



KNOWLTON TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Naturally Knowlton Green Team

628 Rt. 94, Columbia, NJ 07832

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, June 16, 2026

Date / Time	June 16, 2026 — convened 6:40 p.m.; adjourned 8:06 p.m.
Location	Knowlton Township Municipal Building, 628 Rt. 94, Columbia, NJ
Meeting Type	Regular Meeting (organizational / first meeting of the re-established Commission)
Recording	The meeting was recorded.

Call to Order, Pledge & Open Public Meetings Act Statement

The meeting was called to order by Adele Starrs, Township Committeewoman and Environmental Commission Liaison, at 6:40 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Open Public Meetings Act statement was read into the record: this is a meeting of the Knowlton Township Environmental Commission, held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 *et seq.*, as amended by P.L. 2025, c. 72. Notice of the meeting and the agenda were posted on Knowlton Township's official website and on the bulletin board at the Municipal Building. The meeting was being recorded.

Oath of Office

The Oath of Office was administered to the members of the Knowlton Township Environmental Commission present.

Roll Call

Members present: Michelle St. Andre, Jaime Murray, Vince Gaeta, Rick Clarkson, Jim Ashe, and Tara Mezzanotte.

Absent: Lenny Clifford.

Also present: Adele Starrs, Township Committeewoman and Environmental Commission Liaison; and members of the public.

Quorum: The record reflects that a quorum was present. The meeting was turned over to the Chair.

Election of Officers

Co-Chairs

As no member was willing to serve as a sole Chair, Jaime Murray and Tara Mezzanotte expressed willingness to serve as Co-Chairs. They were nominated by Michelle St. Andre.

Motion (Michelle): To elect Tara Mezzanotte and Jaime Murray as Co-Chairs of the Environmental Commission.

Second: Vince.

Result: Approved; no opposition. Tara Mezzanotte and Jaime Murray were declared Co-Chairs.

Secretary

Tara Mezzanotte was nominated for Secretary by Jaime Murray.

Motion (Jaime): To elect Tara Mezzanotte as Secretary.

Second: Michelle.

Result: Approved by voice vote (all in favor; none opposed). Tara Mezzanotte was declared Secretary.

Statement Memorializing the Re-Establishment of the Commission

A statement was read memorializing the process to re-establish the Knowlton Township Environmental Commission, to be preserved in the record. A summary of milestones:

- **August 2025:** The Township Committee accepted Tara Mezzanotte's offer to solicit community interest in re-establishing the Environmental Commission.
- **September 2025:** The Township Committee approved the EC logo, banner, and basic EC application for Knowlton Community Days.
- **October 2025:** A table was set up to solicit interest at Knowlton Community Days.
- **November 2025:** A table was set up at the Warren County History Tour at Ramsaysburg.
- **December 2025:** The Township Committee passed Resolution 2025-127 authorizing the committee to re-establish the Commission, co-chaired by Michelle St. Andre and Tara Mezzanotte, with objectives to recommend updates to the EC ordinance (including integrating the Sustainable Jersey Green Team function into a single EC–Green Team body) and to draft proposed bylaws, goals, and objectives.
- **January – May 2026:** Eight Knowlton residents committed and seven submitted applications; members were appointed by the Mayor to the new Environmental Commission – Naturally Knowlton Green Team. The one-page mission-statement handout was created, the re-establishment ordinance adopted, bylaws prepared for adoption, and a process established to create goals modeled after Sustainable Jersey actions.

Founding members and those who helped in the process were noted and thanked: Michelle St. Andre, Jaime Murray, Rick Clarkson, Lenny Clifford, Pam Rusweiler, Vince Gaeta, Jim Ashe, and Tara Mezzanotte.

Action: Tara to prepare a memorializing document for the record.

New Business

a. Adoption of the 2026 Meeting Schedule

The annual notice of meetings for 2026 was read into the record. All meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. in the Knowlton Township Municipal Building, are open to the public, and formal action may be taken at any meeting. The notice will be filed with the Township Clerk and posted on the bulletin board and Township website.

Motion (Mezzanotte): To adopt the 2026 schedule of regular meetings and work sessions.

Second: Jaime Murray.

Result: All in favor. ADOPTED.

b. Adoption of Bylaws

The Commission discussed a clarification added while finalizing the agenda. The bylaws did not clearly distinguish when the body votes as the Environmental Commission versus as the Green Team. Proposed language for Article VII (Quorum and Voting) provides that, when the Commission acts in its operational capacity as the Naturally Knowlton Green Team (Sustainable Jersey actions, sustainability initiatives, outreach, education, volunteer coordination, grant-support, and other non-statutory matters), all appointed members and alternates may participate and vote. Matters involving statutory Environmental Commission authority — formal advisory recommendations to the Township Committee or Land Use Board, adoption or amendment of bylaws, official resolutions, and land use application reviews — are voted on only by the regular members, with alternates voting only when formally seated for an absent or disqualified member.

Motion (Tara): To incorporate the Article VII clarifying language and transmit the amended bylaws to the Township Committee for review and adoption by resolution.

Second: Jaime.

Result: All in favor. APPROVED.

c. Township Webpage Content

Content for the Commission's page on the Township website was reviewed. One revision was noted: clarify that the regular meetings are the first Tuesday of the month and that the third Tuesday is a work session and what the difference is - while noting all meetings are open to the public. The draft will be revised and finalized at the next meeting.

Action: Tabled — to be finalized and adopted at the July 7, 2026 meeting.

A question was raised regarding if Green Team members and volunteers would be listed on the website. The Commission discussed that a EC and GT roster must be maintained, but that not all Green Team volunteers may wish to have their names listed publicly; the question was left open for decision.

Action: Decide how to handle the Green Team roster — whether, and which Green Team members and volunteers are listed publicly on the website.

d. Social Media Policy

A social media policy is being drafted (what, when, and how to post, including template/response language). The draft will be circulated for review prior to the next meeting. Once approved, the Commission will request the Township Committee's permission to create a Facebook page.

e. Commission Member Orientation — Members' Binders

Per Article XVIII (Member Orientation), new members are to receive an orientation packet. The Commission discussed contents and format. Materials to include: the EC Ordinance, the Bylaws, the Knowlton Township Master Plan, the ANJEC Environmental Commission Handbook, and a brief history of the Commission's re-establishment. After discussion of digital versus physical copies, the Commission agreed to compile a single consolidated, searchable PDF to be shared with all members, and a full copy set to be put into a binder for each member. A future work session may be used to assemble binders.

Action: Tara to compile the consolidated PDF version and materials for the paper version.

f. 2026 Goals & Work Plan

New Potential Sustainable Jersey Actions

Non-Residential Land Use Approvals — Historic Conditions & Follow-Through. A resinet requested the Green Team to take up this action and volunteered to help as a green team member. The proposed action is for the Green Team to study whether conditions of approval attached to past non-residential (commercial, mixed-use, industrial, institutional, and utility) development approvals granted by the Land Use, Planning, or Zoning Boards were implemented and maintained, resulting in an advisory report to the Township Committee and Land Use Board. She emphasized the review would be advisory only, limited to the public record and lawful observation, and apply one standard to every property in scope.

Preview of the proposed motion. The proposed motion was read to the Commission so members could preview the parameters and framing of the action. As read:

“I will be making a Motion that the Commission, acting as the Naturally Knowlton Green Team, adopt as an Action, for inclusion in the Annual Goals and Work Plan and transmittal to the Township Committee for its final approval, a study reviewing the conditions of approval attached to past commercial, mixed-use, industrial, institutional, utility, and other non-residential development approvals granted by the Land Use Board, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Adjustment, for the purpose of identifying conditions that appear not to have been implemented or maintained. The study may include review of public records, field observations from public rights-of-way and other lawful vantage points, and photographic documentation of existing site conditions. It shall apply the same standard to every property within its scope and shall result in an advisory report of findings to the Township Committee and Land Use Board. The study confers no regulatory or enforcement authority on the Commission, and any findings shall be advisory and shall not constitute a determination of violation or noncompliance.”

Members discussed details of the proposal, including concerns and questions about the Commission's authority and potential liability, such as the absence of qualified immunity for a non-enforcement body. It was suggested that the Commission recommend the Township Committee direct the Zoning Officer to conduct an annual review of conditions of approval regardless. The Commission agreed to seek the Township Attorney's guidance before proceeding.

Outcome: No vote taken — matter held. Tara to prepare, for review at the next meeting, two memos: (1) recommending the Township Committee adopt an annual conditions follow-through review; and (2) defining the questions to the Township Attorney regarding the Commission's authority and liability to review past approvals. Not to be placed on the TC agenda until the language is reviewed and approved by the Commission.

Other potential actions (notes): Dark-Sky Lighting Ordinance (Jaime and Michelle); Native & Non-Invasive Landscaping Ordinance (Michelle and Jaime); Community Birdhouse Build & Habitat Installation (Rick and Michelle); Natural Resources Inventory (Jaime); Newsletter (Tara); Tire Recycling (Lenny and Jaime); and Knowlton Welcome Packet.

- **Native & Non-Invasive Landscaping:** Michelle suggested we piggyback on the Warren County / Kearns commercial landscaping ordinance and prepare to present to the Township Committee. Identified as readily actionable.
Action: Michelle will begin the process to customize the Warren County ordinance to serve Knowlton Township.
- **Tire Recycling:** Jaime Murray reported the Mosquito Commission will pick up tires on public property and farmers may call them directly; Rick is following up with Frank regarding the farmers' board pursuing funds. Tara spoke with Dave Deck (Warren County Recycling Coordinator) about recycling tonnage funds and process. A request was made for the EC to review, update, and take control of the Township recycling webpage. This could become a SJ Recycling Action, could expanded to general Knowlton recycling and tie into a future newsletter.
Action: The Commission will continue gathering information to help frame a potential action and discuss.
- **Natural Resources Inventory (NRI):** Requires grant funding; not feasible at present. Members noted a first priority should be assessing and submitting for Sustainable Jersey certification based on current actions.
Action: 2027 priority — pursue Sustainable Jersey certification and submit existing actions for points credit. The following existing actions were noted as eligible for points and will be documented for credit: Warren County Pollinator Habitat & Native Planting (Michelle); EC & Green Team Sustainability Initiative (Tara); OEM Community Preparedness & Emergency Communications (Vince — Plan update due early next year); Ramsaysburg Homestead Stewardship & Friends of Ramsaysburg (Rick); Open Space & Farmland Preservation (Michelle); and Knowlton Historic Commission (Tara).
Note: Sustainable Jersey is revising its certification and points system and is not currently accepting new actions; certification strategy will be revisited next year.
Goal: Use Sustainable Jersey funding for the NRI.
- **Removed from consideration:** Trex Recycling and Shredding were removed as not currently viable.

Township Referrals — Land Use Board

Update from the Land Use Board (LUB): Tara also reported to the LUB that, through 2027, the Commission intends to review applications to help members learn the process, then develop questions and concerns for the LUB to consider, rather than offering formal opinions. The LUB and its attorney received this well; the attorney confirmed that, because the Commission would advise by way of raising only questions for the LUB (not develop opinions or provide formal advice on applications), LUB members Tara Mezzanotte and Vince Gaeta need not recuse themselves from these discussions despite serving on both bodies.

Applications: The Burdge application (a residential application involving a conservation easement — a driveway/macadam and tree clearing within the easement, and a proposed garage extending further into it) and the

Simpton Road application were noted. Detailed reviews were deferred due to time constraints; both will be discussed at a future meeting; changes to the applications are being made, so there is time before they come before the LUB.

Correspondence

Notice dated May 21, 2026 — Application for Freshwater Wetlands General Permit #24, proposed septic repair at 143 Rt. 46, Block 48, Lot 10. Going forward, correspondence will be copied, circulated to members, and linked in the agenda for discussion.

Interesting Items / In the News

- The I-80 Stacked Stone Rockslide Barrier (Knowlton–Hardwick) was named to Preservation New Jersey's 10 Most Endangered Historic Sites list, nominated by the Knowlton Township Historic Commission.
- ANJEC Conference — September 25 (Rutgers, New Brunswick). The Commission has \$500 to allocate and will decide how to use it (e.g., sending a few attendees).
- A new Commission email address, knowlton.environmental@gmail.com, has been created and set to auto-forward to the Township account for recordkeeping; the Township Clerk (Kristen) will hold the credentials.

Dates to Keep in Mind

Next Meeting: July 7, 2026 — Regular Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

2026 schedule: July 7 (Reg.), July 21 (Work), Aug 4 (Reg.), Aug 18 (Work), Sept 1 (Reg.), Sept 22 (Work), Oct 6 (Reg.), Oct 20 (Work), Nov 3 (Election Day — no meeting), Nov 17 (Reg.), Dec 1 (Reg.), Dec 15 (Work). Knowlton Community Day — October.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjournment

Motion (Jaime): To adjourn the meeting at 8:06 p.m.

Second: (Michelle):

Result: All in favor. ADJOURNED.

Attachments / Exhibits

The following documents are incorporated into and attached to these minutes:

- **Exhibit A** — 2026 Annual Notice of Meetings (the schedule of regular meetings and work sessions), as adopted under New Business (a).
- **Exhibit B** — Bylaws of the Knowlton Township Environmental Commission – Naturally Knowlton Green Team, incorporating the Article VII (Quorum and Voting) clarifying language, as approved under New Business (b) for transmittal to the Township Committee.

Submitted by Tara Mezzanotte, Secretary.

Minutes approved: June 16, 2026



**Knowlton Township Environmental Commission
Naturally Knowlton Green Team**

ANNUAL NOTICE OF MEETINGS — 2026

In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, *N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq.*, notice is hereby given that the Knowlton Township Environmental Commission has adopted the following schedule of regular meetings and work sessions for the year 2026. All meetings will be held at 6:30 PM at the Knowlton Township Municipal Building, 628 Route 94, Columbia, NJ 07832.

July 7 — Regular Meeting

Oct 6 — Regular Meeting

July 21 — Work Session

Oct 20 — Work Session

Aug 4 — Regular Meeting

Nov 3 — General Election Day, No Meeting

Aug 18 — Work Session

Nov 17 — Regular Meeting

Sept 1 — Regular Meeting

Dec 1 — Regular Meeting

Sept 22 — Work Session

Dec 15 — Work Session

The Environmental Commission warmly invites every resident to attend. Our community's greatest resource is the people who care about it, the neighbors who know our streams, trails, farmland, and historic places, and who have ideas for protecting and improving them. Whether you want to share a suggestion, lend a hand on a project, or simply learn what the Commission is working on, there is a place for you at our table. Great ideas often begin with one person who decided to show up. We hope that person might be you.

All meetings are held in person and are open to the public. Formal action may be taken at any meeting; however, the intent is to reserve votes whenever possible for Regular Meetings and to use Work Sessions for non-voting matters such as working on Sustainable Jersey actions, brainstorming, and discussion.

This notice has been filed with the Knowlton Township Clerk, posted on the bulletin board at the Knowlton Township Municipal Building, and posted on the Township website.

Mission Statements:

 The mission of the Knowlton Township Environmental Commission is to promote the preservation of Knowlton's unique rural character by guiding the community in protecting natural resources, advancing environmental sustainability, enhancing quality of life, and strengthening our relationship with the environment for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

 The mission of the Naturally Knowlton Green Team is to engage residents through education and outreach to build a vibrant, resilient, and connected community.

**TOWNSHIP OF KNOWLTON
COUNTY OF WARREN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE**

RESOLUTION 2026-

**A Resolution Approving the Bylaws of the Knowlton Township
Environmental Commission | Naturally Knowlton Green Team**

WHEREAS, Knowlton Township has an Environmental Commission, established under state law (N.J.S.A. 40:56A-1 et seq.) and Chapter 10, Article II of the Township Code; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee adopted Ordinance No. 26-07, which re-established the Environmental Commission, recognized that it also serves as the Naturally Knowlton Green Team, and updated how the combined body is organized and what it does; and

WHEREAS, that ordinance (§ 10-12.H) lets the Environmental Commission write its own bylaws for how it runs its meetings and internal business, as long as those bylaws follow the ordinance and the law—and it says the Township Committee has to approve the bylaws before they count; and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Commission | Naturally Knowlton Green Team wrote bylaws, voted to adopt them on June 16 at a public meeting, and sent them to the Township Committee for approval; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee has reviewed the bylaws and finds they are aligned with Ordinance No. 26-07, with state law, and with other applicable law, and that approving them is good for the Township because it strengthens environmental planning, sustainability work, and coordination between boards;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Knowlton, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, that:

1. The Township Committee approves the Bylaws of the Knowlton Township Environmental Commission | Naturally Knowlton Green Team, attached to this resolution, as required by § 10-12.H of Ordinance No. 26-07.
2. The bylaws take effect once this resolution is adopted and stay in effect until they are amended. Any future change to the bylaws also has to be approved by the Township Committee before it counts.
3. This resolution and these bylaws do not create a new government body and do not give the Environmental Commission | Naturally Knowlton Green Team any new powers. The Commission has no authority over regulation, enforcement, spending, or buying land.
4. If anything in the bylaws ever conflicts with Ordinance No. 26-07, state law, or other applicable law, the ordinance and the law win.
5. The Township Clerk will give a certified copy of this resolution and the approved bylaws to the Environmental Commission | Naturally Knowlton Green Team, and keep a copy in the Township's official records.
6. This resolution takes effect immediately.

Knowlton Township Environmental Commission | Naturally Knowlton Green Team Bylaws

Article I – Name, Authority, and Functional Capacity

The official name of this body shall be the Knowlton Township Environmental Commission/Naturally Knowlton Green Team (“Commission”), established pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:56A-1 et seq., Knowlton Township Ordinance No. 26-27 (April 27, 2026), and applicable Township ordinances.

The Commission shall also operate as Naturally Knowlton, the Township’s Green Team, when administering municipal sustainability initiatives, including but not limited to Sustainable Jersey certification, grant programs, environmental outreach, and community resilience efforts.

The Environmental Commission and Naturally Knowlton are not separate entities but constitute a single statutory municipal body, and public branding under the Naturally Knowlton name shall not be interpreted to create a separate governmental entity or expand the authority of the Commission beyond that granted by statute, municipal ordinance, or duly authorized Township action.

Functional Identification

For purposes of clarity:

- When exercising powers authorized by statute or ordinance, the body shall be referred to as the Environmental Commission (EC).
- When conducting sustainability initiatives, the body may be publicly branded as Naturally Knowlton or the Green Team.
- Regardless of functional context or public branding, all meetings shall remain official meetings of the Environmental Commission.

The Commission is an advisory body only and shall possess no regulatory, enforcement, fiscal, or land acquisition authority except as expressly authorized by statute or ordinance.

Functional Interpretation

Any reference in these bylaws to the Commission, Environmental Commission, Green Team, or Naturally Knowlton shall be interpreted as referring to the same municipal body unless expressly stated otherwise.

Mission Statements

Pursuant to Ordinance 26-27, § 10-7, the following Mission Statements are codified:

- **Environmental Commission Mission.** The mission of the Knowlton Township Environmental Commission is to promote the preservation of Knowlton’s unique rural character by guiding the community in protecting natural resources, advancing environmental sustainability, enhancing quality of life, and strengthening our relationship with the environment for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.
- **Naturally Knowlton Green Team Mission.** The mission of the Naturally Knowlton Green Team is to engage residents through education and outreach to build a vibrant, resilient, and connected community.

Article II – Purpose, Mission, and Scope

The Commission serves in an advisory capacity and may provide formal recommendations to the Township Committee and other municipal bodies. The Commission may also inform municipal officials and the public regarding environmental conditions, sustainability initiatives, and community engagement activities consistent with its statutory role.

The Commission advances these objectives through:

- its statutory role as the Environmental Commission; and
- its operational role as Naturally Knowlton, the Township’s Green Team.

The Commission shall promote policies and initiatives consistent with:

- The Township Master Plan
- Sustainable Jersey principles
- Sound environmental planning practices
- Community education and engagement
- New Jersey state environmental laws

The Commission’s role shall be advisory, educational, and planning-oriented in nature.

Nothing in these bylaws shall be construed to expand, limit, or modify the authority of the Commission beyond that granted by statute, municipal ordinance, or duly authorized Township action.

Open Space Matters; Exclusion of Authority

Pursuant to Ordinance 26-27, §§ 10-12.I and 10-12.K, the Commission shall have no authority or responsibility for open space planning, open space inventories, open space acquisition recommendations, open space trust fund administration, or open space stewardship. All such functions are assigned exclusively to the Open Space Advisory Committee under Chapter 43 of the Township Code. The Commission may provide environmental resource information upon request and may collaborate with the Open Space Advisory Committee in an advisory and informational capacity, but shall have no decision-making authority regarding open space matters and shall not duplicate the statutory or ordinance-defined functions of the Open Space Advisory Committee.

Article III – Membership

A. Composition

The Commission shall consist of five (5) regular members and up to two (2) alternate members, as authorized by ordinance, appointed by the Mayor pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:56A-1 et seq. and Ordinance 26-27, § 10-8.

Alternate members may participate in discussion but shall vote only when seated in place of an absent or disqualified regular member, consistent with applicable law. Pursuant to Ordinance 26-27, § 10-8, alternate members shall not be counted toward quorum except when voting in place of a regular member.

Members shall serve staggered terms in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:56A-1 et seq. Regular members shall serve three-year terms, and alternate members shall serve two-year terms, except that, in the initial appointments under Ordinance 26-27, Alternate No. 1 shall be appointed for two (2) years and Alternate No. 2 shall be appointed for one (1)

year. Terms shall expire on December 31 of the year in which the term concludes, unless otherwise specified in the appointment resolution.

Members shall be residents of Knowlton Township.

In the event of a vacancy, the Township Committee may appoint a replacement to serve the unexpired term in accordance with applicable law.

One member of the Environmental Commission shall serve as the Commission's designated representative on the Land Use Board in accordance with Section 11-4 of the Township Code, the Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq.), and N.J.S.A. 40:55D-23. Nothing herein shall prohibit additional Environmental Commission members from serving on the Land Use Board and in another capacity if duly appointed and permitted by law.

A member who also serves on the Land Use Board shall evaluate whether participation in a Commission matter involving a pending land use application could create a conflict, prejudgment, or appearance of impropriety. Where the Commission adopts a formal recommendation regarding such application, the dual-serving member shall consider recusal from the Environmental Commission proceeding in order to preserve procedural integrity.

All Commission members shall be considered municipal volunteers and shall be entitled to indemnification, defense, and the protections afforded to municipal volunteers under applicable law when acting within the scope of their official duties.

Members shall serve without compensation, except as otherwise permitted by law.

B. Dual Service as Green Team

All members and alternates of the Environmental Commission shall also serve as voting members of Naturally Knowlton Green Team.

Additional residents and non-resident volunteers may participate in Green Team initiatives in a non-voting capacity.

Non-EC Commission members volunteers:

- shall not count toward quorum
- shall not vote
- shall not exercise statutory authority

C. Environmental Commission Appointment and Green Team Roster Requirements

Appointment to the Environmental Commission shall require submission of the Township Volunteer Form for consideration by the Mayor and Township Committee in accordance with applicable law.

Green Team volunteers who are not appointed Commission members shall not be required to complete the Township Volunteer Form, nor shall formal appointment by the Mayor be required.

Individuals who wish to be included on the Green Team Roster may provide their name and contact information on a sign-in sheet or other form made available by the Commission at public events or meetings.

Information collected for the Green Team Roster shall be used solely for purposes related to Commission and Naturally Knowlton activities and shall be maintained in accordance with applicable municipal record retention and privacy policies.

D. Roster Maintenance

The Commission shall maintain a current roster of:

- Commission members
- Commission alternates
- Green Team volunteers

The roster shall be reviewed at least annually.

Article IV – Definitions

A. Commission / Environmental Commission (EC):

The Knowlton Township Environmental Commission established pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:56A-1 et seq., acting in any authorized capacity, including when operating as Naturally Knowlton, the Township's Green Team

B. Full Authorized Membership:

The total number of regular voting positions established by municipal ordinance for the Environmental Commission, regardless of vacancies

C. Naturally Knowlton / Green Team (NK):

The municipal sustainability program administered by the Environmental Commission

D. Annual Reorganization Meeting:

The first regular meeting held in January of each calendar year, or the first regular meeting thereafter, at which officers are elected, meeting dates approved, and other annual organizational business is conducted.

E. Sustainable Jersey:

A voluntary municipal certification program administered by a nonprofit organization that provides guidance, technical assistance, and grant opportunities to support sustainability, resilience, and environmental stewardship initiatives within New Jersey municipalities. (<https://www.sustainablejersey.com/>)

F. Environment:

The interconnected natural resources and human activities within Knowlton Township that affect land, water, air, ecological integrity, public health, safety, welfare, and quality of life.

G. Naturally Knowlton Volunteer:

A non-appointed participant assisting with Naturally Knowlton initiatives without voting authority.

H. Action Liaison:

A Commission member or Naturally Knowlton Volunteer designated by the Commission to lead and coordinate an approved Action.

I. Township Committee Liaison:

A member of the Township Committee designated by the Mayor pursuant to Ordinance 26-27, § 10-8, to serve as a non-voting point of communication between the Township Committee and the Commission. The Liaison may attend meetings, provide updates, and facilitate coordination, support alignment with Township policies, budgets, and adopted

plans, and liaisons or advance Commission recommendations and sustainability actions for consideration by the Township Committee when appropriate, but shall not exercise supervisory or voting authority over the Commission unless otherwise authorized by law. The designation of a Liaison shall not diminish the independent advisory role of the Commission nor alter the statutory powers of the Mayor or Township Committee.

J. Municipal Official:

A Township official designated by the Township Committee to provide administrative coordination, policy alignment, records compliance, or official communication support to the Commission. The Municipal Official may be a municipal employee or a Township Committee member serving as Liaison. The Municipal Official shall not exercise voting or supervisory authority over the Commission unless otherwise authorized by law.

Article V – Officers, Duties and Administrative Authority

The Commission shall annually elect from among its appointed members:

- Either a Chair and a Vice-Chair; or
- Two Co-Chairs serving jointly in place of a Chair and Vice-Chair.

The Commission shall also elect a Secretary from among its appointed members. The Chair, Vice-Chair, or one of the Co-Chairs may serve concurrently as Secretary if so elected by the Commission.

Alternatively, the Township Committee may designate a Municipal Official or other municipal employee to serve as Recording Secretary. A Recording Secretary who is a municipal employee shall not be a voting member of the Commission and shall perform clerical, recordkeeping, and administrative support functions only.

Compensation for any municipal employee serving as Recording Secretary shall be determined solely by the Township Committee through the municipal budget process. Nothing herein shall be construed to authorize the Commission to hire staff or obligate municipal funds.

Officers shall be elected at the annual reorganization meeting and shall serve for a term of one (1) year or until a successor is elected.

The annual reorganization meeting shall be held in January of each year, or at the first regular meeting thereafter.

A. Duties of the Chair or Co-Chairs

If a Chair is elected, the Chair shall:

- Preside at all meetings
- Set meeting agendas
- Authorize official correspondence
- Execute documents approved by the Commission
- Appoint committees and Action Liaisons
- Serve as primary liaison unless otherwise directed

If Co-Chairs are elected, the Co-Chairs shall jointly exercise the duties of the Chair and may allocate responsibilities between themselves by mutual agreement.

B. Vice-Chair

If a Vice-Chair is elected, the Vice-Chair shall exercise the authority of the Chair in the Chair's absence or incapacity.

No Vice-Chair position shall exist when the Commission elects Co-Chairs.

C. Duties of the Secretary or Recording Secretary

The Secretary or Recording Secretary shall be responsible for:

- Preparing and maintaining accurate meeting minutes
- Coordinating submission of approved minutes for municipal record retention
- Maintaining official Commission records and files
- Tracking resolutions, motions, and formal recommendations
- Maintaining the official Commission and Green Team roster
- Assisting with required public notice documentation, as applicable
- Coordinating transmission of reports, work plans, and formal recommendations to the Township Committee
- Maintaining oversight of the official Environmental Commission–Naturally Knowlton email account in coordination with authorized officers

When a Recording Secretary is designated, references in these bylaws to the Secretary shall include the Recording Secretary unless otherwise specified.

D. Preparation and Transmission of Commission Documents

Following formal action taken by the Commission at a duly noticed public meeting, the Secretary or Recording Secretary may prepare written documents memorializing such action, including but not limited to advisory memoranda, correspondence, reports, and Land Use Board review comments.

The Chair, Vice-Chair, or Co-Chairs, as applicable, are authorized to review, finalize, and approve such documents for transmission, provided the document accurately reflects the action previously taken by the Commission and does not introduce new substantive content.

The Secretary, Recording Secretary or Chair (CoChair) may transmit such documents to the appropriate municipal body, including the Township Committee or Land Use Board, without further vote, consistent with the authority granted by the Commission at the meeting at which the underlying action was taken.

Any substantive modification, addition, or matter not previously approved by the Commission shall require consideration at a duly noticed public meeting in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Article VI – Meetings and Open Public Meetings Act Compliance

A. Open Public Meetings Act Compliance

All meetings of the Commission shall comply with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq. ("OPMA"), and applicable Township policy. Meetings shall be publicly noticed and open to the public except as otherwise permitted by law.

For purposes of these bylaws, a "meeting" shall mean any gathering, whether in person or by permitted remote means, at which a quorum of the Commission discusses or acts upon public business.

B. Regular Meetings

The Commission shall adopt an annual schedule of regular meetings, which shall be publicly noticed in accordance with OPMA. Adoption and proper publication of the annual meeting schedule shall satisfy the regular meeting notice requirements of OPMA unless additional notice is required by law.

The Commission shall hold at least one regular meeting per month, or more frequently as necessary.

C. Special Meetings

Any meeting not included on the Commission's adopted annual schedule shall be considered a special meeting and shall be noticed in accordance with OPMA. Special meetings may be called by the Chair, Co-Chair or majority of the authorized membership.

D. Remote Participation

Remote participation or remote meetings may be permitted to the extent authorized by OPMA, other applicable state law, and adopted Township policy governing remote public meetings.

Article VII – Quorum and Voting

A majority of the full authorized membership shall constitute a quorum.

“Full authorized membership” means the total number of regular voting positions established by ordinance, regardless of vacancies.

No official action shall occur without a quorum.

Actions shall be taken by voice vote or roll call and recorded in the minutes.

Members who are recused shall not participate in discussion or voting and shall not be counted for the vote on that matter.

Green Team volunteers and non-appointed participants shall not vote or be counted toward quorum.

Green Team Operational Actions

When the Commission is acting in its operational capacity as Naturally Knowlton Green Team on matters involving Sustainable Jersey actions, sustainability initiatives, community outreach activities, educational programming, volunteer coordination, grant support activities, or other non-statutory operational matters, all appointed Environmental Commission members and alternate members may participate and vote.

Such Green Team operational votes shall not constitute the exercise of statutory Environmental Commission authority unless otherwise required by law or ordinance.

Matters involving the exercise of statutory Environmental Commission authority, including but not limited to formal advisory recommendations to the Township Committee or Land Use Board, adoption or amendment of bylaws, official Environmental Commission resolutions, land use application reviews, or actions authorized pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:56A-1 et seq., shall be voted upon only by regular members of the Environmental Commission, except that alternate members

may vote when formally seated in place of an absent or disqualified regular member in accordance with ordinance and applicable law.

Motions and Resolutions

The Commission may take action by motion or by resolution.

Routine operational matters, internal administration, committee formation, and informational actions may be approved by motion and recorded in the minutes.

A formal resolution shall be used when the Commission:

- Makes an official advisory recommendation to the Township Committee or Land Use Board;
- Recommends adoption, amendment, or repeal of municipal policy or ordinance;
- Recommends member removal for cause; or
- Amends these bylaws.

Resolutions adopted by the Commission are advisory in nature and shall not bind the Township unless approved by the Township Committee.

Implementation of Actions

Documents implementing or memorializing actions taken by motion or resolution may be prepared and transmitted in accordance with Article V

Article VIII – Committees & Action Liaison

The Commission may, by motion and vote, establish standing or ad hoc committees and appoint Action Liaison as necessary to assist in carrying out the work of the Commission.

Committees shall serve in an advisory and preparatory capacity and shall not exercise the authority of the Commission unless expressly authorized by vote at a duly noticed public meeting.

Committees may consist of Commission members, alternates, and Naturally Knowlton Volunteers. The Commission shall determine committee composition.

Committees composed of fewer than a quorum of the Commission may meet informally for research, drafting, or preparatory work and are not authorized to take official action. If a committee includes a quorum of the Commission, any meeting of such committee shall be publicly noticed and conducted in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Committees support the Commission by conducting research, developing recommendations, organizing volunteers, and assisting with implementation. Actions requiring formal Commission approval, including official recommendations, grant submissions in the Commission's name, policy positions, or expenditure commitments, shall be presented at a duly noticed public meeting for discussion and vote.

To maintain clarity of authority and alignment with municipal policy, no committee or committee member shall:

- Obligate or commit municipal funds or enter into contracts on behalf of the Township

- Represent an official position of the Commission unless authorized by vote
- Issue public statements in the name of the Commission without approval
- Submit grant applications in the Commission's name without prior Commission authorization
- Take formal action on behalf of the Commission outside a duly noticed public meeting

Article IX – Conflicts of Interest and Recusal

Members shall comply with all applicable ethics laws and municipal conflict of interest policies.

Any member with a direct or indirect conflict of interest shall disclose the conflict and recuse themselves from discussion and voting.

Recusals shall be clearly stated and recorded in the minutes.

A member who is recused may remain present for non-participatory purposes and shall not perform deliberative, drafting, or secretarial duties on the affected matter unless otherwise required by law.

Members may serve as municipal liaisons to other entities or sit on boards where no conflicts exist or laws or policies prohibit.

Land Use Application Review Guidance

When reviewing pending land use applications that are or may be subject to consideration by the Land Use Board, the Commission's role shall be advisory and informational in nature.

The Commission may provide:

- Environmental resource identification
- Natural Resources Inventory consistency analysis
- Potential environmental impact observations
- Recommendations for mitigation measures or environmental safeguards
- A list of environmental related questions to consider seeking input on

To preserve the quasi-judicial integrity of the Land Use Board process, the Commission shall endeavor to frame its comments as environmental observations, question and guidance for the Board's consideration.

Nothing herein shall be construed to limit the Commission's statutory advisory authority under N.J.S.A. 40:56A-1 et seq.

Article X-Code of Conduct

Commission members shall conduct themselves in a professional, respectful, and non-partisan manner consistent with the dignity of public office and applicable municipal standards.

Members shall comply with all applicable federal and state law, municipal ordinances, ethics requirements, and Township policies.

Disagreement regarding policy or recommendations shall be expressed in a manner consistent with orderly public deliberation and mutual respect.

Nothing in this Article shall be construed to limit free expression consistent with law; however, conduct materially disruptive to the functioning of the Commission may be addressed in accordance with Article XI (Attendance; Discipline; Recommendation for Removal) and applicable law.

Article XI – Attendance; Discipline; Recommendation for Removal

Members are expected to attend all regular and special meetings except when excused for good cause.

Absence from three (3) consecutive regular meetings or four (4) regular meetings in any twelve-month period without good cause may trigger review by the Commission.

The Commission may, by majority vote, recommend to the Township Committee that a member be considered for removal for cause, including non-attendance, misconduct, incapacity, loss of qualification, or conduct detrimental to the Commission.

Prior to any recommendation, the affected member shall receive notice and an opportunity to be heard.

Only the Township Committee may remove a member from office in accordance with applicable law, including N.J.S.A. 40:56A-1 et seq., and municipal ordinance. Any recommendation for removal by the Commission shall be advisory only.

Article XII – Annual Goals, Work Plan and Municipal Alignment

At the annual reorganization meeting, the Commission shall adopt an Annual Goals and Work Plan aligned with:

- Township priorities
- the Master Plan
- Sustainable Jersey
- available resources

Pursuant to Ordinance 26-27, § 10-12.G, the Work Plan shall be shared with the Township Committee for informational and coordination purposes and shall not be binding unless formally adopted by the Township Committee. Actions requiring municipal funding, or staffing commitments, shall require Township Committee authorization.

The Commission may adjust operational priorities during the year; however, material changes shall be approved by the Township Committee.

Green Team Lead Role; Sustainable Jersey; Collaborating Bodies

Pursuant to Ordinance 26-27, § 10-12.1, the Commission, acting as the Naturally Knowlton Green Team, shall lead and coordinate the Township's Sustainable Jersey certification and grant acquisition efforts. Sustainable Jersey certification submissions, sustainability action documentation, and related resolutions or policy initiatives shall be advanced in coordination with the Township Committee Liaison(s) to ensure consistency with Township governance and authorization requirements.

The Commission shall seek to collaborate with the Open Space Advisory Committee, the Recreation Department, the Historic Preservation Commission, the Trail Committee, and the

Warren County Pollinator Protectors, along with other Township-supported groups, to advance shared objectives consistent with Ordinance 26-27, § 10-12.1.C. Such collaboration shall remain advisory and informational in nature and shall not duplicate the statutory or ordinance-defined functions of any other body.

Article XIII – Annual Actions, Goals and Work Plan

At the annual reorganization meeting, the Commission shall establish its Annual Action Priorities as part of its adopted Annual Goals and Work Plan.

Actions shall be nominated using a document similar to the Action Summary – Sustainable Jersey Action Tracking form modeled on Sustainable Jersey action worksheets or other documentation approved by the Commission. The following categories shall be documented: Action Lead, EC Liaison, Action Description, Master Plan Connections, Potential Sustainable Jersey Points, Environmental Connection, EC Mission Connection, and Naturally Knowlton Green Team Mission Connection.

Each approved action shall have a designated EC Liaison who shall coordinate the action, serve as the primary point of contact, and report progress to the Commission.

When a non-Commission member – Naturally Knowlton Green Team volunteer serves as Action Lead, a Commission member shall serve as a supporting liaison to assist with coordination and to present any formal Commission actions at public meetings.

When Actions require formal Commission action, the matter shall be presented at a duly noticed public meeting for discussion and vote in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Actions shall be approved by motion and vote at a duly noticed public meeting and reflected in the minutes.

Adopted Actions shall be transmitted to the Township Committee as part of the Annual Goals and Work Plan.

Naturally Knowlton encourages community volunteerism, leadership and new membership.

Mid-Year Adjustments

The Commission may add, modify, defer, or remove Actions during the year by motion and vote at a duly noticed public meeting. Material changes affecting municipal funding, staffing commitments, or policy direction shall be transmitted to the Township Committee for review and approval as required by ordinance or Township policy.

Article XIV – Communications, Website, and Social Media

The Commission may maintain a webpage and social media presence, including a Naturally Knowlton Facebook page, subject to Township policies and approval.

All official communications shall be factual, non-partisan, and consistent with municipal standards.

No member shall represent an official position of the Commission unless authorized by the Chair, Co-Chair, or the Commission

The Chair or Co-Chair, Secretary, and a Municipal Official shall manage the website and social media.

The Commission may maintain an official Environmental Commission–Naturally Knowlton email account for the conduct of Commission business. Access to and administrative control of the account shall be limited to the Chair or Co-Chair, the Secretary, and a designated Township official. Only such authorized people shall have permission to send official communications from the account, subject to Township policies and applicable law.

Personal social media accounts shall not present views as official Commission positions.

Article XV – Records, Minutes, and Reports

The Commission shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings.

All records shall be maintained in accordance with OPRA and municipal record retention policies.

All emails and electronic communications sent or received through the official Environmental Commission–Naturally Knowlton email account shall be deemed government records and shall be retained, disclosed, and disposed of in accordance with OPRA, the municipal records retention schedule, and Township policy.

At minimum, by August 1 a mid year written progress report shall be submitted to the Township Committee and a Final Report submitted annually before February 1 of the following year unless otherwise directed.

Article XV – Budget and Expenditures

The Commission shall have no authority to obligate municipal funds except as authorized by the Township Committee. Any requests for funding shall be made through the annual budget process or by formal resolution.

Only expenditures that are expressly approved by the Township Committee and processed and paid through the Township’s official voucher and accounts payable system shall be eligible for reimbursement.

No member, committee, or Action Liaison shall incur expenses on behalf of the Commission with the expectation of reimbursement, absent such prior approval and proper municipal processing.

Donations and Contributions

The Commission shall not directly solicit, accept, receive, or hold monetary donations or other financial contributions. Any donation intended to support Environmental Commission or Naturally Knowlton activities shall be made to the Township of Knowlton and may be accepted only by resolution of the Township Committee in accordance with applicable law and municipal policy.

No donation shall create an obligation, endorsement, or financial commitment on behalf of the Commission unless approved by the Township Committee.

Article XV II– Review and Amendment of Bylaws

Pursuant to Ordinance 26-27, § 10-12.H, these bylaws and any amendments thereto must be approved by the Township Committee to take effect, and shall remain consistent with the ordinance and all applicable law.

These bylaws may be amended by majority vote of the full authorized membership of the Commission at a duly noticed public meeting.

Any amendment shall take effect only upon approval by the Township Committee, as required by ordinance and applicable law.

The Commission shall review these bylaws annually to ensure consistency with applicable statutes, municipal ordinances, and current Commission practices.

If any provision of these bylaws is held invalid by a court or agency of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity shall not affect the remaining provisions, which shall remain in full force and effect.

Article XVIII – Member Orientation

New members of the Commission shall be provided with an orientation packet containing the Environmental Commission ordinance, bylaws, applicable state law summaries, and relevant Township policies.

Members are encouraged to review these materials and participate in training opportunities related to municipal governance, ethics, and the Open Public Meetings Act.