

Readington Township

WaterWatch Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes - August 17th 2021

Attendance Taken:

Chair: Mario Orlandi (P)
Robert Becker (P)
Steven Foster (P)
Trish McGuire (A)
Agostino Pietrangelo (P)
Susan Masinda (P)
Rene Rao (P)
Jonathon Heller (P)
David Owen (P):

Members of the public were in attendance: Marlene Orlandi and Mara Tippet

1) **GUEST SPEAKER INTRODUCTION**

Mara Tippet, Watershed Scientist, Groundwater from Raritan Headwaters presented an update on well water testing, lead pipes, septic systems and community support.

Well testing has been undertaken since the early 80's. This year, like last year, will be COVID safe and held outside for pickup and drop-off. All State COVID protocols will be followed.

There will be five sessions in October starting on October 16th – two at the Three Bridges firehouse and three at the Municipal Building. It is expected that 200-250 people will request testing and the Lab can only process about 80 a day so two more days may be required. On-line pre-registration for test kits is already up and residents can select the tests that they require and paper forms will be available at the test sites. Prices are the same as recent prior years.

Volunteers are requested for all sessions – the first Saturday is very busy so about at least 5 people are needed. A spreadsheet for volunteers to sign-up will be available shortly.

Robert Becker expressed concern about testing for residents who are on public water – although NJ Water does an excellent job monitoring the quality of water getting to the residents home, houses older than 1985 may have lead pipes or lead solder within their homes so testing is equally as important as homes with wells.

Starting December 2021 any Real Estate transaction for Change of Ownership, will require testing water for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) – these tests are sensitive and cost around \$350. At present NJ State is undertaking testing at commercial sites such as industrial, military and fire testing locations as high risk areas are not yet known. If a resident requires a PFAS test, Raritan Headwaters will conduct the test on site as testing is very sensitive.

Mara added that there is the possibility of future offering discounted Septic pumping along with well testing – this happens in Kingwood right now but as Readington is very large, this will not start until at least next year.

Susan Masinda confirmed that the Readington Board of Health will supply a Hunterdon County sponsored Septic Guide to be included with the Well Testing handouts.

Chairman Orlandi offered sincere thanks to Mara for her presentation – the whole Committee concurred.

2) **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

David Owen: RWW / OSAB Collaboration and News from the HC B of CC

David noted that no issues effecting Water Watch were on the Hunterdon County Commissioner agenda for this evening.

David complimented the Open Space, Environmental and Board of Health Committees for their collaboration on several Water Watch initiatives underway.

David visited the Prescott Brook site on the corner of Rt31 South and Stanton Station Road along with Juergen Huelsebusch and Bill Millette fro Hunterdon County. The owner of the property has received a Grant from NRCS to help in the expense of remediating severe erosion of the Brook through her property – known affectionately as The Daffodil Farm. Work was progressing well with the sides of the brook being reinforced with a mix of large and small rocks. David recommended stopping in if Committee members are in the area – the owner is extremely sociable and keen to show the project. David also recommended looking inside the Red Barn on the property – probably built in the 1800’s – the beams are a work of art.

Robert Becker: Sustainable Jersey - Water Issues and Gold Star Standard in Water

Robert requested that Committee members review the newspaper article that he had distributed regarding Rain Barrel subsidies.

Jonathan Heller: Stream Testing and News from the Township Committee

Absent

Steve Foster: Well-testing and Community Education Programs

Steve noted that a Rutgers Water Resource Engineer was reviewing the Three Bridges Grammar School rain garden. David Livingston is also involved – his resume includes Principal, Superintendent, Readington School Board President and he is passionate about the environment.

Susan Masinda: Small Stream Stewardship Program

Susan updated the Committee on the cemetery issue. The defending Attorney had raised three issues – prior release of a Public Notice, no Certificate of Authority and that a Town Ordinance is invalid making a cemetery a prohibited use. The Cemetery attorney requested a postponement of the hearing.

Suisan noted that Hionis was dramatically clearing trees from part of their land in order to plant Mums. The land is SRR zoned and not Agriculture. Hionis has been reported to the Town, The County and the State but are continuing their work.

Ago Pietrangelo: Chemical Impacts on Our Water Supply

Ago discussed the use of PFAS in non-stick pans, textiles, polishes, paints, firefighting foams, food packaging and food processing facilities. Intertek in Whitehouse is a company that can test water for PFAS.

Ago discussed the Facebook Site for Water Watch with an initial focus on Well Testing, information pages, brochures etc. Comments will be turned off. There could be a link to a simple Web Site. Instagram and Twitter could also be utilized in the Social Media space.

Trish McGuire: Stream Clean-up and News from the Raritan Headwaters Association

Trish offered to assist with Social Media efforts

Rene Rao and Marlene Orlandi - Community Programs and Schools Programs

Rene plans to assist with Well Testing and Social Media. Perhaps we could add a note to our pages regarding the Single use plastic bag ban in Readington.

Rene wondered about the road work on Route 22 by Cushetunk. Susan offered to try to find out what it was for.

Rene discussed the “roadside rain gardens” installed along Washington Street in Hoboken and noted that they are a pleasant addition to the road. She will distribute her photos to the Committee.

3) ONGOING & NEW BUSINESS

RHA Well Testing this Fall – See above

NJ Conservation Blueprint Mapping tools – see above

RHA Stream Monitoring – completed for 2021

Adding monitoring sites to the RHA annual list of more than 50 sites – ongoing

Proposed cemetery protest – see above

Hionis Agricultural Development Project Block 20 Lot 1 – see above

Sustainable Jersey – Water Story – The Building Block for the Newest Gold State standard in Water.

Holland Brook Stream Restoration Project – The mailing has gone out and the project is on target for Fall 2021. The memo will serve as a packet of information for the Township Committee

Prescott Brook Stream Restoration Project – see above

Other:

The Penn State Extension project for Backyard Stream Repair starts in September

4) **GENERAL COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None heard

5) **GENERAL COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE**

Steve asked about status of the revised Storm Water Ordinance. Robert said that County and State questioned had been answered but nothing had happened in the last two months.

6) **ADJOURN**

Rene moved, Robert second, motion to adjourn at 9.04 pm. The next scheduled WaterWatch Advisory meeting will be held on September 21st at 7:00pm.