

**Readington Township
Waterwatch Advisory Meeting Minutes
March 28, 2023**

OPEN MEETING

The meeting was called to order by Chair Orlandi at 7:06 p.m. Due to the last-minute rescheduling of the meeting, the chair was unsure if the advertising of the meeting date change was able to be completed in time. (Please note that the advertising of the meeting date change was completed in the timeframe necessary).

Members in Attendance

Mario Orlandi – Chair
Steve Foster
Richard Giessler
Lauren Huelsebusch
Marlene Orlandi
David Owen
Rene Rao

Absent

Jonathan Heller
Agostino Pietrangelo

Minutes

It was moved and seconded, a motion to approve the minutes for February 28, 2023, as corrected. The motion carried unanimously.

Guest Speaker: None

Committee Member Updates

Mr. Foster - Stated that there was nothing new from Environmental Commission nor any policy updates.

Ms. Rao - Reported that the Township Facebook page is active and that 700+ people have joined the page. Ms. Rao did state that the comments have been disabled so this will be a place to just provide information on Township activities. It was asked if you have to be a Facebook member to see the page and the answer was yes, however, there is still the Township website, emails to the listsrv, the lobby TV, etc., for people to get this information.

The meeting was paused at 7:16 pm and resumed at 7:27 pm.

Ms. Rao requested that as part of the Stream Cleanup on April 15th, if the south branch of the Raritan River could be checked for oil cans, since there were many found last year. Regarding the Memorial Day parade, scheduled for May 29th, she suggested that RWW have a table with information addressing Lawn Best Practices, Algae Bloom as well as having games for the kids. Mr. Owen stated that the picnic after the parade is still being discussed. Regarding the rain barrel workshop, Ms. Rao has been in contact with Lauren and they are looking to

schedule the workshop on June 17th or June 24th. The members discussed possible locations to have the workshop.

Ms. Orlandi - Reported that the high school student and the RVCC student continue to work on the StoryMap of the bio-retention basin project. This StoryMap will show the evolution of the project. Ms. Orlandi stated there will be a meeting on March 30th to review the StoryMap. The members discussed ways this StoryMap can be used. She also reported that the school superintendent, Dr. Hart, provided a letter regarding the student ambassador program that RWW members proposed. In the letter, Dr. Hart stated that there is a new social studies teacher looking to involve 8th grade students in civic projects and invites RWW to be a partner in this effort. It was suggested that RWW invite the teacher to a future meeting.

Mr. Owen - Stated that the trails are all open and that the DPW has received a forestry mulcher that can pull up trees and mulch them. The county commissioners reported that Deerpath Park is undergoing a major upgrade. Some of the projects involved in this effort include upgrading the bathrooms and pavilion and a large new playground to be installed. Additionally, they will be putting in a pervious parking lot.

Ms. Huelsebusch – Reported that minor improvements have been made to the old mill house on Darts Mill that was recently donated to the township. She gave a description of the property that includes 350 feet of waterfront on the South Branch of the Raritan and a dam that will eventually be partially removed. She stated that Congressman Tom Kean, Jr. visited the site and was receptive to looking for funding to help with the improvements. Ms. Huelsebusch further informed that the upstairs of the house has been leased to Raritan Headwaters Association; the downstairs will possibly be used by the township for functions. The members discussed the history of the property. It was suggested to have an open house there in the future.

Ms. Giessler – The members welcomed their newest committee member, Richard Geissler, who stated he was looking forward to learning from everyone and offered his help wherever needed.

New/Other Business

Annual Stream Cleanup – Chair Orlandi reported that they are looking to include smaller streams within Readington Township and provided a little bit of history about the annual stream cleanup. The cleanup is scheduled for April 15th, from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. He stated that there have been 60 volunteers recruited for the cleanup. Chair Orlandi reached out to the DPW director to see if they could identify additional areas that could be included in the cleanup and was provided 9-10 areas. He briefly discussed some of these sites and the members discussed ways to get volunteers to these locations. It was asked if RHA recruits people with kayaks to do the cleanup from the river. It was stated that the mayor and his wife as well as Jonathan Heller have all used kayaks in the past to assist in

the cleanup. Mr. Foster reminded the members to get photos that can be put on township media points.

Adopt-a-Stream: Chair Orlandi briefly reviewed this project that he introduced in last month's meeting where residents are aware of the stream they live closest to and then have these people adopt the streams and keep them clean; essentially creating a kind of ownership in their community. He is currently working on identifying an overlap of open space where it touches the streams to create an access point that would allow people to walk along a trail to reach the stream.

Riparian Zone Restoration: The Adopt-a-Stream project segues perfectly into this effort with RHA. The Chambers Brook will be the first stream addressed with the grant awarded to RHA to have trees planted in the riparian zone. Chair Orlandi stated there is open space that touches this stream and will be looking to create an access point near this area and quite possibly a trail. This could be used as a model for the other streams in Readington Township. He further reported that as some point during the week, prior to April 15th, RHA will be doing a species inventory looking for endangered species. He will send out the information to the members on the exact date and time. Mr. Foster pointed out that this is another opportunity to document a project (video, photos, notes) so a story can be told on this project and be used to educate others. It was suggested that when posting information on this project, provide a map so people have an idea of where this is happening.

The meeting was paused at 8:43 pm and resumed at 8:47 pm.

Chair Orlandi stated that he is hoping to be able to identify and work on two (2) of these projects with RHA each year.

Comments

Ms. Rao showed everyone a document with a QR Code. When scanning this code, it will take the person to the Readington Township Water Story on the township website. This could be a useful tool to use at events when looking to educate residents. Ms. Rao's son created the sample she brought to the meeting. The members discussed how these are created and where they could use this tool.

Adjournment

It was moved and seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Radziewicz
Advisory Boards Secretary