

OCEAN CITY ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
Minutes – Tuesday, January 13, 2026

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

Roll Call – The following members were present:

Name	Title	Present/Absent	Name	Title	Present/Absent
Richard Bernardini	Chairperson	Present	Harley Cummins	Commissioner	Present
Marnie Niederhofer	Commissioner	Present	James Edwards	Commissioner	Present
Cyndy Legowski	Commissioner	Absent	John Aitken	Commissioner	Absent
Jessica Fenton	City Liaison	Absent	Doug Blackman	Commissioner	Present
Jason Walsh	Alternate #1	Absent	Anthony Verde	Alternate # 2	Absent
Zarian Cabalo	Student Liaison	Present	Joseph Heng	Student Liaison	Present

Open Public Meetings Announcement – Adequate notice of this meeting was given pursuant to Public Law 1975, Chapter 231.

Approval of Minutes – Motion to approve the minutes for the meetings on December 18, 2025 was made by Jim Edwards and seconded by Doug Blackman. Those eligible to vote adopted it unanimously.

Public Comments

- Attendees:
 - Jan French – Food Cupboard coordination for Family Fun Day
 - Sandra Han – Family Fun Day crafts
 - Donna Moore – concerns about pesticide use in OC, Gas leaf blower noise

Pending Business

1. Submitted Plan Review
 - a. 1 CAFRA/NJDEP notices, 0 Treatment Works, 3 Zoning/Planning Board submissions were reviewed. No adverse comments.
2. Student Environmental Association
 - a. Ocean City High School
 - i. Red Cup Project: In the process of getting a pilot program in place in the high school for morning coffee.
 1. SEA funding is complete, cups ordered
 - a. Joseph was commended for his tenacity with the project.
 - ii. Beach Toy Crates - development of the program is in progress to submit to the City and School Administration for review and approval, possibly for use of Public Access funds
 1. Motion was made to approve and proceed with the program was made by Cyndy Legowski, seconded by Caitlin Quirk. Those eligible to vote adopted it unanimously.
 2. M. Niederhofer noted that Public Access Funds from waterfront mitigation fees may be available for project use. Ideas discussed included Crook Horn Creek Trail and Tennessee Ave. boat ramp area. Beach Toy Box Concept development was presented to the Administration.
 3. The Commission learned of discussions regarding the use of Azek versus reused wood pallets for crate construction. The Commission prefers reused wood. Additionally, Azek scraps are rarely long enough for the recovery and use, and costly.
 - iii. Recycle Art contest
3. ANJEC
 - a. Open Space Grant was approved for North End Veterans Park Garden
 - b. "Best of NJ's Outdoors" program will include an opportunity to view and learn about our pollinator gardens and beach plum programs.
 - i. Program was selected for a site review by ANJEC, to be scheduled
4. Monarch Waystation
 - a. North End Veterans Park
 - i. Collaboration in progress with the OC Garden Civic Assoc., OC Garden Club and OCEC
 1. This tract was confirmed as a city property. The plan was developed for City review and was accepted.
 2. D. Blackman researching plant availability and schedule
 3. Spring 2026 installation
 4. Irrigation system operation confirmed with area coverage
 5. Coordinating with new entrance sign installation.
 - b. Potential locations
 - i. Tabernacle sign at 6th and Asbury
 - ii. Ocean City Welcome sign at 55th Street and 34th St Gateway
5. Lectures/Education Program

- i. 2026 Family Fun Day 2/14/26
 1. Exhibitor participation was reviewed.
6. Noise abatement of gas-powered leaf blowers to be investigated.
7. Family Fun Day February 14, 2026 – commissioners to review and recommend exhibitors and crafts.
 - a. Mrs. Heng volunteered to lead new crafts.
 - i. Recommended crafts were reviewed and discussed
8. Offshore Drilling - The "One Big Beautiful Bill Act" (OBBBA), signed into law on July 4, 2025, has several provisions that will significantly impact offshore oil and gas drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) by mandating more lease sales, reducing royalty rates, and encouraging downhole commingling of production. These changes are intended to boost industry investment and production in federal waters. A discussion was held regarding the impacts of this on our City. A Motion was held to investigate a Resolution by the City to oppose energy exploration off our shores, as is adopted by Cape May County and other Cape May County towns, by Caitlin Quirk, and seconded by Betsy Lehman. Those eligible to vote adopted it unanimously. A position paper will be prepared.
 - a. R. Bernardini presented information to the City Council on 12/18/25. The City Council approved a Resolution on 1/8/26.
9. M. Niederhofer questioned if EC will be installing storm drain medallions this season.
 - a. R. Bernardini advised DPW will provide locations.
10. Commissioner terms
 - a. Harley Cummins and Cyndy Legowski are elevated to Commissioner
 - b. New Alternates appointed – Jason Walsh and Anthony Verde
11. Commissioners questioned the schedule for the Crook Horn Creek trail, R. Bernardini to inquire.
 - a. ACT Engineers advised that information has been forwarded to NJDOT, approval of the Categorical Exclusion Document under the Federal NEPA process is anticipated, bidding to follow, Construction fall 2026.

New Business

1. Councilman Keith Hartzel presented on Facebook an expanded residential parking scheme on properties via use pervious pavers. R. Bernardini lauded his approach to this issue.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM. Motions to adjourn were made by Marnie Niedrehofer and seconded by Doug Blackman. Those eligible to vote adopted it unanimously.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 10, 2026, at 6:30 PM, in person at the Cape May County Howard S. Stainton Senior Center, Room S107 Senior Lounge/Card Room, 1735 Simpson Avenue.