

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date/Time:

Monday, February 13, 2023 – 7:45pm

Meeting Location: Zoom and Borough Hall

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82526876406?pwd=UjgrakhyZW9rek5sRUxhZlBHRW9DUT09>

Join by phone/Dial by your location

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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(A), Randall Preston(A), Lisa Skoglund(P), Antonio Vozzolo(P), Michelle Zink-Jojic(P), Lou Baldanza(P), Planning Board Liaison/Member Robert Zitelli(P) & Council Liaison Christopher Roche(P)

Approval of Minutes – January 9, 2023 - A motion to approve was made by L. Skoglund and seconded by L. De Pellegrini.

Meeting Opened to Public Agenda & Non – Agenda Items A motion to open was made by L. Skoglund and seconded by L. DePellegrini.

- **Girl Scouts Planting Project**

Stephanie and Emma Holden are in attendance representing the Montvale 4th grade Girl Scout troop. They are working on a garden project to improve Memorial Park/Huff Pond. Goal of the project is to beautify the area and teach the girl scouts about volunteer contributions.

- Garden will be 10 ft. x 10 ft. maximum.
- Location will be on the north side of the pond toward the headwalls for the inlet, near the fence installed by the Boy Scouts.
- Plantings will be hardy perennials.
- Emma inquires to the EC about varieties that are deer resistant.
- R. Hanrahan suggests that a smaller garden can covered with screening to deter animals.
- Project will start in May after the town has finished their scheduled planting.
- L. De Pellegrini suggests designing a free form garden that will follow the natural landscape of the pond. Offers to consult on varieties of plants and contribute some plants (Iris) from her own garden.
- M. Zink-Jojic asks, “How will the garden be watered?”
- R. Hanrahan suggests that the troop organize a schedule among their members to water the garden once or twice a week.
- R. Hanrahan suggests the Girl Scouts make a flyer to distribute at Montvale Clean-Up Day on April 22nd to inform the community about the project and ask for community volunteers to help water the garden.

Meeting Closed to Public - A motion to close was made by L. Skoglund and seconded by L. DePellegrini.

Communication/Correspondence: no correspondence to report

New Business:

- **Louis Baldanza - Appointed to the Environmental Commission as Alternate #2**
 - Congratulations and thank you to Lou Baldanza.
 - Lou was unanimously appointed by the Mayor and Council.
 - Lou volunteers for the NY/NJ Trial conference overseeing 20 to 30 trail maintainer volunteers.
- **Sustainable Jersey – a program that is used to encourage environmental focus at a municipal level**
 - Municipalities become certified by participating in priority actions.
 - Examples of priority actions include ordinances, policies and procedures, programs and facility improvements, many of which we already do.
 - Priority actions have different point values.
 - Certification requires participation in 6 to 18 different categories with a total point value of at least 150 points.
 - R. Hanrahan asks L. Skoglund to investigate the program and report back to the EC for further discussion.
- **Clean-Up Day 2023 – April 22nd**
 - Flyer is already posted on the borough website
 - We will meet at approximately 8:00 to 8:30 a.m. The event starts at 9:00 a.m.
 - Ellen will put in a work order request in for cones, tables and chairs.
 - The state of NJ under the DEP has a program to acquire free trees for towns and municipalities. We placed an order for 300 trees. The state recommends giving out 5 trees to each resident.
 - Trees are 12 inches in size and won't arrive potted.
 - Trees must be planted within 24 to 48 hours maximum after they have been brought to room temperature.
 - R. Hanrahan will keep them cool and in a dormant state until it is time for distribution.
 - We could do a webpage with instructions on how to care for the trees.
 - R. Hanrahan suggests trying to track how many of the trees survive.
 - L. De Pellegrini will find instructions for care of trees and post it to the Friends of the EC Facebook page.
 - We will need assistance from volunteers.

Old Business:

- **Community Project Update (Lisa De Pellegrini)**
 - Update on Bat Education Project (Lisa De Pellegrini)
 - Project will start up again in the spring.
 - R. Hanrahan will call Ridge supply and ask for wood.
 - Update on Pollinator Garden Project (Lisa De Pellegrini)

- Project will start up again in the spring.
- **Pascack Trail/Huff Pond Update** (Robert Hanrahan)
 - R. Hanrahan met with A. Hippolit and J. Voytus regarding bringing the pond a state of completion as described on the engineers drawing.
 - Extra work will be done with plantings; work will take place as the weather warms.
- **Montvale Plastic Bag Recycling Update** (Randy Preston/Mairead Jensen)
 - We have 2 new, larger collection boxes in borough hall.
 - R. Hanrahan requests the EC members to assist with transporting plastics to Wegmans.
- **Electric Vehicle Update** (Lisa Skoglund/Antonio Vozzolo)
 - A. Vozzolo requests to meet with R. Hanrahan and C. Gruber to discuss vehicles to be replaced.
 - Police Department did study on cost savings from replacing current fleet with EV vehicles. Study results supported large savings (energy, repairs, etc.)
 - R. Hanrahan reminds EC that grants are available.
- **Community Garden Update** (Robert Hanrahan) – no news to report.
- **Open Spaces and Recreation Plan/ERI** (Mairead Jensen/Robert Hanrahan)
 - The revised draft is due to the EC by the end of this month.
 - The EC was asked to delay it's completion by a quarter of a year based on the current work in progress by the planning and zoning board.
 - Draft will be distributed to EC members by email.
 - Request EC to send any feedback to Ellen.
 - The EC will meet to review the compiled feedback and adjust the plan accordingly.
- **Summit Avenue Open Space Land Purchase (Robert Hanrahan/Chris Roche)**
 - R. Hanrahan reached out to the NY/NJ trail conference to get a quote on a trail plan.
 - We are waiting for feedback from a representative. L. Baldanza will help facilitate contact.
 - New acquisition is approximately 27 acres now owned by Montvale.
 - We can walk the property now that it is municipally owned.
 - There is a rough plan for a trail that is over a mile in distance. It goes through a wetland area. There will be footbridges.
 - Trail will be natural; similar to Memorial Trail/Pascack trail.
 - We can request our engineers to make a drawing and get wetland and stream encroachment permits from the DEP.
 - Currently undecided if trail will have bike access.
 - L. Baldanza can recommend an engineer who has designed bridges/trails and worked with the DEP.
 - L. Baldanza suggests making a small parking lot out of gravel that will have minimal impact on neighbors.
- **Bicycle and Walking Plan** (Antonio Vozzolo)
 - Working on scheduling an appointment with a representative from the DOT.

- **Tree City Signage** (Robert Hanrahan)
 - Signage is installed.
 - Locations are north and south bound on Kinderkamack Road, east and west bound on Grand avenue and north and south bound on Chestnut Ridge Road.
- **Communication about Tree Ordinance to New Families/ New Resident Welcome Mailer** (Robert Hanrahan) – no news to report.
- **New Community Center discussion** (Robert Hanrahan/Chris Roche)
 - Delays for various reasons including recent land acquisitions in town.
 - New plans are under consideration.
- **Repair of Environmental Learning Center, trail discussion** (Robert Hanrahan)
 - The trail is currently in good shape.
 - The flooring in a few place will need to be replaced.
 - We will work with the borough to request a work order to remove the trash and cigarette tray assemblies from the Environmental Learning Center.
 - We can install a sign to remind residents bring their trash with them as they exist the trail.
- **Category One, Riparian Zone and Wetland Protection Ordinance Discussion** (Robert Hanrahan)
 - R. Hanrahan asks the EC for feedback on waterway article.
 - All EC members agree to include the map detail which shows waterways, wetlands and water bodies.

Council Liaison Report – Chris Roche

- Currently working on budgets.
- Anticipate having updated information on a new land acquisition.

Planning Board Report – Bob Zitelli

- The planning board continues to review use permits.
- More businesses are coming to office buildings in town.
- Montvale Grove, LLC
 - Residential property across from Pascack Hill High School on the corner of Grand Avenue and Spring Valley Road.
 - Proposal for 16 single families plus one 3 family home.
 - On the agenda for March 7th meeting.

Adjournment: A motion to adjourn was made by L. Skoglund and seconded by L. De Pellegrini all in favor stating aye.

Next EC Meeting will be on Monday, March 20, 2023