

## Vernon Township Environmental Commission

Minutes July 21, 2025

**Meeting called to order** at 7:00pm by Chair Stephanie DiBrienza

**Statement of Compliance** was read out loud by Chair Stephanie DiBrienza

**Salute to Flag** Chair led the room in salute to the flag.

**Roll Call** by chair

Stephanie DiBrienza- Chair	<b>present</b>
Ann Larsen – Vice Chair & LUB Liaison	<b>present</b>
Catherina Sawoszcyk	<b>present</b>
Barbara Jaggi	<b>present</b>
Edward Connell	<b>present</b>

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair acknowledged quorum and requested edits, comments and motion to approve the June 16, 2025, meeting minutes distributed to commissioners and previously emailed. Vice chair Larsen motioned to approve minutes as written, Chair DiBrienza 2<sup>nd</sup>. Minutes accepted.

### **Public Participation Agenda items only**

Chair motioned to open meeting to the public. Vice Chair second motion. Meeting opened.

J. Paladini stepped forward and introduced herself stating she had two concerns at this time.

Her first concern being the Town Brook which was part of the National Scenic Byway that runs along the ACME Plaza being inappropriately cared for. She brought up concerns of landscaping debris such as clipping's being discarded in the brook and overgrown vegetation on the banks. She stated she had pictures, not with her tonight but would forward them, and had spoken with the landscaping company she watched dump into the stream. She also referenced an incident from 5 or so years ago. She felt it was continuous. Commissioner Sawoszcyk informed her that the commission had discussed the condition of the Town Brook as recent as June 2025 meeting. Commissioners Jaggi and Sawoszcyk had walked the brook the entire length of the ACME plaza on Friday 13, 2025 and found no evidence of" dumping" that the stream was flowing and clear. Commissioner Connell request clarification as to which plants J. Paladini was concerned with, the native vegetation, the invasive plants or all. Commissioner Connell stated his support for the removal of invasive species vegetation. Further discussion was that if a violation is seen it should be reported to the DEP was agreed upon. Chair DiBrienza stated she would follow up with a call to the DEP for discussion. J. Paladini stated that she would forward the pictures.

J. Paladini second concern was LU# 6-25-4 the proposed 99 units in three residential buildings on route 515. Commissioner Sawoszczyk stated this was also a topic of discussion at the June meeting and it was on the agenda for tonight's meeting for further discussion.

Chair requested a motion to close the meeting to the public if there were no further comments. Commissioner Sawoszczyk motion to close the meeting to the public Commissioner Jaggi second.

**Meeting closed to the public.**

Chair called for the **Land Use Board Liaison Report** from the LUB Liaison Vice Chair Larsen.

LUB last met on July 9, 2025

LUB approved Master Plan Update for Mountain Creek Resort.

Master Plan Reexamination Report related to Affordable Housing regulations for the State of New Jersey was presented, voted on and passed at the LUB July 9<sup>th</sup> meeting.

LUB approved Water Use and Conservation Management Plan at the July 9<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Vice Chair brought forth discussion on LU # 5-25-3 13 Geranium Court Application. After discussion commissioners voted unanimously to bring forth concerns to LUB via liaison regarding safety, aesthetics to having a garage only 12 feet from the road and concern for setting a president.

Vice Chair brought forth discussion on LU # 6-25-4 the proposed 99-unit residential buildings at 517 route 515 (not discussed at the July 9<sup>th</sup> LUB) Commissioner concerns discussed were the aesthetics the Western Highlands Scenic Byway in Vernon, how any water run off would negatively affect the town brook, the traffic impact on the environment for both noise and safety, and the percentage of impervious covering of the 2 acres. Chair called for a vote. Commissioners voted unanimously to bring forward concerns to the LUB via liaison.

**Old Business**

Vice Chair Larsen updated commissioners on PFOS and PFAS remediation actively in Vernon Valley Lakes. The Veolia water company has constructed a filtration system for 19 homes affected by PFOS/PFAS in their water.

Vice Chair reported discussion on Master plan update, on Fair share Plan, on Water Use and Conservation Management Plan and amendments to Historic element Perry Farm and Steward House. Master plan currently being updated by Jessica Caldwell & Associates. Current available copy on township website.

LU# 2-25-1 – Red Hand LLC discussed at previous EC meetings was discussed with concerns of water drainage was discussed and passed with concerns noted 5/14/2025 meeting.

**New Business**

**2026 Gypsy Moth Infestation** commissioners discussed rains impact of gypsy moths this year. The mayor confirmed volunteer participation in a summer aerial defoliation survey by the NJ State Department to determine if further actions are necessary.

Chair requested motion to **open meeting to the public**. Vice chair Larsen motioned to open meeting to the public. Commissioner Jaggi second motion. Meeting open. J. Paladini commented on the mayor's verbal comments during the meeting, re offered to email town brook pictures to Chair and offered to assistance to the chair and vice chair in their roles on the commission. Commissioners thank J.Paladini for her interest in the environment.

Vice chair motioned to close meeting to the public if there were no further comments. Chair seconded. Chair closed meeting to the public.

### **Commissioners Comments**

Commissioner Jaggi asked if anyone has heard of any updates or changes to the Highlands Watershed Plan.

Vice Chair reviewed concerns on LU# 5-25-3 and LU# 6-25-4 to bring forth to the LUB.

### **Adjournment**

Chair called for motion to adjourn. Commissioner Jaggi motioned to adjourn, Commissioner Sawoszcyk second the motion. Chair adjourned the meeting.

Next meeting August 18, 2025

Respectfully submitted by Catherina Sawoszcyk