

TUCKERTON BOROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Thursday, May 8, 2025 @7pm in Borough Hall

Call Meeting to Order

Chairperson Kaylyn Ullman called the Tuckerton Environmental Commission meeting to order on Thursday, May 8, 2025 at 7:03 pm in Borough Hall.

Open Public Meeting Act Statement

“Provisions of the Open Public Meeting Act have been complied with as notice was published in the Tuckerton Beacon and the Asbury Park Press stating the time, date and place of this meeting.”

Roll Call

Kaylyn Ullman (Chairperson)	P	Cynthia Coritz (Vice Chair)	Abs
Anthony Scaglione	Abs	Beth Obiedzinski-Garvin	P
VACANT	-	VACANT	-
Debra McMunn	P	John B. McCormack	P
Paul Solimani	P	Savannah Beaulieu (Secretary)	P
Mayor Susan Marshall	P	Mike Dupuis, Sr.(Council Liaison)	P

Flag Salute: Ms. Ullman led the salute of the flag.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes for the March 2025 meeting were circulated, Mrs. Ullman motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Solimani. It was so moved by unanimous consent of the Commission.

Recording of Hours: The Tuckerton Environmental Commission recognizes their member's donation of time and knowledge for studies and research along with attendance of the monthly meetings and available workshops / seminars for the months of April-May 2025

Kaylyn Ullman (Chairperson)	6	Cynthia Coritz	-
Anthony Scaglione	-	Beth Obiedzinski-Garvin	26
Debra McMunn	32	VACANT	-
Paul Solimani	1	John B. McCormack	4

Old Business

Adopt-A-Highway

Ms. Ullman reports that the April cleanup was successful, with community volunteers collecting 6 full bags of debris. She expressed satisfaction with the level of community engagement and proposed implementing a "bingo game" format for future cleanup events, where participants would search for specific types of litter items to make the activity more interactive and enjoyable.

Sustainable Jersey: No Updates.

Town Water Quality: No Updates.

Bank Account/ Grants

Mr. Solimoni reported that during earlier environmental committee meetings, the possibility of creating a bank account had been discussed. Following a conversation with the borough CFO, he learned that any committee seeking to establish a bank account for fundraising must set up a trust through the CFO's office. This trust would operate with an associated checkbook requiring dual signatures for all transactions.

Mr. Solimoni plans to continue working with the CFO to understand the complete process and mentioned that the CFO cited existing examples of other borough committees, including Pride and Celebration, that currently function under this trust arrangement. He encouraged committee members to feel comfortable contacting the CFO directly and committed to pursuing the establishment of the necessary structure to enable the committee's fundraising efforts.

Ms. Ullman announced that the committee was unsuccessful in receiving the mini grant from the Native Plant Society of New Jersey. She explained that approximately 75 applicants were competing for only a few thousand dollars in total funding. Ms. Ullman shared that the organization recommended partnering with their local native plant group located in Stockton for future applications, as this group possesses valuable experience in crafting successful grant proposals for the program.

New Business: ***Guess Speakers-*** Ms. Cook introduced herself as a retired educator with master's degrees in fine arts and education who has taught at Friends School, Hamilton High School, and Stockton University. She described her 30-35 years of experience painting coastal wetlands and documenting climate change impacts, including work as an artist in residence at Forsyth National Wildlife Refuge and with the Coastal Estuarine Research Federation. Ms. Cook offered to assist the committee with grant writing and asked about their specific plans and how she could contribute to their environmental initiatives.

Mr. Solimoni discussed the environmental committee's work at a Tuckerton Beach meeting, highlighting their efforts to revive the community garden, maintain downtown planters, conduct Route 9 cleanups, and address waterway issues, particularly Thompson's Creek.

Drawing from 17 years of local property ownership, he described how Hurricane Sandy transformed Thompson's Creek. The area once had abundant marine life including killies, peanut bunker, and crabs, but residents now must purchase killies due to population decline. Sandy

deposited black silt throughout the marsh that churns up during low tide, replacing the natural sand movement and leaving debris from neighboring properties.

Ms. Cook mentioned having compiled detailed information about potential committee activities and offered to share this resource to help guide monthly meetings and project planning.

Forrest Jennings introduced himself as the Barnegat Bay Watershed Ambassador with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. He explained that his duties include testing stream quality throughout the Barnegat Bay watershed from Brick to Tuckerton, conducting educational presentations at area schools, and participating in community environmental projects. Mr. Jennings offered to assist Tuckerton's environmental committee with future projects and to help promote their initiatives through his social media channels.

A story from Floyd West, one of the originators of the Pinelands Commission, about what caused the decline of fish and clams in Tuckerton Bay. According to West, the problem began when Holgate was filled in after Tucker's Island washed away. Previously, ocean water would enter through Holgate and meet fresh water at the causeway bridge, creating a natural exchange. After the fill project (done by Army engineers as hurricane protection), water now has to travel from Barnegat down past the bridge to meet in the Tuckerton Bay area, eliminating the beneficial water exchange at Holgate.

Mr. Jennings explained this as a "flushing time" issue - with Holgate closed, water from freshwater creeks between Barnegat inlet and the former Holgate opening must travel much farther and sits stagnant longer, depleting oxygen levels and creating less healthy conditions compared to the previous system where water could flush in and out more readily.

Committee Reports: Ms. Ullman announced that the committee has received approval from both public works and council to remove all the invasive Bradford pear trees on Main Street and replace them with native sweet gum trees. The existing trees are non-native, smell unpleasant, and damage infrastructure with their root systems. The project will require digging out every planter since the current trees were planted with plastic liners that must be removed for proper growth. The committee plans to make this an educational initiative highlighting Tuckerton's commitment to native landscaping, with Garden Club volunteers helping to relocate existing native plants during the transition. They emphasized the need for public communication through newspapers or signage to frame this as a tree replacement program rather than just removal, and are working to secure donated replacement trees for fall planting.

Members Forum: The committee discussed textile recycling as a growing environmental issue, explaining that unwearable clothing should not go in regular trash but instead be taken to specialized recycling bins. These bins accept all clothing regardless of condition, with damaged items being shredded for rags. The committee identified existing bins at local locations and explored bringing more to Tuckerton through a company called HelpSee, which offered to create

promotional materials featuring the town seal pending council approval. The initiative aims to divert textiles from landfills while educating residents about proper disposal methods.

It was discussed implementing a "Skip the Stuff" resolution to reduce single-use plastics among local businesses. This initiative would involve approaching restaurants and other establishments to encourage them to only provide plastic utensils, straws, and condiment packets when customers specifically request them, rather than automatically including them with orders. The committee noted this aligns with current statewide efforts to reduce single-use plastics in New Jersey and could save businesses money while reducing waste. They planned to create a list of local businesses to approach, educate them about the benefits, and potentially create certificates or window signage recognizing participating establishments. The committee referenced successful implementation in other towns like Westfield and emphasized framing the approach as education and voluntary cooperation rather than mandates.

Ms. Obiedzinski-Garvin raised concerns about a property on South Green Street that borders the Forsythe Wildlife Refuge. The property owners accessed their land through the Refuge's roadway entrance during cleanup activities, resulting in significant damage to both trees and the roadway itself. This led to a discussion about the environmental and legal implications of the situation. Several members volunteered to attend the upcoming Land Use Meeting to address these matters.

Approval of Secretary Services: Ms. Ullman motioned, seconded by Mr. Solimani to approve the secretary's services for the month of May. It was so moved by unanimous consent of the Commission.

Public Forum: Ms. Ullman motioned, seconded by Mrs. McMunn to open public forum.

Seeing no comments, Mrs. Obiedzinski-Garvin motioned, seconded by Ms. Ullman to close public forum.

Adjournment: Seeing there were no more comments from the Commission, Mrs. Ullman motioned, seconded by Mrs. Obiedzinski-Garvin to adjourn the meeting. It was so moved by unanimous consent of the Commission. The Environmental Commission meeting ended at 7:35pm.

Sincerely,
Savannah Beaulieu
Tuckerton Environmental Commission Secretary