another police officer and that they should now be at full capacity.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Symonds opened the meeting to the public for questions and comments on items not included on the agenda. There being no further comments, the public session was closed.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.

The next regular scheduled meeting of the Environmental Commission will be held on Wednesday, November 3, 2021 at 7:30PM at the Harding Township Municipal Building.

Respectfully submitted,

George Byrnes

George Byrnes, Secretary
Harding Township Environmental Commission