

HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Hopewell Township Municipal Offices
590 Shiloh Pike
Bridgeton, NJ 08302

Meeting Minutes

April 12, 2023

In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, the meetings were advertised in the South Jersey Times and The Daily Journal on February 14, 2023. A notice was also placed on the Hopewell Municipal Office bulletin board as of the same date. The meetings are in compliance with Chapter 231 P.L. 1975 (The Sunshine Act).

Members present for the regular in-person monthly meeting: Marion Carll, Burt Doremus, Ken Strait, Cheryl Lalancette, Jerry Lewis, and Beth McClain. The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm, followed by a reading of the Public Meetings Act statement. The meeting was devoted to a presentation of the results of the Private Well Testing Outreach program. The presenters were Jesse Gleason, research scientist, and Rebecca Schwartz, project coordinator for the NJ Department of Health. Four community members also attended the meeting.

Jesse Gleason and Rebecca Schwartz presented an informative program for the HTEC members and guests. Private well drinking water quality is solely the responsibility of the homeowner, and the testing of these wells is only mandated in real estate transactions. A well water outreach testing program has been offered two times recently in Hopewell Township, supported by the Hopewell Township Environmental Commission. Two contaminants were targeted in the most recent round of testing-gross alpha and lead.

Radium contributes to gross alpha, so its presence indicates a concern for radium, with Gross Alpha being a measure of total radioactivity in drinking water. Health concerns include bone and sinus cancer, anemia, and cataracts. Testing results show that 45% of the samples of raw water in the township failed for gross alpha results, and 3% of the treated water failed. One-fifth of the samples tested failed even when treatment systems were used, indicating the importance of maintaining treatment systems. Recommended treatment systems for gross alpha/radium are water softeners and/or reverse osmosis systems. Water testing should be conducted yearly, and treatment systems should be maintained regularly.

Although lead was banned in 1986, it is still found in older plumbing materials in homes. There is no safe level of lead in the body. Thirty-eight wells were tested in Hopewell Township, and twenty-seven were above the American Pediatrics recommendation. No lead was detected in eleven wells. Children are at the highest risks for health concerns, since lead has effects on brain development of children and fetuses. The health risks for adults are hypertension, reduced fertility, and heart and kidney disease. Granular activated carbon filters and reverse osmosis systems are effective treatments for lead in drinking water.

The NJ Department of Health will be distributing pamphlets detailing the results of water testing from 323 wells in Hopewell Township, Waterford, and Pittsgrove Township, indicating that 41% of the wells showed unsafe levels of radioactivity. Financing is available for homeowners to install treatment systems from the NJ Housing and Mortgage Financing Agency. The South Jersey Homeowner's Guide is available online.

The presenters answered questions from the audience. The public was advised to also test for nitrates and pesticides due to the township's agricultural location. It was noted that many homeowners installed a water treatment system after getting test results.

A brief business meeting was conducted after the presentation. K. Strait reported that there was no Land Use Board meeting in March.

Mayor Paul Ritter suggested that a map or brochure be developed for the Barrett's Run Trail, and he discussed measures to increase use of the Picnic Park.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm.

Submitted by Beth McClain, secretary

May 5, 2023

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