

Keyport Environmental Commission Minutes for November 28, 2022 – Conducted in Keyport’s Borough Hall

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 8:04pm by **Chairperson Ken DeGroat**.

Sunshine Law was Read

Salute to the Flag

Roll Call

	NAME	STATUS	TERM EXPIRES	PRESENT	ABSENT
1	KEN DEGROAT (KD)	COMMISSIONER, CHAIRPERSON	12/31/2024	X	
2	MIKE PALMISANO (MP)	COMMISSIONER, VICE CHAIRPERSON	12/31/2024	X	
3	JOE SHERIDAN (JS)	COMMISSIONER, SECRETARY	12/31/2023	X	
4	DON PACHECO (DP)	COMMISSIONER	12/31/2022		X
5	ROY JIMINEZ (RJ)	COMMISSIONER	12/31/2022		X
6	MATT TEVIS (MT)	COMMISSIONER	12/31/2022	X	
7	JIM AUMACK (JA)	COMMISSIONER	12/31/2023	X	
8	HEATHER BRADY-MILLER (HBM)	COMMISSIONER, 2 YEAR ALTERNATE	12/31/2022	X	
9	DOUG WEIDER (DW)	COMMISSIONER, 2 YEAR ALTERNATE	12/31/2022	X	
10	DELIA SOSA MCDERMOTT (DSM)	KEYPORT BOROUGH COUNCIL LIAISON	12/31/2022	X	
11	DR. JUN CHENG	KEAN UNIVERSITY ASST. PROFESSOR	-	X	

Review/Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Minutes of the October 24th, 2022, meeting; Motion to Accept by Mike Palmisano (MP); Jim Aumack (JA) 2nd; No comments/edits/revisions; MT, DW, and HBM Abstained due to absence at the 10/24/2022 KEC Meeting; Unanimously Approved.

Keyport Unified Planning Board (KUPB) Updates:

(DSM):

- There will be two Keyport Unified Planning Board meetings coming up to deal with all the upcoming projects.

(JA):

- Port 149 is making great progress-is there any talk of filling the void?

(DSM):

- There is supposed to be a gap-there is still discussion on the size of the return that is necessary, but the bulkhead should be at the same level as the waterfront promenade. The size of the return will be a function of cost.

(JA):

- Spoke about there used to be a beach existing in that location in the 70s, by Erickson's Boat Ramp, gas pump, and the sewer plant.

(KD):

- Discussed how important it is to raise the Fireman's Parking Lot with this construction.
- Added to the history discussion with Mike's Subs being built in 1961.
- Asked if there was any progress being made on the Henry Hudson (H.H.) Trail.

(DSM):

- Keyport Borough Administrator Delaney recently walked the H.H. Trail with the Borough Engineer.

(MP):

- Mentioned that a company called Oswald pumped the drainage pipe out. Mike spoke with the Oswald workers and pointed to what areas needed to be cleaned out. The swale still needs to be cleaned and rip rap added.

(KD):

- Added that more rip rap will help to stem the erosion.

(MP):

- Said that the Veteran's Park water drain is a danger for people to fall into.

(DSM):

- BA Delaney is planning on taking action on the Veteran's Park water drain.
- Asked if the KEC will need more saplings to plant in the Spring, like we did in 2022?

(KD):

- Yes, about 25 saplings; the same quantity and mix of trees that was purchased/planted earlier in 2022 would work.

(DSM):

- **ACTION** to let BA Delaney know of the need for 25 saplings in the Spring of 2023.

(JS):

- Asked if anyone has heard if there were any environmental issues with the boat fire earlier in the day at a Keyport Marina.

(KD):

- Understood that there was a small sheen observed floating on the water, but that most of the liquids burned up in the boat fire, so there was not much of an environmental issue.

(Dr. Cheng):

- What about Aeromarine erosion?

(DSM):

- Spoke about there being ongoing litigation and that the Aeromarine does have 5-year plans in place.

(MT):

- Asked if any updates are given?

(DSM)

- Updates are given, but due to the litigation, there is not much that can be said.

(MP)

- Believes the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) should have a monthly report available to the public regarding the Aeromarine.
- The Aeromarine was a brownfield-there were some issues-but the Aeromarine landfill has not been officially capped.

(Dr. Cheng):

- Aeromarine is private land?

(DSM):

- Aeromarine is privately owned, and zoned Residential/Light Industrial.

(MP):

- There was a time when the Aeromarine lot was subdivided and made into residential/light industrial.

(JA):

- Aeromarine used to be a swamp...and then it became a dump.

(JS):

- The Keyport Historical Society will be showcasing the Aeromarine in 2023.

(KD):

- The water and soil around Aeromarine is tested regularly.

(DSM):

- Much more of Aeromarine can be seen at low tide.

(MP):

- Flying boats were made at Aeromarine. An airline was also present in Keyport with flights to Cuba.

Reappointments:

(KD):

Reminded members whose terms expire this 12/31/2022 and wish to be considered for re-appointment, must fill out a Volunteer/Citizen Leadership form. KD will send an email to any of the members who are up for reappointment reminding them they need to fill the form out.

Cedar Street Dune Project:

(KD):

Weeding/Planting of 1,000 beach grass plants happened on November 5th. It was a beautiful day with a good turnout and all the plants are doing well. The snow

fencing around the new plants near the Veteran's Park ramp has not yet been installed.

(DSM):

- Keyport Department of Public Works (DPW) knows about the need to install the snow fence around the baby beach grass plants.
- The plan is for only one ramp to go down to the water and not two due to the sand that collects on the ramps and the need for its removal.

New Business:

(KD):

- Mr. Kavanaugh (Resident Commercial Crab Fisherman-potential Clam Farm in Keyport) will follow up with the KEC after the holidays regarding

(DSM):

- The Keyport Council will recognize the cooperative effort between Kean University and Keyport.

(Dr. Cheng):

- He is looking for funding to have his students perform field surveys.

(DSM):

- Please work with Keyport Business Administrator Jay Delaney to schedule in field surveys in case things are needed.

(KD):

- **ACTION ITEM** to put Dr. Cheng in touch with the Keyport High School Environmental Club Teacher.

(Dr. Cheng):

- Looking to start a project to take measurements.

(DSM):

- It is better to wait until after the Keyport Council has recognized the cooperative effort between Kean University and Keyport.

(KD):

- Looking to put up Horseshoe Crab signs, acquired from Save Coastal Wildlife (sign photograph is attached to Minutes).
- **ACTION** to write communication to Keyport Mayor & Council recommending the placement of 2-3 signs along with locations.

(MP):

- The horseshoe crab signs would assist the Green Team in its Sustainable New Jersey effort.
- Looking for some other member of the Keyport Environmental Commission to step up and be the Representative KEC member on the Green Team in 2023. The Green Team continues to strive to update sustainable NJ certifications.

(JA):

- Stated that J.P. was very impressive in running the Green Team.

(KD):

- Excellent happenings with the Green Team – rain barrels and sustainable helpful hints are thanks to the Green team – a good group!

(MP):

- The Green Team also is involved with energy audits – MUCH documentation!

Recycled Evergreen Program:

(DSM):

- Will coordinate with DPW to drop off twenty-five (25) evergreen trees for our program on or before January 21, 2023.

(MP):

- Do we need a permit?

(DSM):

- The KEC should communicate with the Keyport Mayor and Council-it is better to put in indigenous plants than to take weeds out.

(MT):

- With removal, no permission is needed if the tree is cut down, provided the roots are left in place, so soil erosion mitigation can be maintained.

(Dr. Chen):

- Can we fly drones? They have drones with sensors that detect beach grass-mapping drones.

(DSM):

- Drones are not to be flown over residences.

(KD):

- Drones have to adhere to strict height regulations as well.

Open to the Public

9:05pm: KD opened the meeting to the Public.

Close to the Public

9:06pm: KD closed the meeting to the Public.

(JA)

- Read the article (see attached to Minutes) about the virge gardens-grass areas between streets and sidewalks, i.e., across from the old Cornucopia and by Stone Road Meadows.

(MP):

- The Health Strip – there was a similar subject discussed at the Philadelphia Flower Show – must be careful of the maximum height of the growth.

(JA):

- This is something the KEC can do – really make a difference with little cost.

(MP):

- There are several good locations.

(JA):

- It is just something to think about in 2023.

(KD):

- Sounds like a good Spring project!

(KD):

- There is no December KEC Meeting scheduled.

(JS):

- Made the MOTION for the KEC to convene again on **Monday, January 23, 2023, at 8:00pm**; JA 2nd; No comments/edits/revisions; Unanimously Approved.

Meeting Adjourned 9:11pm: Motion to Adjourn by JS; JA 2nd; Unanimous Approval.

There is no December KEC Meeting scheduled. The next meeting will be held on **Monday, January 23rd, 2023, at 8:00pm, at Keyport Borough Hall Council Chamber.**

Have a Happy Holidays and a Healthy and Prosperous New Year!

Minutes submitted by Joe Sheridan.

HORSESHOE CRAB NESTING AREA



Protect Horseshoe Crabs DO NOT DISTURB

Fun Facts



- Atlantic horseshoe crabs (*Limulus Polyphemus*) are important keystone species in coastal ecosystems.
- Horseshoe crabs are known as "living fossils" due to their bodies remaining largely unchanged for over 400 million years.
- As horseshoe crabs mature, they molt and grow a new shell approximately 18 times during their lifetime.
- Horseshoe crab eggs provide an important source of food and energy for migrating shorebirds, including the threatened red knot, a shorebird which breeds in the tundra.



If you see a tagged horseshoe crab, do not detach.

Take a PHOTO ONLY of the tag, and report to

1-888-LIMULUS (546-8587) or www.fws.gov/crabtag



SAVE 
Coastal Wildlife

Education Restoration Research
www.savecoastalwildlife.org

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Some see dead space on the side of the road. These groups see a potential haven for wildlife.

Reinvigorating those grassy edges of streets and highways, called road verges or medians, is the bread and butter of one local conservation group that's working to "re-wild" traffic areas for a biodiversity boost.

By Lauren Kent, CNN,

Published Nov. 14, 2022 5:33 PM EST | Updated Nov. 14, 2022 5:33 PM EST





On The Verge Cambridge volunteer Jo Scrivens says it's satisfying and even astonishing to see the wildflowers bloom on road verges and meadows the group has planted. (Toby Hancock/CNN)

(CNN) -- This roundabout would have been easily overlooked just a few months ago -- wedged between busy traffic lanes, there wasn't much growing apart from bog-standard grass. But local residents who drove past every day thought it had potential.

Now, it's been transformed into a wildflower meadow, buzzing with insect life and blooming with color.

Reinvigorating those grassy edges of streets and highways -- often called road verges or medians -- is the bread and butter of local conservation group [On The Verge Cambridge](#), which stepped in to help re-wild the traffic circle as they work toward boosting biodiversity in the local area through planting.

It's been fulfilling and even astonishing to see nature work its magic, says volunteer Jo Scrivens as she thinks back to some of the first meadows the group planted in 2019.



DEFINITION

She Was a Star, Now She Works in Springfield



YOURDIY

27 Beach Photos No Longer Socially Acceptable



GIVE IT LOVE

The 15 Most Loyal Dog Breeds, Ranked in Order

"It was raining and it was windy, and we're just chucking this wildflower seed. And I said, 'Oh my goodness, is this a complete and utter waste of time?'" Scrivens recalls. "Six months later, we cycled around on a spring day, and we were just utterly blown away by these areas that were full of wildflowers. It's so satisfying."

They might look like small patches of land, but as world leaders gather in Egypt at the [UN's COP27 climate summit](#), conservationists say road verges could be a key solution to both the climate and biodiversity crisis.

"Just a tiny corner, just a small area, can create a wildflower meadow," says Ben Greig, founder of [On The Verge Cambridge](#), whose volunteers help identify and manage natural urban areas that could be planted better for pollinators, like bees, butterflies and beetles. The group hopes to connect enough wild areas to form an "insect corridor" that can assist pollinators as they move around the English city.

A Marmalade Hoverfly stops at a wildflower on the roundabout that volunteers from On The Verge Cambridge helped transform into a meadow. (Toby Hancock/CNN)

But these roadside areas also have potential as a climate change solution -- when planted correctly, they can absorb and hold significant stocks of carbon-dioxide. [Studies show](#) that roadside strips are [similar to grasslands](#) in their carbon storage potential, with urban road verges holding even more carbon stocks in their soil than natural soils.

Havens for bees and butterflies



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And pollinator species have declined by a third, according to the World Wildlife Fund for Nature. Half of Britain's butterfly species are facing the threat of extinction, according to the charity Butterfly Conservation.

It's a dire situation that's getting worse amid the climate crisis.

"In a lot of countries -- and lots of parts of the US, and in the UK -- we don't really have a lot of space for nature. Essentially, most of our land is taken up by farmland, which is not very good for wildlife, not very good for pollinators," said Benjamin Phillips, a conservation scientist at the University of Exeter.

Phillips noted that despite the habitat degradation from air pollution, car exhaust and litter, roadsides still provide valuable habitats for these insects.

Standing in a patch of tall grass that volunteers have worked to re-wild in between two lanes of a highway, Greig points out dozens of plant species that are blooming even as the autumn weather rolls in. Bees circle the blossoms of purple greater knapweed and the flowers of yellow hawkweed -- some of the more than 70 species found in this patch alone.

"It's a huge area that can act as a sanctuary for wildlife, and it can be part of nature's recovery," said Mark Schofield, a road verges advisor for British conservation organization Plantlife.

If roadside areas are managed well, they can also save local governments time and money.

On The Verge Cambridge volunteers Ray Hackett and Ben Greig point out some of the 70 species found in this biodiverse roadside area. (Toby Hancock/CNN)

For years, Schofield says, the status quo of roadside management has not only been more costly than it needs to be, but also worse for nature.

"It's no understatement to say that we could set about a revolution in managing vegetation on the public estate, across our green infrastructure," he said.

Boosting biodiversity

Plantlife has been urging local governments and highway managers around the United Kingdom to cut roadside grass less often and to collect the cuttings. If grass cuttings are left to rot on the side of the road, it increases the fertility of the soil to the point where only the strongest plants -- like



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green, moving later in the year, and collecting the grass can ensure that more delicate wildflowers and native species aren't crowded out.

And those spaces for local plants can add up; Plantlife estimates that roadside areas account for 1.2% of Great Britain's total land area. That's more than 1,000 square miles of land that pollinators could benefit from.

"It's arguably a whole county of land hidden in plain sight," Schofield said.

More than 700 different types of wildflowers can be found on roadsides across the UK, including 29 species of rare wild orchids, according to Plantlife.

What's more, there are now some plants that can only be found on road verges, such as the fen ragwort, which has disappeared from the wild, apart from one ditch in Cambridgeshire. The rare plant was once more widespread and was believed to have become extinct during the Victoria era, until it was rediscovered in 1972 in the refuge of a roadside habitat.

Many road verges have been left largely untouched -- serving as remnants of "lost" habitats -- as surrounding areas have had native species and soil removed to make way for agriculture, housing or other human development.

Across the UK, 58% of all species are in decline and about 15% are threatened with extinction, according to the [2019 UK State of Nature report](#), making these pockets of wildlife all the more crucial.

Grass clippings and the green economy

Collecting grass clippings helps promote the growth of wildflowers, but some parts of the country are also seeing an opportunity in the waste. Instead of burning the green waste or taking it to a landfill, it's possible to turn grass clippings into a range of other profitable materials, including biogas, organic fertilizers, clean water and even a component of asphalt.

Technology to convert grass clippings into various different products is rapidly progressing, potentially generating revenue for local governments and highway authorities.

Instead of burning green waste from road verges or taking it to a landfill, it's possible to turn grass clippings into a range of other profitable materials, including biogas, organic fertilizers, and even a component of asphalt. (Toby Hancock/CNN)



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offset the operating costs by taking the grass clippings to a nearby plant that converts the grass into other materials through a process called anaerobic digestion.

"What we're trying to help local authorities see is that their green infrastructure is an asset to them," Plantlife's Mark Schofield said. "It can even pay for its own management -- and that can extend from road verges to public parks and gardens."

Finding more sustainable ways to produce products like asphalt, which is a large source of air pollution emissions, could also help reduce the overall carbon footprint of pavement production.

Meanwhile, redirecting green waste into new products and away from landfills reduces methane emissions. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas, with a much higher planet-warming power than carbon dioxide, and scientists say slashing methane emissions is one of the most effective ways to quickly limit global warming.

Experts say reducing grass waste can help take a bite out of the climate crisis, which is **already wreaking havoc** in the form of more intense heat waves, deadly storms and unprecedented flooding.

"This is not some distant future," said Ghent University Environmental Chemistry professor Erik Meers, who spearheaded a **European Union project called "Grassification"** and is working on similar solutions to help governments find business streams for roadside green waste.

The team at Grassification has already worked with one company that makes green insulation out of grass fibers and another venture that has created prototypes of plastic-like furniture made from grass waste.

Other businesses are taking note as well. Meers' research team often fields calls from roadside management contractors and waste processing companies that want to develop new streams of revenue.

Meers told CNN some of these solutions could be implemented more widely in Europe and beyond in just a few years. "But you need this kind of joint action between public bodies, research centers and companies to pick this up."

Less lawncare, more nature

Despite growing awareness from local authorities that these roadside habitats are valuable -- and potentially even lucrative -- climate campaigners and academics alike say it's hard to shift road verge management away from "business as usual."



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services with rain, said Phillips, noting that public perception is a huge hurdle. "People have expectations around how these areas should be managed, and expect them to look neat and tidy and associate longer grass with neglect."

Urban areas in particular often intensively manage roadsides with frequent grass cuttings, which can be both expensive and harmful for nature. Sometimes all it takes is a few complaints to the local government about tall or messy looking grass for a wildflower meadow to be mowed over.

One local council in the southern English county of Dorset has been a pioneer in getting the public on board for more wild, less manicured roadsides. As part of a campaign called "Love Your Verge," local authorities put up signs in unmowed areas to explain how the wildflowers and diverse array of plant species can be beneficial for bees and hedgehogs.

The signs also aim to encourage drivers not to litter on roadsides.

By moving to a "cut and collect" approach and mowing once a year instead of seven times, Dorset has reduced its annual budget for highway verge management and redirected that money to other climate change projects and public services.

"It's not just saving staff time -- it's the actual machinery that's required, it's the cost of getting that machinery to that place and returning it again, and the diesel required to drive there," said Emma Teasdale, who works for the local government-backed campaign Litter Free Dorset.

If those good practices were adopted by more local authorities and highway managers, they could help the UK make significant progress toward achieving government targets on biodiversity, nature, and climate, according to Plantlife.

Ahead of COP27, climate and environment organizations warned that the Paris Agreement goals -- which were adopted by nearly 200 nations in 2015 to combat climate change -- cannot be achieved without the restoration of natural ecosystems, according to the Nature4Climate alliance, and yet "nature is being destroyed faster than it can regenerate."

With more than 22 million miles of road estimated worldwide, campaigners say road verge ecosystems -- and the green economy opportunities they present -- must be part of that restoration.

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