Environmental Commission

September 11, 2025 7:30pm – at Boro Hall and via Zoom

Minutes

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance Paul Yarin called the meeting to order at 7:34 pm with the Open Public Meetings Act announcement.

2. Attendance

Paul Yarin-present
Krishna Rege-present
Shelagh McCaffrey-absent
Council Liaison Cho-present
Conway Wong-present

3. Approval of Minutes (May 8, July 10, and August 14, 2025) addressed later in the meeting.

4. Open Meeting to Public Comments
A group of young people came forward with the idea of creating a "Closter Cleanup Club," which would bring kids closer together and clean up Closter once or twice a week. Mr. Yarin voiced that the Environmental Commission supports the idea and suggested that the next step would be discussing with the DPW. Discussion. This would have to be on public property only. Ms. Rege suggested taking before and after pictures, Discussion about adult leadership (for safety). It was mentioned that school staff expect stipends for club supervision. One of the students suggested having monthly talks during the summer. More discussions to follow.

5. Executive & Treasurer's Report

a. Budget update

b. Upcoming events: Closter Town Day will be 10/6. No members were available to work at the fair. Climate Week: a lot of events are free and/or online; ANJEC Congress Ms. Rege attended last year and felt that it was educational. This year it is on 10/10/2025. Mr. Wong moved that the Commission allocate $400 to pay for Environmental Commission members to attend second Ms. Rege. All in favor. Carried. Mr. Yarin and Ms. Rege plan to attend. Mr. Wong is not available. Other members will advise.

c. EC participation on Planning Board

d. Recruitment updates

6. Unfinished Business

a. Closter Clean-Up Crew student proposal (above)

b. Community Energy Planning Grant updates. Mr. Yarin showed a graphic explaining which elements would be feasible for Closter.

c. Buzzoni Pollinator Garden updates Butterfly caterpillars seen in August have now gone into the chrysalis stage. The volunteers were thanked for their work, as was the DPW. Pictures of insect homes were shared and discussed. There are ANJEC funds available for signage. A sign with a "card wall" design may be created.

d. ERI: M&C presentation recap and next steps. Mr. Yarin reported that he had given a presentation to the Mayor and Council about an ERI and asked for $25,000. The Mayor and Council asked questions of clarification and supported the request. The Administrator advised Mr. Yarin that he may go ahead and give permission to Rutgers to begin the work. Ordinances and formal permission will be addressed by the Mayor and Council

e. Website/social media updates A student may be interested in doing some work.

7. New Business

a. Rutgers Native Plants Sale Rutgers is offering kits based on 1) a lot of sun; 2) not much sun; 3) do you know what you are doing. Mr. Yarin purchased a kit. Perhaps the Closter EC could design kits.

b. EC postcard mailer Mr. Yarin designed an Every Door Direct Mail postcard for discussion. The purpose would be to let residents know there is an Environmental Commission and to learn what people's concerns or interests are. Mailing to the whole town is about $900. Printing would be about $500. Discussion. This would have to be mailed very soon so as not to get lost in the election mailings; or they should be mailed well after the elections. Mr. Wong moved to approve allocating $1500.00 for the mailer and mailing; discussion about whether the results would be worth the money. Councilman Cho suggested a table at MacBain Farm might be a good way to connect with residents. Councilman Cho seconded Mr. Wong's motion. Three voted in favor; one (Krishna Rege) was against. Carried.

~~8. Plan Review and Comment~~

The Planning Board Chair asked that someone attend each meeting. Mr. Yarin attended this month and asked some questions about the application. Discussion about influencing Zoning Board as well as Planning Board through the use of a Green Building checklist. This would be a list of recommendations.

9. Liaison Reports

a. Governing Body (C. Cho) The ERI presentation received good feedback. The Mayor invited everyone to his table at Fireworks Night.
b. ~~Shade Tree Commission~~ (postponed pending new appointment)
c. ~~Planning Board~~ (postponed pending new appointment)

Minutes (listed above):

May 8 Correction: Flynne is the correct spelling of Ms. Wiley's first name. Ms. Rege moved to approve with correction, second Mr. Wong. All in favor. Carried.

July 10 Layvand is the correct spelling of Sam's last name. Matticks is the correct spelling of Michelle's last name. The paragraph about 104 High Street should state that the lot is fairly large (not lot). Paragraph 8C should say that the project is awaiting FMHA approval. Ms. Rege moved to approve with corrections, second Councilman Cho. All in favor. Carried.

August 14 The spelling of Flynne Wiley, Arati Navar, and Mason Ben-Yair from Ciel Power need to be corrected. Ms. Rege moved to approve with corrections, second Mr. Wong. All in favor. Carried.

A property on Closter Dock requested a waiver from underground wiring, Discussion.

10. Adjournment Ms. Rege moved to adjourn, second Mr. Wong. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Marti Francis
Recording Secretary