

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

Central Region Office  
Robbinsville, NJ  
November 12, 2008

The regular meeting of the New Jersey Fish and Game Council was held on the above date. In attendance were:

Councilman Dave Burke  
Councilman Ed Kertz  
Councilwoman Jane Morton-Galetto  
Councilman John Messeroll  
Councilman Dan Van Mater  
Acting Chairwoman Jeanette Vreeland  
Councilman Len Wolgast

Absent: Councilman Richard Culp  
Councilman Fred Hough  
Councilman Robert Puskas

Division employees included: Director Dave Chanda, Assistant Director Larry Herrighty, Paulette Nelson, Tim Cussen, Jim Sciascia and Tony Petrongolo.

Members of the public included representatives of the Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, the National Wild Turkey Federation and others.

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 am by Acting Chairwoman Vreeland.

In accordance with P.L. 1975, notice of this meeting was filed with and posted at the Office of the Secretary of State and sent to the designated newspapers of the Division, the Newark Star Ledger and The Press (Atlantic City) on October 23, 2008.

The flag salute and Pledge of Allegiance were completed.

Roll call was taken.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked for any comments on the October, 2008 meeting minutes. Councilman Burke noted one change, on page 8, paragraph one, where the word "note" should read "not". There were no other changes. **A motion was made by Councilman Kertz, seconded by Councilman Messeroll to approve the minutes of the October 14, 2008 meeting. A vote was taken with all in favor, and one absenteeism from Councilwoman Galetto who was not in attendance at the meeting.**

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland thanked Councilman Messeroll for sitting in for her as Chairperson at the last meeting. She reviewed several highlights from the past month, including attending the Morris County Federation meeting where there was a presentation of the new deer aging program. She also attended the pheasant round up at the Rockport Game Farm in preparation for the opening day of small game season, noting the damage done to the pens because of the snowstorm last week.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland noted the passing of retired conservation officer Captain Matthew Ferrigno.

Director Chanda reported that he attended the Board of Directors meeting of the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation this past month in Maryland. The Division has worked with the RBFF on the lapsed angler program. Of the 30 states participating in this program, they have seen an increase from 5 to 25% in license sales. The return on the investment is currently being analyzed, and more information should be available in the future.

Director Chanda also reported that the Management Assistance Team from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies were here several weeks ago. They met with the Bureau Chief's during the day, and with representatives from our constituents in the evening. They will be assisting with strategic planning and helping to identify what program areas are most critical due to the lack of personnel in the Division. He noted that all those involved had the desire to focus on the three main user groups, which are the hunters, anglers and outdoor enthusiasts. Also discussed was the impact the Division has on habitat through land management efforts. Additional meetings will follow, and there may be a need to reorganize the agency.

Last week, Director Chanda was in Erie, Pennsylvania attending the Northeast Director's meeting. He noted that each of the 13 northeastern states involved contributed a small portion of their wildlife grant money into a pool fund to do regional work, especially in those areas where the data results may overlap from state to state. New Jersey contributed \$40,000, with a total combined contribution from all the states being \$400,000. There will be five projects done from these monies.

Director Chanda noted that there will be a new Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection appointed some time soon, due to the recent appointment of current Commissioner Lisa Jackson to the position of Chief of Staff for the Governor. He also noted that she is part of the transition team for President Elect Obama.

There was a Finance Committee meeting this morning, and right now the budget is secure, but this is due to the reduction of staff. There should be a two million dollar carry forward from this fiscal year and Director Chanda noted that even if the budget freeze is lifted, only a few critical positions will be backfilled. There was some additional discussion on the hiring restrictions currently in place.

Director Chanda reminded everyone in attendance of the Freshwater Fisheries Forum scheduled for the Hackettstown Hatchery on December 6, 2008.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland noted that the public comment period would be at the end of the meeting today since there were no agenda items to comment on.

Councilman Kertz reported for the Agriculture Committee. He noted that Agriculture Secretary Charles Kuperus will be stepping down on December 31, 2008. The State Board of Agriculture is currently looking for a replacement for his position.

Councilman Kertz noted that the Farm Bureau Convention will be held next Monday and Tuesday.

In his area, Councilman Kertz is receiving reports that farmers and hunters both are seeing more deer this year than they did last year.

Councilman Messeroll noted that he has been away, and turned the Legislative Committee report over to Legislative Liaison Nelson. She noted that the Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs (HOFNOD) bill A3379 was through the Assembly, and had been assigned to the Senate Environment Committee. Also, the bill which would remove the pots from artificial reefs has moved through the Senate and has been assigned to the Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee. Bill S802, which addresses Sunday bow hunting has gone through the Senate and is also assigned to the Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee. There was also discussion on the bill that would reduce the safety zone limit to 150 feet.

New bills that have been introduced include:

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| A3105 | Establishes a new Department of Agriculture and Conservation; clarifies authority of Fish and Game Council in but not of the new department.                               |
| A3144 | Increases membership of the Fish and Game Council and clarifies it has sole authority to regulate freshwater fishing, hunting and trapping.                                |
| A3239 | Establishes forest stewardship and forest certification program in DEP limits liability of landowners who allow sport or recreational activities on their lands for a fee. |
| A3252 | Requires DEP to establish free recreational saltwater fishing registry.  |

There was discussion on A3252, which would cost the Division approximately one million dollars to implement through the point-of-sale system. This type of registry would be necessary to be in compliance with the Magnuson-Stevens Act. After some additional discussion, **a motion was made by Councilman Kertz, seconded by Councilman Van Mater to oppose A3252.** Councilwoman Galetto said she would vote no because opposing the bill would not

address the problem, and felt that we may need to recommend having a saltwater license instead. Director Chanda explained the Magnuson-Stevens Act to the Council, noting that it requires information to be collected by the Federal agency (NOAA) if the individual state does not have a saltwater license, and the cost of this work by the Federal agency will eventually be passed on to the sportsmen. There was additional discussion on this matter, after which Councilman Kertz offered to change his motion to read Council opposes this bill, but supports a saltwater license because of the financial needs of the Division. **Councilwoman Galetto revised this motion to read we are not in favor of the saltwater registry because of the cost and it does not accomplish where the Division needs to be in terms of helping the marine resource, and we would be happy to assist in that process. This was seconded by Councilman Van Mater. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.** Assistant Director Herrightly suggested that this Council prepare a letter to present to the Assembly Committee regarding this issue and their feeling on it.

S2194 Requires DEP to establish free recreational saltwater fishing registry.

It was suggested that the Council may want to expand their previous motion to cover both this bill and A3252. **A motion was made by Councilman Kertz, seconded by Councilman Van Mater to expand the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

A3272 Authorizes black bear hunting permits and permit fees, and clarifies Fish and Game Council authority over bear hunting.

A3280 Expands calibers of rim-fire rifles permitted on State wildlife management target ranges.

There was discussion on this bill that it may not be needed.

A3379 Establishes, in the Division of Fish and Wildlife in DEP, a program to encourage school children to avoid drug use and appropriates \$200,000 therefore from Drug Enforcement and Demand reduction fund.

A3384 Establishes program authorizing lease of historic buildings and structures in State parks, forests, and wildlife management areas.

S2305 Authorizes black bear hunting permits and permit fees, and clarifies Fish and Game Council authority over bear hunting.

S2335 Authorizes hunting of game animals every day of the week during the hunting season.

There was discussion that this would not affect the Game Code, but there would be adjustments needed to the waterfowl hunting dates if this bill were to pass.

Legislative Liaison Nelson advised that tomorrow, the following bill would be in Committee:

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| A3252 | Requires DEP to establish free recreational saltwater fishing registry.  |
| S713  | Establishes forest stewardship and forest certification program in DEP; limit liability of certain landowners who allow sport or recreational activities on their lands for a fee. |

Councilwoman Galetto commented that A823 may be linked to another bill, noting that the ATV community has sent many letters and faxes to their congressional representatives to support this bill, and suggested that the sportsmen should send letters to their congressional representatives noting the damage done by ATV vehicles on State lands.

Councilwoman Galetto reported for the Endangered and Non-Game Species Committee. Their last committee meeting was held on September 17, 2008, where they discussed the Goldwing warbler population in New Jersey and the possibility that they may need an emergency listing for this species because of the population's reduced numbers.

The stilt grass growth at the Berkshire Valley WMA was also discussed. It appears to be somewhat resistant to previous herbicide treatments, and it will be monitored so that future growth can be eliminated.

Also discussed at this meeting was white nosed bat disease, and the methodology being done throughout the country to assess its presence or absence in various mines.

Councilwoman Galetto reviewed information from the Bald Eagle project for 2008. There were 69 territorial nesting pairs, and 63 of these were known to have laid eggs. Of these, 50 pairs successfully fledged 85 young birds.

Councilwoman Galetto also noted that the osprey population is near the 400 pair mark, and commented that this was a milestone. She briefly reviewed some of the highlights of the osprey program, including that there were 38 new structures put up this year, and over half of those have been occupied, with 14 of those nests producing 25 young.

Councilwoman Galetto noted they also discussed the Holly Farm property in Millville. This area has been named at the first choice for a new high school, but she noted that Council and the Department are both opposed to this area being developed because of the number of threatened and endangered species in the area.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland noted that she recently attended the Trapper's Convention, and remarked about the number of trappers who were catching bobcats in their snares in the Beemerville area. They would like to see the bobcat listed as an animal that is legal to take.

Assistant Director Herrighty added that he had spoken to Mick Valent from Nongame on this, who felt that the number of road kills are high enough that bobcats could not sustain additional mortality from trapping. This matter was further discussed, and Councilwoman Galetto asked, if a protocol should be developed for the handling of bobcats that get in to snare traps. Assistant Director Herrighty noted that Mick Valent has spoken with trappers on this matter in the past.

Councilman Messeroll reported for the Federation. He reviewed some of the meetings that have been held recently, noting that the stocking of pheasants at Fort Dix was discussed at the Ocean County Federation meeting. He also reviewed some of the recent activities of various groups, including Pheasant Forever and the NRA.

At the State meeting, the Federation discussed membership. Also discussed were the closure of the ranges at the Winslow and Piney Hollow WMAs.

Councilman Burke reported that the closure of land in the Bass River State Forest was discussed at the Atlantic County meeting. Due to the new construction of lean-to's at Bass River, a very large area has been closed to hunting. He noted that this is near where George Zimmerman is doing the Atlantic white cedar study, and that this closure has created a refuge in that area. He advised that the Division will probably be receiving letters from hunters who have utilized this area in the past, and noted that someone may need to speak to personnel from Parks on this. Assistant Director Herrighty asked that the information be forwarded to him, noting there has also been a closure at the D & R Canal State Park.

Councilman Burke also noted that the waterfowl, deer and small game hunters are out, as well as fisherman. At some of the check stations he has visited, he has had some reports that the deer numbers are down.

Chief Sciascia reported for the Bureau of Information and Education. He noted that there are many things going on, including website work for information on the various hunting seasons that are occurring.

Plans are also underway for the various outdoor shows that will be starting in January, as well as plans to hold an outdoor expo next Fall. This would be an expansion of the wildlife festival that is held at Pequest, and would be centrally located. The idea is to have all types of fish and wildlife and outdoor recreation groups involved, showing the various types of outdoor opportunities available. They will be applying for a grant from the Weatherview Foundation to receive funding to help get the event underway, and are identifying other departments that may want to be included in the planning of this event, which they are hoping to hold in September, 2009.

The freshwater fishing version of the Digest is wrapping up, and it should be available in mid-December. Work is progressing on the marine version of the Digest.

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Chief Sciascia reported that the first year of the Division's coordination of the Trout in the Classroom program is ending, and we were able to increase the number of tanks in classrooms from approx. 65 to approx. 90 this year. It is expected that the program will continue to grow. Councilman Wolgast asked what it costs for a school to set up this program, and was cost a limiting factor. Chief Sciascia noted it costs approximately \$2,000.00, but funding for some schools has been made available through Trout Unlimited. Additionally, he hopes more funding resources will become available with the growth of the program. Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked about producing an informational brochure that could be distributed to promote the program and ask for sponsors, and Chief Sciascia noted that something has just been finalized for that purpose.

The Take a Kid pheasant hunt has been completed. All seven WMAs where the registered hunt was held were fully subscribed, and they received very good support and positive feedback from this event.

Chief Sciascia reported that the Hunter Education Unit's numbers are ahead of what they were at this time last year. As of last week, they had a 14% increase in graduates; however, the number of certificates being issued was down by 10%. This may be due to more students taking fewer disciplines. The number of archery students seems to have increased, and he noted that he would have to compare the information from 2006 and 2007 to this year's data to be sure. Hunter Education courses will be concluding soon for this season.

Radio ads promoting fish and wildlife related outdoor recreation and emphasizing hunting and public hunting land opportunities were created under the contract with the New Jersey Broadcasters Association. Chief Sciascia reviewed the highlights of this promotion, which will be aired on 30 radio stations throughout the month of November.

Chief Sciascia distributed a copy of the Fall Trout fishing promotion postcard, which was mailed in October. He reviewed all the fishing promotions that were done this year, noting that this was

the most that has ever been done. He also distributed and reviewed sales information for this year compared to 2007. The results of this year's promotional efforts and information provided through the analysis of the RBFF promotion results will help with planning for future promotions. He recognized Bob Longcor for his assistance with comparing and reviewing the data.

Chief Sciascia reported that Bob Longcor will be attending the RBFF workshop, and either Chief Sciascia or Paul Ritter will be participating in the annual Archery Trade Association meeting.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked about the progress of the archery range at the Black River WMA, and Chief Sciascia noted a set back due to Paul Ritter being out on sick leave. This matter will be addressed again at the ATA meeting in December. He also reported that funding was provided for 10 National Archery in Schools Program kits for schools in the area of Black River in Morris County. Efforts are under way to recruit and train school teachers interested in using the kits and running NASP in their schools.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked if the NASP program could be part of the reason for the increase in bow hunter education participation and Chief Sciascia noted that the NASP program promotes target shooting, not hunting. The target shooting aspect is recognized by the Olympic archery team as a way to generate interest in potential Olympians. Other states who have NASP have observed some participants developing on their own and interest in all forms of archery, including bowhunting and 3D target competition.

Councilwoman Galetto suggested that a thank you letter be sent to the supervisor of Darlene Yuhas from the DEP press office for her cooperation and assistance with promoting fishing in New Jersey. Chief Sciascia advised that there were many aspects of the promotional campaigns that she has been involved with in addition to actively seeking newspaper and TV media coverage for the spring and fall trout seasons. **A motion was made by Councilwoman Galetto, and seconded by Councilman Messeroll to do a thank you letter to the Press Office thanking them for the assistance of Darlene Yuhas with the promotional campaigns. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.** Chief Sciascia will prepare this correspondence for the Council's signature.

Chief Cussen reported for the Bureau of Law Enforcement. He noted that interviews will be held tomorrow for the Conservation Officer II positions to fill the vacancies of Training Lieutenant and District Five Supervisor, which became available when Lt. Honachevsky asked to transfer to the Lieutenant Investigator position. All appointments will become effective on November 22, 2008.

Conservation Officers recorded a total of 6,712.5 hours of service during this reporting period. Of these, 1328 hours were for training, 1189 for marine resources, 885 for deer hunting patrols, 449.5 for hunting patrols, 366 for fishing and 75 for black bear investigations. Additionally, there were two black bear feeding enforcement sweeps conducted during this reporting period in Sussex and Passaic counties, and a commercial sweep is being planned for some time this month.

Officers conducted 3640 field inspections this past month, resulting in 324 summonses, 27 warnings and no criminal arrests. Of these, 137 summonses were for marine resource violations, 52 for WMA violations, 14 for deer hunting violations and 39 for fishing violations.

In the Northern Region, personnel from the Wildlife Services Unit discovered that a snare that they had set was missing and there was a large amount of blood in the area of the snare. Officer Hutchinson and Lt. Panico investigated the complaint, and discovered that a group of individuals that were cutting firewood on the property had also brought along a rifle to do some target shooting. When they came upon the bear in the snare they thought that it was injured, so they euthanized the bear. Charges are pending against two individuals, and the case is still under investigation at this time.

Also in the Northern Region, in the area of the Hackensack Meadowlands, Lt. Applegate and CO Kuechler investigated two adults and one juvenile who were apprehended for shooting after hours. A total of 66 rounds were fired, and upon investigation, officers found an additional 44 rounds that had not been shot. All the rounds were lead shot, which is illegal for waterfowl hunting. Additionally, the boat was not registered, the boat operator had no operator's license, and there were no life jackets on board. Appropriate summonses were issued.

In the Central Region, Officer Szulecki investigated a complaint about illegal fishing on the trout stocked waters of the Manasquan River. One of the individuals was observed using a cast net, which is illegal for trout fishing, and the other individual was observed throwing trash in to the river. When inspected, one of the individuals was found to be a non-resident who had illegally procured a resident fishing license. Appropriate summonses were issued.

In the Southern Region, Conservation Officers Kille and Vazquez interviewed an individual who was alleged to have illegally killed a large buck with a rifle. While there, they noticed deer hair on a lawn mower. When questioned, the individual produced two sets of deer antlers, and he has been charged with possessing illegal deer parts. The investigation remains open on the original complaint, since neither set of antlers matched the description of the deer from that complaint.

In the Marine Unit, the fishing vessel Helen W. Smith was observed by CO Petrucelli on September 23 off-loading croakers. He learned that the vessel had met its limit of Summer flounder on September 22, and he boarded the vessel to make an inspection. He noticed that the captain seemed stressed, and the crew was hastily finishing their work in the hold. CO Petrucelli found 2,114 pounds of illegal fluke that the captain planned to sell in Virginia. Chief Cussen reviewed the list of various summonses that were issued.

In the Training Unit, the Basic Conservation Officer class is nearing completion. A black bear training class was held at the Morris County Police Academy for area police officers, with assistance from the Wildlife Services unit.

Councilwoman Galetto asked about the status of the previously reported case involving the cutting of a tree that held a bald eagle nest. Chief Cussen reported that a meeting was held on Friday afternoon, at which time a presentation was made by the defense attorneys, and the case is under review at this point. Councilman Wolgast inquired about the black bear feeding case in

Vernon, and Chief Cussen noted that the defendant has asked for the venue to be changed since they have had another incident with our Wildlife Services personnel.

The meeting broke for lunch at 12:20 pm, and resumed again at 1:30 pm.

Assistant Director Herrighty reported for the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries. He distributed and reviewed the Winter trout stocking schedule. He noted the only change was that Shaw's Mill Pond would not be stocked due to dam repairs that are being done. Councilwoman Galetto commented that downstream from Shaw's Mill Pond was the largest deposit of swamp pink (*Helonius bullata*), and had concerns about its protection. It was determined that this was not in the area of the dam work being done.

Assistant Director Herrighty noted the fisheries forum is scheduled for the Hackettstown Hatchery on December 6, 2008. He briefly reviewed some of the topics to be discussed that day.

Last month it was reported that there had been some vandalism at the Hackettstown Hatchery, and Assistant Director Herrighty noted that the most severely damaged vehicle was being repaired. The other vehicles had only minor damage.

Staff from the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries completed the annual gill netting at the Round Valley Reservoir last week, and Assistant Director Herrighty gave a brief review of same.

It was noted that Principal Biologist Pat Hamilton, at her own expense, attended a course given by the National Park Service to learn how to properly use Antimycin A, which is a fish poison being used to re-establish native brook trout population in the streams of the Southern Appalachian Brook. She also assisted with this project.

Assistant Director Herrighty reported for the Bureau of Wildlife Management. He noted that the deer check stations would be manned at reduced levels by biologists this year. On the opening day, they will target the areas where they feel they will obtain good data. There is also an alternative method that will be used for data collection this year, where the hunter is asked to collect the incisor teeth from the deer and return them to the Division. The regional deer biologists will speak with county Federation's in the target areas to solicit their assistance on this project, and they may go to some of the larger hunting clubs at the end of the week to age deer as well.

Assistant Director Herrighty noted that there had been previous discussion on the health risks of baiting for deer, and that Principal Biologist Carole Kandoth would be preparing a document and giving recommendation on same.

There was no update on the Game Code, and Assistant Director Herrighty noted he had reached out to the attorney who is doing the review, but they had not yet responded.

Principal Biologist Kandoth and Assistant Director Herrighty have been working on a New Jersey based management plan for invasive species, along with representatives from the Invasive

Species Council and the Department. There had been some deer related information previously reported that was not accurate, and they are working to try to have this corrected.

There were no Community Based Deer Management applications presented today, however, resolutions from several towns in the area of the South Mountain Reservation have been received.

Personnel from the Upland Project have met several times with staff from the University of Delaware regarding the research on Bobwhite quail. The final report will be presented to the Game Committee, and then to the Council.

Assistant Director Herrighty noted a staff shift in the Division due to personnel shortages. Ross Shramko has been working as a habitat biologist in the Southern part of the state, and will be transferring to the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries. He will be trained in learning the formula used for fish stocking, and aspects of managing the Hatchery.

The waterfowl pre-season banding has been completed. It was noted they banded more mallard ducks this year, and less black ducks, but felt that this was habitat related. After two years of avian influenza testing, they did not find any strain that would affect people in North America. Several strains of influenza common to waterfowl were determined, but those have been in existence for hundreds of years.

The most recent bear statistic information was distributed. Category One bear incidents were up by 155%, and Category Two incidents were up by 107%. Assistant Director Herrighty noted that all calls are now going through the New Jersey Emergency Management System (NJEMS). This system and how the information received is handled was discussed.

Assistant Director Herrighty noted that 88 bears were caught during Fall trapping activities, and one out of every nine caught had been previously tagged.

Staff is working on a document that would allow Zone 25 deer hunters to legally take feral pigs from the area of the White Oak Branch WMA during the firearm deer season. A special wildlife management permit will need to be signed by the Director to allow this. It was noted that 7 pigs were trapped by the USDA this past summer, but there is still a population out there. Any pigs harvested will have to be taken to a check station where sample information can be taken by representatives from the USDA and the New Jersey Department of Agriculture. There was some additional discussion on this matter.

There were no harvest results available on the Fall turkey season. Bob Eriksen, from the National Wild Turkey Federation was present at the meeting today, and he felt that it was a limited harvest, with probably less than 200 turkeys being harvested.

At the Rockport Game Farm, staff from the Bureaus of Land Management and Fisheries all assisted with the damage done during the recent snow storm.

Councilwoman Galetto asked about the Landowner Incentive Program, and this matter was discussed. She also reviewed some recent information she had heard regarding wildlife and farm land areas.

Chief Petrongolo reported for the Bureau of Land Management. He noted that the loss of Wildlife Habitat Improvement Project (WHIP) monies on public lands would be significant, since we have used over \$150,000 of these monies in the past several years.

It was reported that 461 acres have been acquired during this reporting period. One large addition was made at the Lockatong Creek WMA, where 337 acres were added. An 85 acre piece across from the Hackettstown Hatchery was also acquired.

This morning, there was a press event in Salem County with representatives from the Green Acres Program and the Department of Agriculture. They will be acquiring Seabrook Farms, which is the largest property in the Farmland Preservation Program's history. This acquisition will increase the size of the Salem River WMA by several hundred acres.

The dam restoration project at Harrisonville Lake is almost completed.

Chief Petrongolo referred back to the stocking program at Fort Dix. He noted that access to the base is dictated by the military, but the area is open to hunting for anyone who is a member of their hunting club.

Bureau planning biologists have been working on the lease plans for farming on WMAs. Chief Petrongolo reviewed some of the aspects of the leases they are preparing. He noted that there are currently 57 leases for 4,700 acres of property. Of this, they predict a \$280,000 per year value, with \$120,000 of that being in cash, and \$160,000 being from in-kind services. The leases should be in place for the 2010 farming season.

Chief Petrongolo updated the Council on the parking lot work at the Musconectcong WMA in Holland Township. The original plan was for two parking lots, but the owner of the neighboring property to one of the proposed lots had concerns due to the close proximity to his home. After working with the town, they have agreed to the construction of one lot where roadside parking is difficult, and allowing roadside parking at the other area. This lot will be stone and gravel, and will hold six to eight vehicles.

Work is underway with Mercer County to demolish the house at the Van Nest Refuge. The County is currently doing road improvements at the area, and in exchange for utilizing our area, they have agreed to take down the house.

Councilman Burke asked about the status of the Oyster Creek Ramp, and Chief Petrongolo noted they are proceeding, but it will not be completed before Spring. At the Absecon Boat Ramp, bids have been sent out for the construction of additional floating docks. Councilman Burke also asked about the Salem Canal, and concerns about artifacts in the area. Chief Petrongolo noted the town had some concerns, but Regional Superintendent Widjeskog is scheduled to meet with them in December. Chief Petrongolo felt the ramp work would still be moving forward.

Councilman Kertz asked if farmers who were currently farming land on WMAs would be given special preference for securing leases. Chief Petrongolo noted that would not be the case, but advised that the leases would be done for a ten year period, giving farmers some planning security.

The proposed schedule for the 2009 Council meetings was reviewed. It was agreed to move the December 8, 2009 meeting to December 15, 2009 since it fell during the week of the six day firearm deer season. Councilman Burke asked if the meetings that were scheduled on the same day as the Waterfowl Advisory Committee could start at 1 pm. This would include the January, April, July and October meetings. All members were in agreement with these changes.

There was no updated information on the pending appointments to Council.

Bob Eriksen from the National Wild Turkey Federation advised that he appreciates all the work done by this Council.

Councilman Wolgast noted that the Sunday bow hunting bill was no longer active. There had been 24 calls against for every one call that supported Sunday bow hunting. The safety zone reduction bill has passed the Senate, and it is out of committee in the Assembly, but now needs to be posted. This matter was briefly discussed.

**A motion was made by Councilwoman Galetto, seconded by Councilman Van Mater to adjourn. A vote was taken with all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 2:45 pm.**