

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

**Meeting Date/Time:**

Monday, April 19, 2021 – 7:45pm

**Meeting Location: Zoom**

Go to [www.zoom.us](https://www.zoom.us) click JOIN A MEETING and enter the meeting number shown below.

**Link to Join Meeting:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88274468127?pwd=bnd1cGJjQ3dNaWRaFc1UkZnUDUxdz09>

**Meeting Number: # 882 7446 8127**

**Meeting Passcode: Passcode: 100615**

**Or by phone: US toll call: + 1 929 436 2866**

**Open Public Meeting Statement:**

Adequate notice of this meeting was provided to the Bergen Record and/or The Ridgewood News, informing the public of the time and place according to the provision of the Open Public Meeting Law (Chapter 231, P.L. 1976)

**Roll Call:**

**Members: Lisa De Pellegrini(P), Daniel Eichhorn(P), Chairman Robert Hanrahan(P), Mairead Jensen(P), Randall Preston(P), Lisa Skoglund(P), Vicki Solis(P), Michelle Zink-Jojic(A), Planning Board Liaison/Member Robert Zitelli(P)& Council Liaison Christopher Roche(P)**

**Approval of Minutes** – March 15, 2021 Minutes – A motion to approve was made by R. Zitelli and seconded by V. Solis.

**Meeting Opened to Public Agenda & Non – Agenda Items:** A motion to open was made by R. Preston and seconded by D. Eichorn.

**Members of the Public Present:**

- Montvale residents and members of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee Gabriel Brodman and Connor Quinlan.
- Ray Hutchinson, Montvale resident, to present on community gardens.

**The Diversity and Inclusion (D & I) Committee present:**

- The D & I Committee has a plan to plant a tree at Huff Pond. The committee is requesting input from the EC regarding species of tree to donate and proper location to plant.
- Connor Quinlan: The D & I committee would like to do a tree dedication. Potential date of dedication is June 13<sup>th</sup>, rain or shine.
- Requests recommendation on size and species of tree to donate and installation schedule.

**Feedback/comments from members of the EC:**

- Work being done at Huff pond has been delayed and it may be difficult to coordinate the timing/date of the dedication until Huff Pond is further along. This project requires coordination.
- Species suggestions:
  - Flowering species; the Eastern Redbud tree has a strong pink color.
  - Weeping Willow, Weeping Cherry
  - One of the trees that is currently included in Boswell's submitted and approved plan.
- Location suggestions:
  - The firehouse near the path/trail.
  - The area by the memorial site has full sun and would be a good location.
  - Borough hall has many location options and would avoid the delays from the Huff Pond Renovation.
- Work to be performed: EC confirms that volunteers would be required to plant the tree.

Chairman Hanrahan: June 13<sup>th</sup> will not be possible for a tree dedication at Huff Pond. Currently the Huff Pond renovation schedule is behind by 4 to 5 week. Suggests the front of the firehouse as a location that is away from the memorial site or, alternatively, a location at the borough hall complex. Suggests a native species and one that is not susceptible to disease and insects. Recommends a visit to the borough hall for location options. Will forward techniques and direction on several different ways to plant.

### **Community Gardens:**

Ray Hutchinson presents to the EC on his experience building a community garden at the First Congregation Church in Park Ridge. Ray was previously a member of the EC for over 10 years.

- Built a garden with 35 raised beds for rent to individuals and 3 community beds.
- Cost to rent a garden bed is \$25.00 per season which includes the cost of water.
- All food grown in the community bed is donated to a local food pantry.
- The garden is fenced in to prohibit animals from entering the area.
- The garden was built six years ago on a budget of \$7,000.00. Today, lumbar and supplies are more expensive.
- There are many participants, some from within the church congregation but many others from the extended community. Currently they have a waiting list for rental of garden beds.
- Suggests using 2 x 12 pine and making the boxes 4 x 8 in order to cut down on labor required.
- There is a person dedicated to overseeing the operation of the garden and maintaining the membership list.
- Maintenance funds are supplemented by an organic plant sale.
- Offering experience to assist in getting our project started.

Chairman Hanrahan: It is a nice way to meet people and see your community. There is much to be learned. We need to seek out others who are able to help develop and manage the project. Suggests reaching out to the Friends of the Montvale EC as well as Facebook. We need a core team of 3 to 4 people. The EC would not be overseeing the garden for the long term. L. Skoglund did share with the EC a video which touches on things identified as important to consider for this project. Suggests to EC to review before next meeting.

L. Skoglund: It is run by the Bergen County Master Gardeners to help people understand the breath of the project.

C. Roche: There is talk of revamping the area suggested for the community garden (former swimming pool location) so we may want to look into other locations. Suggests the old t-ball field behind 7-11.

R. Hanrahan: It is called field 11. It could present difficulties in parking. We may be able to work out/cooperate with NJ transit to use parking in their designated lot. There is also a company in town called Thrive who is investigating if they can share a piece of their parcel for the community garden. Currently it is not clear if this is a viable option. The borough hall also has some areas we can look into for consideration.

G. Brodman (resident): Thinks high school students would want to be involved in the construction. They could receive community service hours as an incentive to participate.

**Meeting Closed to Public:** A motion to close was made R. Hanrahan and seconded by R. Zitelli.

### **New Business:**

- **Tree Ordinance discussion:** Ordinance states that if you are performing any construction on your property you cannot remove trees within a protected area. We use the zoning and building setback to describe the area where trees must remain or be replaced. If a home construction plan cannot accommodate the ordinance, the EC will review and make appropriate recommendations to the homeowner, building department and planning board as necessitated. Research has been done in previous years prior to the adoption of our current ordinance. Research provided the following:
  - 13 instances of significant tree removal on residential properties (10 of which were working with the building department)
  - Some instances from new construction; some from installation of swimming pools.
  - Homeowner's do not want restrictions on their property.

Problems resulting from excessive tree removal:

- Increased heating/cooling costs
- Drainage difficulties which can impact home foundations.
- Change in town aesthetics.
- Ordinance states homeowner cannot perform construction if there was any tree removal looking back 4 months.
- Concern of *clearcutting* around town, may need to look further into it.
- Important to educate current and new residents on the tree ordinance. People moving into town may not know there is a tree ordinance.
- Important to keep the aesthetics of the town as well as avoid water issues from clear cutting.
- Tri-fold pamphlet on tree education should be available at the library and senior center.
- **Montvale Clean-Up Day 2021** – Thank you to everyone for your participation in this successful event.
  - 110 residents participated.
  - Over 1100 pounds of trash was collected and disposed of.

- The trail by Huff Pond, the walking path by borough hall as well as the center of town were cleaned.
- **Newly appointed member of the EC: Michelle Zink-Jojic** – Was appointed at the last Mayor and Council meeting to fill Alt. 2. position on the Environmental Commission.

#### **Old Business:**

- Community Project Update (Lisa De Pellegrini)
- Thank you Miread and Ellen for pulling together a grant submitted to ANJEC for a \$1500.00 grant award to help with a pollinator garden that the girl scouts would like to help with.
- Pascack Trail Update (Robert Hanrahan) –
  - Half of the trail is closed now because of the work being done at Huff Pond.
  - 3 benches are built and ready to be put installed along the trail. Scout leader will assist with project.
  - This week the stone dust will be laid down from Grand Avenue to near the fire house. It will leave a cleaner surface once done. This may require participants/volunteers to help spread it out.
  - We have volunteers who will help with a gas tamper to help tamp it down.
- Thank you to V. Solis, M. Jensen and E. Riccardi for meeting at the trail to decide where to place the trail signs. We did receive approval that the DPW can dig hole and install 4 x 4. DPW will install it for us.
- Trail marker – V. Solis offered to help lead some scouts to put in trail markers. We will get a group of 6 or more scouts that will help paint trail markers along the trail. Educational investment.
- Suggestion of educational placards.
- Montvale Plastic Bag Recycling Update (Randy Preston/Mairead Jensen) –
  - We will start up another 6 month cycle.
- Electric Vehicle update (Lisa Skogland)
  - No new information to share; in research phase.
  - R. Hanrahan: the subject deserves time invested; there is potential state funding available.

#### **Council Liaison Report – Chris Roche**

- The budget will be approved on May 11, 2021.

#### **Planning Board Report – Robert Zitelli**

- Waypoint – Proposed 157 unit development. Applicant is reconsidering plan.
- Solar array installation at Mobius approved. Solar panels are being installed.
- Next meeting is April 20, 2021

**Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn was made by R. Zitelli and seconded by V. Solis all in favor stating aye.

**Next EC Meeting will be on Monday, May 17, 2021**