



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

MINUTES

Wednesday, December 17, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: 7:04 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, Michael Byrnes, Sasha Fernandes, Josephine Noone, Kerry Pflugh, Matt Polsky

Absent: Audra Frank

SALUTE TO FLAG

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes from **November 19, 2025**, motion to approve by Michael Byrnes, 2nd Sasha Fernandes, approved by acclamation with Kerry Pflugh abstaining.

CORRESPONDENCE: N/A

PUBLIC COMMENT: N/A

COMMITTEE MEMBERS REPORTS:

Michael Byrnes:

Michael spoke to Dr. Warriach, Warren County Agricultural Extension Agent. Michael is willing to continue to reach out to Dr. Warriach and Rutgers Cooperative Extension to see whether there is a role for the WCEAC in furthering his work.

Sasha Fernandes:

Sasha is willing to reach out to Jim Bishop, who runs the Warren County Fair, to introduce herself and see how the WCEAC could better reach out to farmers.

Audra Frank:

Josephine Noone:

Josephine Noone, Washington Borough Green Team, and Environmental Educators Diana and Michael Dove presented a program at the Washington Public Library on Dec. 13 entitled *Where Wild Animal Garden Visitors go in Winter*. 14 adults and 14 children attended. Participants made wildlife and nature-themed ornaments and door swags, listened to a story, and went outside to see the NWF-certified wildlife habitat pollinator garden preparing for winter. This program was sponsored by Washington Borough Clean Communities.

Matt Polsky:

Matt shared some information on the agrovoltatics movement coming out of Rutgers.

Clairanne Arcaro:

The Pollinator Protectors hosted a Holiday Party on December 15th and approximately 25-30 people attended.

CHAIR REPORT (Kerry Pflugh):

The WCEAC now has a page on the Warren County website with our photographs and bios, agendas and minutes.

NEW BUSINESS:

2026 Meeting Schedule: Motion to continue to meet on the 3rd Wednesday of the month in 2026 by Clairanne Arcaro, 2nd Michael Byrnes, approved by acclamation.

Discussion Notes:

A New Jersey Highlands Council Liaison from Warren County is being appointed by Governor Murphy. Her name is Kelly Smith from Harmony. She still needs to be approved and sworn in.

The WCEAC could help to research and facilitate conversations about Highlands Planning Conformance for Warren County. This is an important and detailed area of long-term land use planning and we need to take a careful and well-informed approach. The WCEAC could help by gathering information, reviewing the available guidance and data, evaluating potential environmental and community impacts, and providing recommendations to the Warren County Commissioners as they consider their options. We would like to invite the Warren County Planning Director, Ryan Conklin, to come talk to us about the legal ramifications of Highlands Planning Conformance. Kerry Pflugh will reach out to invite Ben Spinelli, Executive Director of the New Jersey Highlands Council, to speak to us.

Commissioner Kern shared that another goal for 2026 is to develop an inventory of priority properties that could be preserved as open space using county funding.

The Warren County Commissioners recently voted to create an improvement authority to assist towns with borrowing money for upgrading infrastructure. This could assist with bonding for drainage improvement to roads, stormwater infrastructure, etc.

Kerry Pflugh suggested that we continue to highlight and promote our National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Community Wildlife Habitat initiative.

The Pollinator Protectors, in conjunction with the Parks Foundation, would like to clean up the native garden at Bread Lock Park.

Goals for 2026:

- 1) We will work with the County Commissioners to research and make recommendations on Highlands Planning Conformance.
- 2) We will promote the NWF Community Wildlife Habitat initiative.
- 3) The Pollinator Protectors, in conjunction with the Parks Foundation, will clean up the native garden at Bread Lock Park.
- 4) We will assist in identifying potential lands to be preserved as open space.

OLD BUSINESS: N/A

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn at 9:21 pm by Kerry Pflugh, 2nd Clairanne Arcaro, approved by acclamation.

Submitted by Josephine Noone