

Readington Township Waterwatch Advisory Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
April 16, 2024

OPEN MEETING:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Orlandi at 7:05 p.m. stating that the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act have been met and that this meeting had been duly advertised.

Members in Attendance:

Mario Orlandi – Chair
Lauren Huelsebusch
Marlene Orlandi
David Owen
Andrew Saad
Rene Rao
Steve Foster
Jonathan Heller
Jerry Cook
Tatianna Halinka

Member Absent:

Richard Geissler

In Attendance:

Cathleen Doroty – Introduced herself as a Readington resident and professor at Rutgers.

Doug Vorlocker – Introduced himself as an adjunct professor at Raritan Community College and is taking on the stewardship position for Readington in May. He discussed his professional background and plans to coordinate all the work Readington volunteers have done so far and offer resources provided by the college.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion made to approve the March minutes as amended by Steve Foster, seconded by Marlene Orlandi, and carried by all. Andrew Saad abstained.

Adjunct Committee Member Updates:

Tatiana Halinka – Discussed her ideas and initiatives for creating a centralized location for volunteer opportunities. Hunterdon Central High School has created a resource library for activities and events, and she suggested adapting the model for Readington Township to create a platform for communication, resources, event, flyers, community boards, volunteer opportunities, and intern opportunities. Tatiana answered members' questions on the students' point of view. Mr. Heller asked Tatiana to put together an email presentation to present to the Township Committee requesting a place to sign up from on the website for communications and enrollment. Tatianna offered to help create the site. The upkeep of the maintenance of the website would need to be an employee. Jonathan Heller made a motion to endorse this project and present it to the Township Committee. Rene Rao seconded the motion. All in favor. None opposed.

Committee Member Updates:

Mr. Foster - Reported there are no policy updates from the EC. Sustainability initiative focus is beginning in May and June. Bob Becker introduced a new database via email that will complement our ERI. It is similar to the environmental resource inventory but focuses on the sustainable specs of Readington not exclusive to ecology such as age, health, food scarcity, and transportation. 350 people attended the tree giveaway. There were 1800 trees and 100 remained after the event. The remaining trees will be used to repair buffer zones where needed. The museum said they would be interested in receiving trees. Steve showed the members the information that was passed out to residents who came for a tree. It had information on the water story and was an opportunity to engage and provide information to residents.

David Owen – The stream clean-up is Saturday, April 20th, from 9AM – 12PM. The three locations include Rockafellow Mills, Three Bridges at Railroad Avenue, and Pleasant Run by 202. Dave met Ron Christy at DPW to discuss the event. The trailer will be filled up with cones, road signs, t-shirts, water bottles, gloves, dog bags, safety vests, etc. and taken to Summer Road on Friday. The collected garbage will be picked up on Monday. He also provided the flyer to Ron, the Police Department, and the WW secretary who posted the flyer on the lobby tv. No update to report from the County Commissioners. All trails are open. Dave gave a report on the status of each trail and what has been reported to Ron. Penn East was notified of the Bowman Stickney trail issue. Ron provided ATV signage that was placed on the trail heads. If ATVs are seen, please report it to the police. Last month's trail hour statistics were 70 hours from open space and 35 hours for the trail association.

Ms. Rao – Discussed a possible second well testing event. Some places had a pickup event at a farmers' market, and you return the kit directly to RHA. The event was called get the lead out, directly targeting lead testing but all testing was available. The Summer Spectacular is Tuesday, June 18th from 5-9 PM. Members discussed having the RHA van attend and have kits available. Kits are always available at Dart's Mill for pick up. Jonathan described a visual demonstration that would be effective grabbing residents' attention. The earthquake sparked an increase in testing due to people seeing brown water. Ms. Dorety discussed her experience with lead testing and her experience with events. Lead free NJ has materials and often come out to community events. She is willing to get materials and help us at the summer spectacular. Rene will send out the salt testing results. Rene discussed the earth day post created for Facebook and will incorporate Steve's infographic content in her post.

Ms. Orlandi – The Viking Agenda from Mr. Daly was sent out to everyone. He thanks everyone who helped him and is currently awaiting approval from the BOE for these events. The deer enclosure activity was discussed. Marlene will report back with an update when the dates and locations are approved.

Lauren Huelsebusch – Ms. Huelsebusch reported that they are currently in a holding pattern. She walked the trail with their grandchildren and the 4th graders would be capable of walking the Lachemyer Trail. They noted things to mention and places to stop at on the way. She recommends that the signs are made up and laminated and posted. She emphasizes that this is a school project that we are facilitating. This is to the benefit of the program to keep it running for years to come. The rail markers are mostly intact, but some areas could be remarked.

Mr. Heller – Jonathan has test kits for hydrocarbon test kits for the 50-gallon diesel fuel spill at DPW holding tank. He will perform the testing during a rain event to see if there is run off. DPW is in the process of getting that remediated.

Mr. Saad – Andrew discussed volunteer opportunities and offered to help Tatianna build the volunteer platform she was discussing. He is excited to introduce these topics to younger generations early on.

Mr. Geisler – No Report

New Business/Other Business:

The chair discussed the Chambers Brook tree planting in May. Information is available on the RHA website. Mario discussed stream clean up training and expanding the stream clean up program. Stream monitoring, gathering data, and preventing further erosion is the main focus of this group.

Public Comment:

Ms. Doroty will share with the group the hydrology information she found about groundwater changes since the earthquake. Doug Vorlocker suggested members consider attaching well testing to the rain events recently experienced to peak the general public's interest. He suggested it may be beneficial to have hazard training for stream clean up as well.

Adjournment

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Rene Rao, seconded by Marlena Orlandi, and carried by all. The meeting adjourned at 9:01 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Danielle Monaghan
Advisory Boards Secretary