

TUCKERTON BOROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Thursday, April 9, 2026 @7pm in Borough Hall

Call Meeting to Order

Chairperson Beth Obiedzinski-Garvin called the Tuckerton Environmental Commission meeting to order on Thursday, January 8, 2026 at 7:05 pm in Borough Hall.

Flag Salute

Ms. Obiedzinski-Garvin led the salute of the flag.

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

Beth Obiedzinski-Garvin	P	Cynthia Coritz	P
Anthony Scaglione	Abs	John B. McCormack	P
Paul Solimani	P	Vincent Lauricella	P
Debra McMunn	P	Carolyn Keen	P

Approval of Minutes

Minutes for the December 2025 meeting were circulated, Mr. Solimani motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. McMunn, the motion carried with Ms. Coritz and Mr. Lauricella abstaining.

Minutes for the January 2026 meeting were circulated, Mr. Lauricella motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. McMunn, the motion carried with Mr. McCormack, Ms. Keen, and Mr. Solimani abstaining.

Old Business

Adopt-A-Highway: The Commission's Adopt-A-Highway cleanup is scheduled for Saturday, April 11 at 10:00 AM along the adopted one-mile stretch of Main Street. Members were reminded that the NJ DOT safety video is only required to be watched once per volunteer, so those who have previously viewed it do not need to watch it again.

Regarding outreach, the event was featured in The Sandpaper alongside other Earth Day coverage, and was submitted to the Barnegat Bay Partnership website during their cleanup promotion window. Members shared the event on personal social media. The Nixle alert system was discussed as a potential outreach channel for future events. A follow-up with Mr. Martin was suggested to explore sending an alert to all registered recipients. It was also noted

that the Pinelands Regional School science club was not contacted in time this cycle and should be included in future planning.

Regarding supplies, a box was received at the office via UPS containing bags, reflective vests, and gloves. Mr. Solimani will pick up the box from the secretary's office Friday morning and will also retrieve additional supplies from the Public Works yard. Members were encouraged to bring their own pickers.

For signage, Councilman Brian Martin confirmed via text that Councilman Sam Colangelo may have the cleanup signs or they were returned to the yard. One sign will be placed at each end of the stretch. Ms. Keen will pick them up along with the other supplies. Regarding bag pickup, Mr. Solimani offered to haul all collected bags in his truck. Per the NJ DOT Adopt-A-Highway program, DOT is responsible for picking up the filled bags; the registered drop-off location is Borough Hall. Mr. Solimani noted that if the bags needed to go to the yard instead, he would need to depart by 11:30 AM as the yard closes at noon on Saturdays.

Ms. Keen announced the annual Tuckerton Beach cleanup is scheduled for Sunday, April 25. There is no rain date — if it rains, the cleanup will not take place. Significant storm debris was noted along Little Egg Harbor Boulevard, including wood and pilings; Mr. Keen will assist with truck removal of larger items. The Carol Avenue stream area is also included in the cleanup scope. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is to be contacted regarding that area.

Grants: Ms. Keen and Ms. Coritz announced that information on an available stewardship grant (up to \$1,500 per project) was received on April 7, 2026, with a submission deadline of April 13. Because the application requires a completed budget and the Commission's projects are not yet fully scoped, it was not feasible to apply in this cycle. The grant was recommended for consideration in the next funding cycle. Invasive species management and the community garden and tree projects were identified as strong candidates. Steve Fiedler, who previously assisted with invasive tree removal, remains available to answer questions.

Water ways: Mr. Solimani explained that councilmen Brian Martin is pursuing grant funding from NJ Fish & Game and Forsyth for the Thompson's Creek restoration project; results are expected by mid-to-late summer, with engineering and remediation work to follow if funding is secured. Regarding the shoreline dredging project, soundings have been completed and the project closeout date is March 2027. Discussion of possible movement of dredge material from Lanyard Lagoon was noted; Brian Martin is the lead contact. No visible construction activity has been observed on site. As Mr. Scaglione, the Commission's waterways lead, was absent, a full waterways discussion was deferred to the next meeting

Tree Replacement: Mr. Lauricella reported six trees removed last fall are being replaced along Main Street, a state road. The existing tree pits are approximately two feet wide, limiting plantings to a 10–15 gallon container size at most. Three native species are under consideration: Sweet Bay Magnolia, Eastern Redbud, and Serviceberry (*Amelanchier canadensis*, also known as Shadbush), available in tree form. All three have relatively delicate

root systems and are not known for damaging sidewalks. The site is challenging due to limited pit size and shade conditions.

Hand's Nursery does not carry trees in the needed size. Mr. McCormack mentioned Down to Earth Nursery carries all three species but priced at approximately \$335, which exceeds the budget. The group estimated a cost of roughly \$200 per tree including stakes and planting materials, for a total of approximately \$1,200 for six trees. A visit to a Galloway-area nursery was also suggested. Preference was expressed for locally sourced native plants; Highlands Alliance, Barnegat Bay Partnership, and Jersey-Friendly Yards were noted as resources for native plant nurseries.

On the funding side, a prior private donation of \$250 was received, and \$100 was previously expended toward a movie event. Union Market held a fundraiser on Easter Saturday (10% of proceeds going to the tree project); the contribution amount is still pending, though the store appeared busy that day. Union Market also expressed interest in donating one or two trees directly. Mr. Solimani will bring the tree donation request to the Paradise Cove and Uplanders meeting the following week, and the Tuckerton Beach Association meeting on the 18th will offer another opportunity to solicit support. Funding must be confirmed before any trees are purchased. Beth will also reach out to the Chamber of Commerce about possible support.

Helpsy: Ms. Coritz announced the Commission will host a HELPSY textile recycling drive on Sunday, April 26, 2026 from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM at Tuckerton Borough Hall. The time was set by group consensus to accommodate church schedules. The Secretary will open the building, and the Police Chief will be notified of the event.

The format will be as follows: residents drop off textiles during the event window, Commission volunteers sort and organize the items, and a HELPSY truck arrives at the end to collect and weigh everything. The Commission receives payment by the pound (approximately \$0.10/lb), with all proceeds going toward the tree replacement project. HELPSY accepts clothing, shoes, accessories, linens, and other textiles — including items that are torn, stained, or otherwise unusable — diverting them from the landfill. A full list of accepted items was shared via link in a prior email.

Ms. Coritz will contact HELPSY to inquire whether they will create a promotional graphic, as they did for the West Tuckerton Fire bins. If not, Beth will create one using her design programs. Publicity will go out through The Sandpaper, the Borough and Environmental Commission Facebook pages, the Commission website, the Paradise Cove Facebook page, the American Legion bulletin board, and the TBA meeting on the 18th.

Ms. Coritz will also ask HELPSY about placing a dedicated collection bin near the community garden for ongoing donations that would generate credit for the Commission. The existing HELPSY bins at West Tuckerton Fire and Southern Ocean locations do not generate

Commission credit. Additionally, Ms. Coritz will inquire about scheduling a home pickup option for community members who are unable to attend the April 26 event.

New Business

Arbor Day: Tuckerton Borough's Arbor Day celebration will be held at Borough Hall on Thursday, April 24 from 6:00 to 7:00 PM. First through third grade students submitted essays on a prompt proposed by Mayor Marshall: "Our country is celebrating 250 years. What do you think Tuckerton looked like 250 years ago? Describe what you would see if you were alive back then." Selected students will receive awards, and for the first time, living community members will be honored alongside historical recognition. All Commission members were encouraged to attend.

The Commission expressed interest in having a presence in classrooms around Arbor Day. The suggested path is to contact the school superintendent to propose a visit. Ms. Obiedzinski-Garvin offered to look into children's books on environmental and nature themes suitable for younger grades. Ms. Coritz noted a contact who ran Trees New Jersey may have grade-appropriate educational materials available. Because the essay project was already distributed to students for this cycle, any classroom engagement would more likely occur in a future year.

Tuckerton 250th Anniversary Parade Participation:

Tuckerton is celebrating its 250th anniversary this year, and the parade is expected to be significantly larger than in prior years, with expanded fireworks and a call for maximum community group participation. The Commission agreed it would like to participate. A suggestion was raised to coordinate with other borough commissions and committees — including Land Use, Historic Preservation, Economic Development, and Pride & Celebration — to march or ride together under a combined banner, with the Chamber of Commerce potentially sponsoring a large Tuckerton Borough flag. Ms. Obiedzinski-Garvin will draft an email for Ms. Beaulieu to distribute to the chairs of each commission and committee, copying Councilman Brian Martin.

The Commission currently has no banner, tablecloth, or branded materials for public events. Ms. Coritz will research the cost of a branded tablecloth and may personally sponsor it, with design and logo details to be determined.

Second Chance Toy Drive:

Ms. Coritz shared a concept seen at a Stafford Township Environmental Commission event: a plastic toy drive that collects gently used, clean plastic toys — no broken parts, no stuffed animals — to redistribute to families in need, keeping plastic out of the landfill. The proposed timing for Tuckerton would be early September or early October, when seasonal residents are closing up their homes and clearing out belongings. The group discussed possibly connecting it with the September 19 cleanup date. The format would involve a drop-

off and sorting day, followed by a separate distribution day for community members to take items. The concept was well-received and tabled for further planning ahead of the next program year.

Members Forum: It was discussed whether there is any open availability on the Commission, as additional community members have expressed interest in joining. It was clarified that the Commission currently consists of nine members, seven regular members and two alternates. As seasonal members return, the Commission anticipates reaching a full board. It was noted that one member has yet to be sworn in, and the Commission will need to make contact to arrange for that to be completed.

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

Public Forum- No Public Form.

Adjournment- Seeing there were no more comments from the Commission, Ms. Keen motioned, seconded by Mr. McCormack to adjourn the meeting at 8:26pm. It was so moved by unanimous consent of the Commission.

Respectfully submitted by: Savannah Beaulieu, Secretary, Tuckerton Environmental Commission