

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date/Time:

Monday, May 15, 2023 – 7:45pm

Meeting Location: Zoom and Borough Hall

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89937263561?pwd=THpHNIJrZmZqcFdkckxLb2hwbFN4Zz09>

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

Approval of Minutes – April 17, 2023 - A motion to approve was made by R. Preston and seconded by L. DePellegrini.

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

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

Communication/Correspondence:

- NJDEP – Fish stocking for Huff Pond
 - The requested fish will be stocked August through September (spawned in Hackettstown, NJ)
 - Variety: Sunfish are likely, bass will be stocked if available.
 - R. Hanrahan requested minnows from Bergen County for algae control.
 - Recreation Department will contribute some funds to purchase fish for the pond.
 - C. Roche – Mayor and Council will discuss scheduling a fishing event.
- We received an email from resident requesting recommendations for water testing.
 - There are still a few water wells in Montvale.

New Business:

- Review of 131 North Kinderkamack Road submission as forwarded by Planning Board
 - Power station application
 - Location: On the east side of town, in the proximity of the train tracks.

- Notification distributed to residents approximately three weeks ago.
- Comments/questions/feedback from EC:
 - R. Preston: It appears to be a new switch gear within the confines of their current footprint. It will involve changing aggregate stone and cutting away old foundations. The new gear will fit in front of what is existing; upgrading to a solid state gear rather than the older analog.
 - Will be doing ground water monitoring. The oil in the transformers could have contaminants.
- Memo from Planning Board regarding EC
 - Memo delineated that the EC can only provide input on landscape architecture with regard to requests presented to the Planning Board.
 - We are in discussion with the borough attorney about expanding EC input to other environmental issues.
 - EC input is only informational; what we provide in non-regulatory.
 - We would like provide feedback to the planning board on a broader scope; subjects that are relevant to the environment.

Old Business:

- Community Project Update (Lisa De Pellegrini)
 - Update on Bat Education Project (Lisa De Pellegrini)
 - Currently pricing out premade bat houses; may be more cost efficient than building them.
 - Update on Pollinator Garden Project (Lisa De Pellegrini)
 - Waiting for communication from girls scout leader.
 - A Girl scout from troop would like to lead the project in an effort toward achieving a gold award.
- Clean Up Day 2023
 - Over 80 residents participated including the boy scouts who contributed one week earlier due to a scheduling conflict.
 - The Bergen County mini grant in the sum of \$400.00 was approved after submission of photos and appropriate forms.
- Pascack Trail/Huff Pond Update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - All planting has been completed.
 - We replaced dead Cyprus with Holly and Leyland varieties.
 - The inlet and outlet of Huff pond are functioning properly. The outlet will overflow during extreme rain only.
 - Boulders have been placed strategically and the pond bank has been adjusted.
 - R. Hanrahan will discuss overflow with C. Roche and Mayor Ghassali to propose repair work for another year.
 - The project would cost approximately 20K. If we do the project now we could work off the permit that is already filed.
If the permit expires, it will cost an additional 15K.
- Montvale Plastic Bag Recycling Update (Randy Preston/Mairead Jensen)
 - 1018 pounds of plastic have been collected since January.
 - We already have our 6th bench ordered.
 - The senior group built 4 benches and put them on the grass behind the community center.

- The benches require some L brackets and cement to secure them in position.
- Electric Vehicle Update (Antonio Vozzolo)
 - Working on scheduling a meeting with the NJ Department of Transportation. Would like to set it up for June.
- Community Garden Update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - Mayor Ghassali approached R. Hanrahan with renewed interest in the community garden.
 - Residents who apply would receive a parcel of land in the garden and would bring their own plants.
 - Typically the resident keeps the yield, and also makes some donations for a local food bank.
 - Main advantage is meeting people/socialization.
 - E. Riccardi will keep a list of volunteers interested in the project.
 - A resident did step forward and offered to lead up a team of volunteers.
 - R. Hanrahan sent the old drawing to the Mayor Ghassali and Joe Voytus.
 - The cost to start the project is just over 40K.
- Girl Scout Garden – Huff Pond (L. DePellegrini)
 - L. DePellegrini and girl scouts are going Friday at 3:10 p.m. to map out an area against the fence and plant.
- Open Spaces and Recreation Plan (Mairead Jensen/Robert Hanrahan)
 - Still under review with the Planning Board.
- Environmental Resource Inventory (Robert Hanrahan)
 - The Land Conservancy of NJ has returned the ERI for the EC for review. We are to provide feedback, suggestions and changes.
 - R. Hanrahan will look at changes and forward to planning board to try to reduce delays.
 - Please complete the work by Friday, May 19th and forward any feedback to E. Riccardi.
 - The planning board will have the opportunity to do the same.
- Summit Avenue Open Space Land Purchase/Trail (Robert Hanrahan)
 - Viola is placing a balloon over the location.
 - They are studying the area for possible placement of a water tower.
 - Trails will be built as well.
 - We are requesting suggestions on the trail from NY/NJ trail conference.
- Bicycle and Walking Plan (Antonio Vozzolo) – No news to report
- New Community Center discussion (Robert Hanrahan/Chris Roche) – No news to report
- Repair of Environmental Learning Center, trail discussion (Robert Hanrahan)
 - L. Baldanza and others have offered to help.
- Category One, Riparian Zone and Wetland Protection Ordinance Discussion (Robert Hanrahan)
- Sustainable Jersey (L. Skoglund) – No news to report
- ANEC Open Space and Stewardship Grant 2023
 - Unfortunately, our grant proposal was decline.

Council Liaison Report – Chris Roche – No news to report

Planning Board Report – Bob Zitelli

- Next meeting is tomorrow night.
- Montvale Grove proposal has been scaled back.
- L. DePellegrini states that the area of discussion is within a vernal habitat.

Adjournment: A motion to close was made by R. Preston and seconded by L. DePellegrini.

Next EC Meeting will be on Monday, June 26, 2023