

**Allentown Environmental Commission (AEC)**  
**P.O. Box 487, 8 North Main Street**  
**Allentown, New Jersey 08501**  
**5 February 2026**  
**Minutes**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order in by Chairman Bill Cotte at 7:05 p.m., and the following statement was read:

“In compliance with the ‘Open Public Meetings Act’, Chapter 231, PL 1975, Section 5, adequate notice has been given of this meeting by posting a Notice in the lobby of the Borough Hall, a public space; on the Borough’s website, Face Book page, and X account and by transmitting a notice to two newspapers, THE TIMES and the ASBURY PARK PRESS, as required by law.”

Flag Salute

Role call - Present: Bill Cotte, Rick Jakober, Patricia Brown, Nancy Tindall, Keith Clayton, Angela Gurrera, Greg Westfall, Jennifer Elder Brady, and Councilwoman DeKranes; absent; Wil Borkowski. A quorum was present.

Chairman update – Bill Cotte – Bill and Greg Westfall attended the virtual Dam Removal in NJ webinar on January 28, 2026. See comments below.

Public comments: Limited to three (3) minutes per citizen. State name and address clearly for the record. –Terry Brown, chair of Allentown Shade Tree Commission, 80 Church St. Allentown, NJ 08501

Minutes- Motion to approve the minutes from the January 8, 2026 meeting by Keith, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jennifer; motion passed and minutes approved.

Communications -

- Correspondence –Bill got an email with a link for the Dam Removal in NJ webinar. He will share the link with AEC members and anyone who might be interested.
- Email from the Borough regarding the CPR class. \$25/person. If interested in attending, reach out to Bill Cotte, Borough Administrator Laurie Roth, or Councilwoman Nikki Darling.

Old Business

- EV Charging - Keith Clayton – Update – Keith reached out to the GreenSpot Company. They said they will do any of the work that needs to be done. They potentially can move 2 of the chargers to the Church St. location at no charge. We need to adopt the resolutions they recommend. They haven’t done a site visit, yet. Once it is approved, with the resolution and contract signed, it could be done in 3-6 months. Councilwoman

DeKranes put it on the agenda for the next Borough Council meeting on Tuesday, February 10<sup>th</sup>. Keith asked if there already were electric meters in the Church St. parking lot. Councilwoman DeKranes said the Borough is looking into 2 spots in each lot for Farmers Park and Church St. Greg said they need to check liability for fires for EV's. Bill said they have examples of what to look for from other municipalities. Nancy stated that ANJEC had good information and she had reached out to Liz Ritter and Jennifer Coffey for further information.

Pollinator Gardens – Patricia Brown –working on a resident brochure and Pollinator Garden Registration for the Borough. Rick stated that garden room should be allowed for utilities maintenance. Keith stated that a setback is needed of maximum square footage. Terry Brown suggested a “least restrictive” buffer of 5 ft. "Least restrictive" buffers are good for pollinator gardens and generally involve practices that maximize natural habitat connectivity while minimizing rigid, artificial barriers. They allow native vegetation to grow, minimize mowing, and use natural materials. They use native perennial plantings rather than fences or hardscape. This can include planting native groundcovers, vegetation, shrubs, or tall-grass prairie buffers that provide protection from wind and can act as a softer, more unobtrusive boundary. Jennifer said to emphasize the highlights of what the brochure is proposing.

- ERI Update – Rick Jakober –has added more sections. He would like to reference the NJDEP invasive species list. He said the ERI was a good example of a “living document”. It will have electronic links to keep information current. It will be reviewed on an annual basis and links can be easily updated. Resources like Chatgpt will look for dead links and correct them. Bill asked what are the next steps? ANJEC’s definition of an ERI states that it is not a regulatory document. Jenny stated then no one has to approve it. Nancy suggested that the concern was that to keep it current would be problematic to update if it part of the Master Plan. It already is referenced in the Master Plan; it should just be presented to the Planning Board. We’re not replacing the Master Plan but it is an important component of it. Jennifer asked about any changes and new sections. Rick said the old NRI now ERI, is updated with more details. It will include a history section. Borough planner Andy Thomas adoption of the ERI will be an appendix to the Master Plan. Rick will “tighten up” the document he has thus far. He will then send it out to AEC members for more review. If it’s okay, Councilwoman DeKranes will take it to the Borough Council.
- Environmental Ordinances – stat.
- Rain Barrel Workshop Date –Set for Saturday April 25<sup>th</sup>. Bill will apply for the permit and reserve the Annex. Watershed Ambassador, Felicity Cruz will put together flyers and a presentation. Bill remarked that the cost will be \$25/person and open for interested residents first.
- Projects 2026 – a) ANJEC Road show b) Environmental/Shade Tree Commissions Education program c) Electric Vehicle charging stations d) Stream assessment – May 16<sup>th</sup>

## New Business -

### Dams -

Bill and Greg attended a Dam Removal webinar, sponsored by ANJEC, on January 28th. Mayor Fritts had asked for AEC members to attend. The Borough's interest is related to the NJ poorly rated Indian Run Dam and potential impacts to the Borough Water Treatment Plant located immediately downstream. Bill reported that the total number of dams in NJ is 1,826. Greg noted that Monmouth County is focused on seven dams of which Indian Run dam is one. County Engineer, Joe Ettore oversees these dams. The dam has multiple owners including the Borough and Monmouth County. Bill stated that the Borough has been having weekly meetings with Monmouth County and others regarding the Indian Run dam.

Greg stated that The Mayor and Borough Council previous to his time as Mayor were required by Monmouth County to agree to a long term operation and maintenance agreement or the County would not agree to rebuild the Allentown Lake (Conines Millpond) dam as part of the bridge-dam project around 2011. If not properly maintained, it can cause significant property damage within the Borough.

Greg is a Certified Floodplain Manager. He asked Councilwoman DeKranes several questions related to the Borough's Drinking Water Treatment Plant. He noted that the NJDEP Bureau of Dam Safety has rated the dam as "Poor" for a number of years. He recently learned that the primary reason for this rating is due to the insufficient size of the spillway (built circa 1930) under Co Route 526 (Church Street). Residents have been concerned about the dam safety area and have been pushing for rehabilitation or removal. The Water treatment Plant is vulnerable.

Greg asked what the cost of the current Water Treatment Plant upgrades was. Councilwoman DeKranes stated approximately \$1.2 million but will check on the information. She noted that there will be flood mitigation measures. Greg asked what level flood (100 year, 500 year) these measures are designed for. Jennifer questioned whether other flood mitigation measures such as elevation of the plant had been considered. She stated that residents needed more information. She asked what could we do for our infrastructure and protection of the Water Treatment Plant. Rick asked if there was any process for resident input. Pat will send out a listing of pros and cons for dam removal. Greg asked whether the Borough has flood insurance for this facility. Commission members asked to take a tour of the plant. Councilwoman DeKranes said the Borough is looking into grants for upgrading the Water Treatment Plant. She will check to see what plan is publically available. She will get back with answers to these questions.

### Committee Reports:

- Watershed Ambassador, Felicity Cruz- reported that rain barrels are available for our Spring Rain Barrel Workshop. The event will take place on Saturday April 25th and hosted at the Borough's Annex Building. A tent will be set up for overflow room.
- Borough Council Liaison- Councilwoman DeKranes –
- Watershed Ambassador Update- Felicity Cruz –
- Planning & Zoning –Jennifer Elder Brady –none
- Parks & Public Spaces – Wil Borkowski- none
- Recycling & Food Waste – Pat Brown and Nancy Tindall

- Education & Stewardship – Nancy Tindall-
- FaceBook- Rick Jakober – continue to send Rick updates and information related to our environment and commission. We all have access to our FaceBook page.

Other Business

- ANJEC Grant 2026?
- Keith Clayton and Valerie Pellecchia are working on a presentation regarding Native Plants. He discussed possible street lawns ideas.
- Bill had asked Terry Brown, Chair of Allentown Shade Tree Commission, to collaborate on a Native Plants Workshop. They will be promoting Borough walking tours for people to see the different varieties of trees, how to care for trees, residents planting trees and street lawns. Terry said that there is a Trees & Trails of Heritage Park guide online. Bill suggested a “walkabout” and presentation in May. Keith said that Valerie Pellecchia may be able to make a presentation regarding Native Plants.

Adjournment -There being no further business, a motion was made by Angela and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Pat to adjourn the meeting at 8:30p.m.; motion passed. Meeting adjourned.

Next Regular Meeting - Thursday, March 5, 2026 7:00 p.m. in person at Borough Hall and on Zoom.