

Mountain Lakes Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes

May 20, 2025

Members Present: Dan Gates (Chair), Mimi Kaplan, Robert Platt, Cy Korman,

BC Liaison: Josh Howley

HS Liaisons: Evan Mei

Public - Mark Stewart

- April Meeting Minutes - Approved
- Dan introduced Mark Stewart, who attended out of interest in becoming an EC member, and Mark shared his background and reasons for his interest
- MLHS Liaison Update –
 - Recycling program – Evan will try putting lids on recycling cans, with signage that tells students what to do. Committee members suggested the following actions that may be helpful.
 - Reach out to Ryan Dunn, who directs maintenance activities for the schools, for assistance. Contact info for Ryan will be on the Board of Education web site
 - Reach out to Holly Gallegan, who is training to become the Borough’s Clean Communities Coordinator, for assistance with signage. Contact info for Holly will be on the Borough web site
 - Reach out to Anthony Marrone, District Recycling Coordinator for the Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority, to see if he would provide stickers for garbage cans. (Holly may be able to provide stickers, which would make this unnecessary)
 - Flag Pole Light pollution - based on the EC Light Pollution paragraph in the Borough eBlast, a resident reached out to Dan about the flag pole at the high school, which is brightly lit all night every night. An internet search showed that national flag protocol requires lighting whenever an American flag is left on its flag pole at night, so there may not be much that can be done about this. Evan will see if the lighting can somehow be reduced, or if it is possible to start lowering the flag in the evening.
- Highlands Regional Master Plan Conformance Update
 - Dan gave Mark background about what this is
 - Next step is for Planning Board to update the Borough Master Plan to reflect conformance. Planning Board is addressing this at its March 22 meeting.
 - EC provided a letter to the Planning Board to express support for conformance
 - Josh will email the EC members when he knows the expected schedule for Borough Council to introduce a conformance ordinance
- ERI Update: Dan is waiting for response from J. Caldwell Associates about doing an ERI for Mountain Lakes. He will follow up

- MLEC Annual Cleanup Recap
 - There were 72 filled spots on signup genius, and it was agreed that this was a good turnout.
 - Josh pointed out that the event was on the last weekend of the schools' Spring Break, and recommended that next year the event take place before or after Spring Break, to get even better turnout
 - Cy and Evan suggested that the 2026 Community Cleanup date be picked by September, and that it be publicized at the high school in the fall, and again in the spring. This will let students plan to include participating in the cleanup as part of their required volunteer hours

- E-blast: what to highlight next? (Mowing, watering, fertilizing, other?)
 - Cy suggested something about proper disposal of batteries, since they are a serious fire hazard. Dan asked Cy to direct him to information about this, and he'll write something up
 - Leave the Leaves will be re-published in the fall

- Birchwood Rain Garden – May Volunteer will be Mimi

- Other – Cy asked about status of 49 Bloomfield Avenue development. Josh shared that it was discussed at the last Council meeting. The developer is proposing 32 residential units. This isn't yet going to Planning Board.

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Meeting adjourned @ 8:25pm. Next MLEC meeting is scheduled for 6/17/25 @7:30pm via Zoom.