

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date/Time:

Monday, November 15, 2021 – 7:45pm

Meeting Location: Zoom and Borough Hall

Go to www.zoom.us click JOIN A MEETING and enter the meeting number shown below.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85736759323?pwd=a2lOV1Y0S2t5aVQwaG9GaEdMU3RIQT09>

Meeting ID: 857 3675 9323

Passcode: 424238

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), Chairman Robert Hanrahan(P), Mairead Jensen(P), Randall Preston(P), Lisa Skoglund(P), Vicki Solis(A), Antonio Vozzolo(P), Michelle Zink-Jojic(A), Planning Board Liaison/Member Robert Zitelli(P) & Council Liaison Christopher Roche(A), Shannon Stemper (intern)(A)

Approval of Minutes – October 18, 2021 - A motion to approve was made by R. Zitelli and seconded by M. Jensen.

Meeting Opened to Public Agenda & Non – Agenda Items - A motion to open was made by R. Zitelli and seconded by R. Preston.

Meeting Closed to Public - A motion to close was made by R. Zitelli and seconded by R. Preston.

Communication/Correspondence:

- R. Hanrahan found a gold ring in the plastic bag collections and with the assistance of the library was able to reunite the owner with the ring.
- Thank you to L. DePellegrini and L. Skoglund who were both in attendance at the Montvale shredding event to represent the EC and distribute information on the plastic ban, bee event and other EC initiatives.
- Thank you to L. Skoglund for your attendance and participation at the St. Joseph's High School Community Service Event.

New Business:

- Barbara Davis of The Land Conservancy of New Jersey Presents on Open Spaces

- The Land Conservancy is a non-profit, land trust located in Boonton, Morris County, NJ. Their work encompasses educational and municipal services, land stewardship and land preservation. Work includes open space plans and land conservation on a local level and helping municipalities qualify for funding through states programs.
- Work in Bergen County has included:
 - Open Space Plans
 - Analysis of remaining farm land
 - Recreation and open space inventory – active and passive space
 - Flood acquisition planning
- Reasons for creating an open space plan include:
 - Assists municipalities in identifying its parks and recreation areas and helps with planning for new ones.
 - Useful in qualifying for grant and award monies (Green Acres).
- Open Space Plan:
 - Executive summary
 - Goals
 - History of Program –Includes information on the open space trust fund and how much has been expended (land acquisition projects).
 - Inventory
 - Recreation resources - community recreation areas, ballfields
 - Recommendations: opportunities
 - Action Plan: Short, mid and long term.
- ERI (Environmental Resource Inventory):
 - Melds land conservation, sustainable and planning interests of municipality.
 - Reports on the existing natural and cultural resource base for the municipality.
 - It is a guidance document used to help to build land ordinances and steep slope ordinances.
 - Helps to provide informed decision making.
 - An ERI can include noise levels, air quality, historic resources, topography and soil types, agriculture and hydric soils, endangered species habitats, water quality and flood zones.
 - Includes 12-15 maps in plan.
 - Consistent with sustainable Jersey (priority action – 20 points in application for certification)
 - An open space plan and ERI are a “pictures in time”. An ERI is uploaded information on an electronic platform. Requires someone with a mapping background as well as a science background.
- Funding an Open Space Plan and ERI:
 - Fees to cover an open space plan and ERI can come from the open space trust fund.

Comment from John DePinto, Chairman of the Planning Board: We are hoping to get budget approval to redo our master plan. Regarding development and redevelopment; we will have to pay more attention to the environment. Since 2015, population growth has increased substantially and further increase in population is anticipated in the next 5 years. Supports the funding of the research on this project and will share information with the planning board.

Comments/Questions from the EC members:

- M. Jensen: Thank you Barbara for presenting to the Montvale EC. If we have something to preserve, now is the time to take action.
 - R. Zitelli: We need to redo the master plan and will want to work with the land conservancy. We certainly want recreation facilities available and are looking to increase the amount of open space.
 - R. Preston: In addition to the Green Acres grants, are there any other funds, certifications that this would help us with?
Response from Barbara Davis: Depending upon the project the Land Trust Organization can contribute funding. Green Acres will fund up to 50% of the appraised value even if the borough is able negotiate an acquisition at a cost that is less than appraised value.
 - L. Skoglund.: Many of the local farms have already been developed. Is it possible to test any of that land?
Response from Barbara Davis: The Land Conservancy encourages testing on any acquisition for open space. The first step is environmental assessment.
An Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI) will use a time delineated database.
 - R. Hanrahan: The open space and recreation plan would be updated in concert with the master plan. An ERI could be the responsibility of an EC or a planning board. If the EC owns the ERI, the master plan could be owned by the planning board. If this project moves forward it will require a concerted effort between EC and the planning board.
- Montvale Bee Education Event (Lisa Skoglund) – Friday, November 19th at 7:30 p.m.
 - Presentation was created from discussions with community members at the Montvale Street Fair.
 - We will place the event on the Memorial Drive Bulletin and publish a notice in the Pascack Press.
 - R. Hanrahan requests any members available to assist with setup on Thursday night.
 - Tree Removal Request – 7 Blue Sky Lane- Block 2601, Lot 35
 - Request was approved at the last EC meeting with the exception of requesting homeowners to submit an updated drawing.
 - The update has been submitted by the EC and forwarded to the building department with exception.
 - Fundraising – no news to report
 - 2022 Borough Budget - Tomorrow is first meeting for the 2022 budget. The EC will request the same budget as was approved for 2021.

Old Business:

- Community Project Update (Lisa De Pellegrini)
 - Update on Bat Education Project (Lisa De Pellegrini)
 - Lisa is trying to accumulate wood for building the bat houses.
 - We can post a request for contribution of wood on the Montvale Community Facebook page.
 - We will schedule time after the holiday season for the scouts to cut the wood and assemble the bat house kits.
 - Distribution of kits can begin at the end of the winter season.
 - Currently we have 32 requests for bat houses.

- Pascack Trail/Huff Pond Update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - The area between Huff pond and the trail requires cleanup from past storm damage; we will place a request with the DPW.
 - We do not have funding to complete the repair work.
 - FEMA request has been submitted.
 - A basic cleanup of the area will help facilitate planting in late February, early March.

- Montvale Plastic Bag Recycling Update (Randy Preston/Mairead Jensen)
 - Thank you to M. Jensen and R. Preston for all your hard work at the recycling center.
 - We have collected another 500 lbs. of plastic and are placing a request for a 3rd bench.
 - R. Hanrahan confirmed placement of benches in the bocce court location.
 - Our senior community members are very excited to have the benches at the bocce court.
 - M. Jensen worked with 2 girl scouts on signage for the recycling center. They made 3 signs to assist with identification/sorting of recycling.
 - The girl scouts also made an educational video for posting to our website.

- Plastic Bag Legislation (Robert Hanrahan)
 - Beginning May 4, 2022 NJ law prohibits stores from providing single use plastic bags.
 - We will monitor our collection program.
 - We are still receiving a steady supply of bags toward the Trex program.

- Electric Vehicle Update (Lisa Skoglund) – no news to report

- Pollinator Garden Update (Shannon Stemper)
 - The garden was moved to a new location next to Community Center.
 - Girl scouts are planting pollinator seeds which will be sprouting in the spring.

- Open Spaces (Mairead Jensen)- as presented above

- Community Garden Update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - The project will require support from Mayor and Council.

Council Liaison Report – Chris Roche – not in attendance

Planning Board Report – Bob Zitelli

- Last meeting was October 19th.
- Residential variance submitted by builder for plans of a house on an empty lot.
- Bank of America on Chestnut Ridge Road presented an updated lighting and landscaping plan. Submission was well received.
- Next meeting is November 16th.

Adjournment A motion to adjourn was made by R. Zitelli and seconded by R. Preston all in favor stating aye.

Next EC Meeting will be on Monday, December 13, 2021