

**Readington Township  
Waterwatch Advisory Meeting Minutes  
April 18, 2023**

**OPEN MEETING**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Orlandi at 7:11 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  
Richard Giessler  
Lauren Huelsebusch  
Marlene Orlandi  
Rene Rao

**Absent**

Jonathan Heller  
David Owen  
Agostino Pietrangelo

**Minutes**

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

**Guest Speaker: None**

**Committee Member Updates**

Mr. Foster - Reminded everyone that the Tree Seedling giveaway will be Saturday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. He thanked the museums who helped with signage. Mr. Foster provided an overview of how the giveaway works.

Reported that he met with Jacob Spooner, a certified arborist that resides in Whitehouse Station, who is interested in helping with a proposed program that will build benches, tables, etc., from fallen trees. This idea was formed and suggested in an Open Space meeting. Schools have requested benches, chairs, and tables for their Outdoor Classroom program. Open Space could benefit from this with benches for the trails. Members discussed steps needed to get the tree to the end-product. It was stated that this could provide an opportunity for community involvement. Additionally, there is an option where the products could be sold with the monies put back into the project to help fund it. Other thoughts provided include introducing this idea to the DPW and looking for grants to help pay for this.

Mentioned that Kristi MacDonald, director of science for Raritan Headwaters Association (RHA), did her doctoral thesis on the urban biodiversity in the Meadowlands and that her book is available. The Native Plant Society of New Jersey had her as a guest speaker during their Annual meeting in March.

Ms. Rao - Provided a recap of the Stream Cleanup held on April 15<sup>th</sup>. It went very well and at her location she found many small liquor bottles and posed the question as to what can be done to stem the littering of these. Members discussed why this may happen and a suggestion was made to include the police, however it was stated that this is a bigger problem than the Waterwatch is able to handle. Members shared the odd and interesting items found at various locations during the Stream Cleanup.

The Rain Barrel workshop has been scheduled for June 24, 2023, and she discussed the flyer that was in progress of being made for this event. Members discussed all the ways to get the information distributed to the public including Facebook, township website, listsrv email, monitor in lobby, and the flyer. A suggestion was made to paint a rain barrel and install it between the police station and the municipal building to bring awareness to the benefits of a rain barrel.

Reported that refreshments will be provided after the Memorial Day Parade and asked the members if they wanted to have a table for Waterwatch. She discussed several topics that can be presented at the table. It was mentioned that the Summer Spectacular would be another event where they could have a table.

Ms. Orlandi - Discussed Earth Day events at Three Bridges School on April 19<sup>th</sup> from 5-6 pm. This is an opportunity to celebrate the retention basin gardens as well as local food and farms. The StoryMap that has been created to document the process of the retention basin will be presented. Mr. Geissler asked about the Trout in the Classroom program; Chair Orlandi gave a brief overview of the program.

Ms. Huelsebusch – Reported that a mini street cleanup was held at the Darts Mill property and this cleanup made a big difference. She stated that RHA officially signed a lease to occupy space in the building. Currently there is a cesspool on the property and a new septic system will be installed in the future when deemed necessary. She stated that DPW was a huge help in getting the property ready. Additionally, Mr. Owen received numerous photos of the property from Jack Flood, the person who donated the property to the township. The Darts Mill Task Force will be meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> to discuss having an open house, possibly on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Waterwatch would also like to host an open house, however the details still need to be worked out.

Mr. Geissler – Nothing to report.

### **New/Other Business**

#### **Annual Stream Cleanup:**

This was discussed earlier in the meeting. Chair Orlandi is writing a synopsis of the event to be posted on the township Facebook page.

**Social Media Distribution Channel:**

Chair Orlandi reported that many people have been visiting the Facebook page. He requested that Ms. Rao be the contact/coordinator for Waterwatch posts. It was mentioned that articles can still be submitted to the Readington News.

**Stream and Climate Station Monitoring – Training Opportunities:**

Chair Orlandi reported RHA offers two (2) types of training – stream monitoring and climate station monitoring. He gave an overview of both types of monitoring. Anyone on the Waterwatch committee interested in taking the training offered should let Chair Orlandi know so it can be arranged.

**Adopt-a-Stream Riparian Zone Restoration:**

Chair Orlandi reported that a few Waterwatch members visited the Chambers Brook site owned by the township (Block 39, Lot 14.02) and provided a handout with some information about this site. There is a band where the trees have been wiped out by flooding; this is the site where RHA will look to plant up to 1,000 trees to repair the Riparian Zone. The members discussed how to access this area and options available for creating a trail. Chair Orlandi shared that there was a representative from NJDEP - Fish and Wildlife – at one point looking for any endangered species. None were found. There was an invasive tree discovered and members discussed ways to remove this invasive tree before the Riparian repairs would begin.

**Comments**

Mr. Foster queried the members on who would be volunteering at the tree seedling giveaway as well as potential volunteers for the Memorial Day parade in the event the Waterwatch committee has a table.

**Adjournment**

It was moved and seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Radziewicz  
Advisory Boards Secretary