Environmental Commission

April 9, 2026 7:30pm – at Boro Hall and via Zoom

Minutes

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance Mr. Yarin opened the meeting at 7:33 pm with the Open Public Meetings Act Announcement.

2. Attendance

Present: Paul Yarin (Chair), Councilman Chris Cho, Ansar Batool, Liel Dulev, Marina Layvand, Arati Navar, Conway Wong, Anna Maroules (Council Liaison)
Absent: Sarah Ritter Chung, Krishna Rege

3. Approval of Minutes (March 12, 2026) Ms. Layvand moved to approve the March 12, 2026 minutes; Ms. Navar seconded. Ms. Batool abstained as she had not been present at the March meeting. The motion carried and the minutes were approved.

4. Open Meeting to Public Comments No one wished to make a comment.

5. Executive & Treasurer's Report

a. Budget update The temporary budget is in effect.

b. Submitted grants: PSEG/SJ These grants have been submitted for a $20,000 dual-port EV charger and an energy efficiency education grant. The decisions will be made at the end of the month. Mr. Yarin asked whether the EV charger on municipal land could be used by the public and whether it could be on school or library property. Discussion. Certain stipulations apply to the use of these potential grants

c. Grant application: ANJEC There is a potential $1500 grant for use in open space, but the deadline is very soon. Discussion.

d. Partner orgs / events: ANJEC, Sierra Club, CNC, SJ videos of recent ANJEC seminars are on line. Mr. Yarin spoke at the Sierra Club; his talk is on YouTube. The NJ Comprehensive Climate Action Plan is taking place soon. There is an advocacy campaign webinar soon. The CNC Soup Supper is on April 26 at 5:00 pm. The Environmental Commission Fundamentals will be on May 2 in Newark; the Sustainable Jersey Summit is scheduled to be held soon. The

Commission will pay for members to attend if they let Mr. Yarin know in time for him to obtain tickets.

6. Unfinished Business

a. Closter Cleanup Day final coordination (4/25, rain date 5/3) several members are spreading the word of the cleanup. Members should meet at the Senior Center at 9:20. Three people will go to the Nature Center to run a second sign-in desk until 2:00 pm. The Patisserie coffee truck will be on hand. Members are asked to wear their green vests.

b. Updates:

Birdhouses: the Dulev family and Sam Layvand's high school group have made and installed many birdhouses. Mr. Yarin is working on building a floating birdhouse. Mr. Yarin suggested having a map of all birdhouse placements.

Buzzoni Garden: Mr. Yarin showed identification cards he created last year

Green Challenges: Ms. Layvand reported that each bi-monthly challenge now offers a prize, with the Mayor to present a certificate and prize to the overall annual winner at a year-end ceremony in December or January. The program has been publicized to the schools, senior center, library, scouts, and local shops; the April challenge is now active, with entries accepted by email or Instagram. Mr. Yarin suggested adding a birdhouse-themed challenge.

Health walks: launched on Sunday April 5 and will take place each Sunday, 10:00 am, meeting at Ruckman Park. Reminders will be posted. Time can be adjusted to match people's schedules.

Trail maintenance: Mr. Dulev and Mr. Yarin walked a trail extension near the Blue Trail at the Nature Center. Several trail markers are down or turned around, and a handful of logs have fallen across the trail; nothing extreme. They cleaned up trash, including trash blowing in from the loading dock at the back of the adjacent temple. It appears they may have walked the wrong segment; Mr. Wilsher will coordinate with Riley to identify the correct trail and schedule a follow-up walk.

ERI: Documents are now being provided to Rutgers to be added into their system. There may be additional data held by the Police, DPW, or other borough departments. Environmentally sensitive sites of concern should be pointed out.

Ms. Batool is looking into this question for the Planning Board. Discussion of stream spots that have pollution. A map should be created.

CEPG: A stakeholder engagement meeting needs to be scheduled.

7. New Business

a. DPW discussions: Mr. Yarin said that inviting someone from the DPW to EC meetings a few times a year would be a good idea (quarterly?). The DPW superintendent is open to test driving electric landscaping equipment.

b. Closter Swim Club solar concept: Mr. Yarin shared that he has been ruminating about possible ways to put a solar farm on the site of the former Swim Club. This idea is in its very nascent stage. Challenges include the fact that the site is in a floodplain and floodway, the elimination of some of the tax credits (due to the One Big Beautiful Bill Act), and the PCB contamination on the property, which is strongest toward the back of the site near the old pool pump house. Mr. Yarin will look into this issue further, including discussions with the borough engineer and solar developers. The current default plan for the Swim Club property is to remediate it and make it into some sort of a park. Discussion.

8. Plan Review and Comment

a. TBD: The Planning Board would like Mr. Yarin to attend the May meeting.

9. Liaison Reports

a. Governing Body (A. Maroules) The 2026 Environmental Commission proposed budget totals $4,775.00.

b. Planning Board (A. Batool) No report this month.

10. Adjournment 8:26 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Francis
Recording Secretary