



Warren County Environmental Advisory Committee
165 County Route 519 South, Belvidere, NJ 07823-1949

MINUTES

Wednesday, September 17, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: 7:05 pm

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT:

Adequate notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act by forwarding a notice of the date, time and location of the meeting to The Star-Ledger, The Daily Record and the Warren County Clerk and by posting a copy thereof on the bulletin board of the Warren County Courthouse and Administration Building. Public participation is encouraged. In order to assure full public participation, those individuals with disabilities who wish to attend the meeting should submit any requests for special accommodations one week in advance.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Clairanne Arcaro, Sasha Fernandes, Audra Frank, Josephine Noone, Matt Polsky
Absent: Michael Byrnes, Kerry Pflugh

SALUTE TO FLAG

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes from **July 16, 2025**, motion to approve by Audra Frank 2nd Matt Polsky, approved by acclamation with Sasha Fernandes abstaining.

PRESENTATION:

Update on County Sustainability Study

Emily Hammer, Director, Department of Public Works

Marcus Rosenau, Principal, SSP Architects

The presentation included information on energy efficiency, renewable energy, sustainable design standards, and time for Q&A. Energy audits of county-owned facilities will be conducted in order to make recommendations based on current data. Audits are funded by NJ Clean Energy Program. Decisions will be made based on four bottom lines: energy efficiency, user impact (health, comfort, productivity), environmental impact, and resilience. We saw a plan for the Bread Lock Park Nature Center and Land Preservation Office. Wildflower meadows and bioswales will be included in the design, which is along the historic Morris Canal Greenway. Based on this plan, the Nature Center will be a learning tool that will incorporate sustainable features, such as a small solar array on the roof and electric vehicle charging stations.

CORRESPONDENCE: N/A

COMMITTEE MEMBERS REPORTS:

Clairanne Arcaro:

- The Pollinator Protectors website is up and running: wcnj-pollinatorprotectors.com The group is updating and maintaining gardens. They are collecting seeds.
- There is a Girl Scout project, *Faith in Nature Rain Gardens*, grand opening on September 20 at Breakpoint Community Church, 493 Route 46E, Hackettstown, NJ. The Pollinator Protectors provided assistance with this Girl Scout Gold Award Project.
- Claire is working with the kids at Mountain Villa. They planted pumpkins/wildflowers
- Claire & Matt met with Dr. Hassan Mahmood Warriach, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Warren County

- Lynn Waclawski, Home Horticulture Program Assistant, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Warren County, located at 3 Shotwell Drive, Belvidere. Upcoming program details can be found on the website warren.njaes.rutgers.edu
 - 9/24 Garlic & Herbs
 - 10/4 Ag Day
 - 10/23 Practical Permaculture -Belvidere Office
 - New 2026 Steward Program beginning January

Audra Frank: Audra and an intern from Centenary met with Mayor Randy Piazza of Phillipsburg over the summer to review the process for joining Sustainable Jersey. Mayor Piazza also attended our presentation on Sustainable Jersey on October 16, 2024. Mayor Piazza informed her that Phillipsburg passed a resolution to support participation in the Sustainable Jersey Municipal Certification Program at their last Town Council meeting. We discussed the intern from Centenary helping Phillipsburg, and Claire questioned who they represented and answered to. This discussion was tabled until our next meeting in October when Chair Kerry Pflugh is present.

Sasha Fernandes:

- Peace NJ received a total of \$400,000 in grants for the project at Alumni Park in Hackettstown. The Musconetcong Watershed Association would like to start a water sampling project there.
- Upcoming events in Hackettstown:
 - September 26-28, Octoberfest
 - October 4, Community Resource Fair, Trinity Church

Josephine Noone:

- The Washington Borough Green Team received a \$2,000 Sustainable Jersey Grant funded by PSEG, and planted a native plant perennial pollinator garden and wildlife habitat at the Washington Public Library. There will be a ribbon cutting event for the garden on Saturday, September 27, at 11:00 am at the library, 20 Carlton Avenue, Washington Borough.
- Josephine attended the *Women and Their Woods Retreat* organized by the Ridge and Valley Conservancy. Josephine will share information and links provided at the retreat with committee members by email. In particular, information was shared about how to create Forest Stewardship Plans.
- Josephine shared an idea for a contest from the Atlantic County Recycles Summer 2025 newsletter. Atlantic County Clean Communities is having a Fall Litter Challenge. Litter teams can perform cleanups between October 6-24 on roadways, parks, or other public areas and report bags of trash and recycling collected. Winners will be selected based on the amount of trash collected and will receive mini-grants. Details are provided at acua.com/litterchallenge.

Matt Polsky:

- Matt spoke to Warren County Planning Director, Ryan Conklin, regarding:
 - County-wide Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) & Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI) updates
 - Open Space Master Plan update due in one to two years
 - Follow up regarding the status of the Regional Climate Action Plan for the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) that includes Carbon, Lehigh, & Northampton Counties in PA and Warren County in NJ. We hosted the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) Workshop on March 19, 2025, and would be interested in being informed of the outcomes.
 - Warren County would like to place someone on the Highlands Commission as there is currently a vacancy.

- Matt reached out to Dr. Warriach from Rutgers Cooperative Extension to propose exploring whether the farming community and environmentalists could work together on areas of common ground. Matt and Claire met with Dr. Warriach.
- Matt hosted three online *Democracy is Us: How Can We Get Out of Our Polarization Mess?* talks in August and September. Josephine attended one online talk. Matt will email links to the recordings to WCEAC members.
- Matt sent us his report and his students' report on recommendations for New Jersey's next governor on climate change.

CHAIR REPORT (Kerry Pflugh): Not present

OLD BUSINESS:

Warren County Fair Survey Results were compiled by Josephine Noone and emailed to committee members. Three people provided contact information. Audra Frank will contact them to invite them to our next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Chris Infinito: Commissioner Kern will be on the American Conservation Coalition (ACC) and League of Conservation Voters panel at Rowan University on October 15.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn 8:33 pm by Audra Frank, 2nd Matt Polsky, approved by acclamation.

Submitted by Josephine Noone