

**Readington Township  
Waterwatch Advisory Meeting Minutes  
May 16, 2023**

**OPEN MEETING**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Orlandi at 7:02 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  
Steve Foster  
Jonathan Heller  
Lauren Huelsebusch  
Marlene Orlandi  
David Owen  
Rene Rao

**Absent**

Richard Giessler  
Agostino Pietrangelo

**Minutes**

It was moved and seconded, a motion to approve the minutes for April 18, 2023. The motion passed, with Mr. Heller and Mr. Owen abstaining.

**Guest Speaker: Jake Spooner, Arborist**

Mr. Spooner, a lifelong Readington Township resident, arborist, and tree service/sawmilling business owner, introduced an idea for a project that involves using the wood from trees that have been taken down or have died and repurposing the wood for benches and possibly tables for the trails. The members discussed the different types of trees that may be used, and the different maintenance required. It was stated that placing benches at strategic points along the trails and along the streams could encourage community residents to utilize these areas. This project could also be an opportunity to involve residents, students, and other groups in making objects from the wood. Additional discussion ensued regarding the logistics of the project and the funding needed. Mr. Spooner will submit a proposal with the help of some of the Waterwatch committee members.

**Committee Member Updates**

Mr. Foster - No updates to report.

Ms. Rao - Reminded members that the Rain Barrel Workshop is scheduled for June 24, 2023, from 11:00 – 12:30 pm. It will be held at the Bouman Stickney Farmstead and will be run by Lauren Theis, from Raritan Headwaters Association (RHA).

Canvassed members about their interest in manning a table at Pickell Park after the Memorial Day Parade. During this discussion, some members expressed the reality that rarely do people stop by tables after the parade and are usually only interested in getting free items. It was decided not to have a table at this event.

Ms. Orlandi - Shared that the social studies/civics teacher at Readington Middle School, Mr. Daley, is hosting a showcase on June 8<sup>th</sup> to illustrate what he and the students are doing in the classroom. She also mentioned other events that are held to introduce the students to municipal government.

Mr. Owen - Reported that DPW is out in force on the trails. Unfortunately, three (3) mowers used by DPW are out of commission and in need of repair.

Shared that Mr. Mueller, Deputy Mayor, was at Dobozyński Park to assist in cleaning up the trees that had died as well as helping to clear out invasives.

As reported a couple of months ago, the project to install a new ADA compliant playground at Deerpath Park is almost completed and is quite large.

Darts Mill Phase I - included getting a tenant for the second floor which has been completed. RHA will be ready to move into the space in late June. Mr. Heller reported that there had been a couple of nights where the lights were left on inside and one time the front door was left open. Mr. Owen stated that the previous owner provided many old photographs of property and he and Ms. Huelsebusch had gathered many frames in which to display them. Phase II will consist of installing railings on the front and side doors for safety compliance. RHA is asking for an area at the property for drop off purposes; the members discussed different options available.

Mr. Heller - Reported that the township received a grant to allow more testing of the Rockaway Creek in order to pinpoint the source of the E. coli contamination. He discussed how the testing will be done and the labs that will be used. It was mentioned that the signs warning residents of potential contamination in Lake Cushetunk are missing.

Discussed stream monitoring training sessions (in the field) that have to be completed in order for the testing to be accepted by the state.

Ms. Huelsebusch - Provided comments in other member's updates; nothing more to report.

### **New/Other Business**

Riparian Zone Restoration Project (RHA Collaboration):

Chair Orlandi reported the Chambers Brook was officially approved as the site for this project. There is an invasive species present in this location that will be treated with a substance that will kill the root system and allow for the trees that will be planted as part of the project to survive. When completed, this will be a new access point to the Chambers Brook for the public. A discussion ensued regarding the need to plant trees along all the streams to offer protection to the stream and prevent soil erosion.

No other updates discussed.

**Comments**

Mr. Robert Colburn, Board of Health chairman, was in attendance and expressed his concern about new development in the area, specifically the new single-family homes near the Ryland Inn, and the water retention basin. Mr. Colburn and the members discussed concerns regarding septic systems and septic inspections with regard to home sales, the need to have homeowners pump their septic systems and how to enforce the recommended timeframes. Additionally, there was a discussion regarding the need for an accreditation system for septic inspectors and installers. It was agreed that communication between the Board of Health, Waterwatch and the Environmental Commission would be beneficial for educating and involving the residents.

Ms. Orlandi commented that a photo from the stream cleanup showing the volunteers and all the bags that were filled is a great visual to promote this activity.

**Adjournment**

It was moved and seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Radziewicz  
Advisory Boards Secretary