

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
12 Mercedes Dr., Montvale, NJ 07645
Council Chambers-7:45pm

MINUTES
June 20, 2016

Robert Hanrahan, Acting Chairman, opened the meeting at 7:45pm. Chairman led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance. Adequate notice of this meeting was provided to The Record and/or the Ridgewood News, informing the Public of the time and place, according to the provisions of the Open Public Meeting Law (Chapter 231, P.L. 1975).

Roll Call:

- **Present:** Daniel Eichhorn, Robert Hanrahan, Judy Russo, Randall Preston, Lisa Skoglund, Richard Johnson and Dante Teagno
- **Absent:** William Antczak, Janet Russo, Board Secretary
- **Also Present:** Ms. Lorraine Hutter, Acting Secretary, Mr. Gus DeBlasio, Landscape Architect, Maser Consulting, via telephone

Minutes: A motion to approve the minutes from the April 18, 2016 meeting was made by Mr. Teagno and seconded by Mr. Preston with all stating aye.

Applicant:

NJ Energy Realty-Block 405, Lot 1,2, and 26- Chairman asked to have Mr. Gus DeBlasio on speaker for review. Mr. Dan Steinhagen of Beattie Padovano represented the applicant along with David Halls, Project Engineer. Mr. Hals gave a brief presentation. Existing gas station located on Kinderkamack Road and Wayne Street. There is an existing gas station now with repair bays. They are proposing to keep the canopy and gas pumps in the same location. There are three existing driveways that service the site, 2 from south Kinderkamack Road and one from Wayne Street. There is another driveway behind the building that is for a parking area and is being eliminated. A 2400 sq. ft., convenience store is being constructed on the site. South Kinderkamack Road is being widened; there will be a new curb and sidewalk. The landscaping area along Kinderkamack Road now will be moved back into the property. New street scape improvements along Wayne Street as well as Kinderkamack Road. Screen the parking spaces from Wayne Street is also proposed. They are adding 3 shade trees along the front of the property adjacent to the parking area. There are new shrubs that will be 6 feet in height to screen the parking. In the rear they are adding a double row of multi species. They are planting 8 ft. on center with staggered plantings. It will maintain a good buffer. There are two existing street lights to be replaced. Mr. Hanrahan asked about the wall removal. Mr. Hals stated the wall is being removed. Mr. Hals stated they are reducing the impervious coverage on the site, it will be 71.4%.

Questions from board members: Ms. Skoglund asked about the initial bedding along Wayne St., the ornamental grasses. What type of grasses she is concerned of site impairment coming out of Wayne St. Mr. Hals stated he didn't specify the type of grasses but according to the County requirement they can have a height of 30". They will add the height on the plan. Choice of the Green Giant Arborvitae. Mr. Hals stated it goes to 25'. It will not be the 80'. Mr. Teagno asked the corner bed, the 7 Japanese holly and 2 on the corner-specification is 36" to 42" is going to be a raised bed do they see any site line problems. Mr. Hals stated they are up the street more and there is no issue. The count of the yews was off on the plan, Mr. Hals stated he would make the correction. Mr. DeBlasio called in and went over his concerns and everyone was in agreement. It was decided it should be 5ft in general on the side and have a physical root barrier installation. Mr. Hals was in agreement. A motion to make the recommendation was made by Mr. Teagno and seconded by Mr. Preston. The Environmental Commission made their recommendation to the planning board for approval with the memo from Mr. DeBlasio.

Meeting Opened to the Public- Ms. Skoglund opened the meeting to the public and seconded by Ms. Russo . No one from the public wishing to be heard a motion to close was made by Mr. Teagno and seconded by Ms. Skoglund with all stating aye.

Communication/Correspondence

- Environmental Commission Issues-R. Hanrahan-see above
- Natural Resource Inventory Committee-R. Hanrahan-Mr. Hanrahan spoke about the Activity Log. They hope to make sub-committees for different projects. Mr. Preston thought it was a great idea and he would like to see it on the website. Activity list was gone over. Added verbiage to placards maybe by a boy scout troop. Ms. Hutter stated she believes that Hekemian was going to do something with the trail. She will verify and report back. Municipal Complex Patio Repairs needed was discussed. It is a major project. He would like Mr. Hipolit to look at it. Montvale Environmental Tram by Hekemian. He would like to see a tram system from Chestnut Ridge Road to Grand Avenue. Ms. Hutter stated that is a proposal from Hekemian for the new project. She will find out for sure and report back. The NRI could possibly be funded by grant monies stated Mr. DeBlasio. Update will be at next meeting.

Planning Board Liaison Report:

Old Business:

- **Draft of M&C Tree Ordinance-** Mr. Hanrahan discussed the NRI as being a data base for the tree ordinance. Mr. Hanrahan asked that Councilman Weaver come forward and give an update on the Councils activity. The Mayor and Council voted on the most recent draft and the vote was 5 to 1 against the tree ordinance and to send the ordinance back to the Environmental Commission for review. It was not in a place where it needed to be to move forward. Councilman Weaver stated he cannot speak for the other councilmembers but in his opinion the failure was in the objective in the way that it was written. As you read through the first line, it states that the ordinance is to preserve the character of the borough and its neighborhoods by

establishing appropriate tree preservation standards to control and regulate indiscriminate and excessive removal. Mr. Weaver stated that the word “indiscriminate” how do you define it. If someone wants to remove a tree or multiple trees for a pool or deck it is not indiscriminate there is a purpose behind it. Page 5 gives criteria for replacing trees that have been removed; he used the example of 3 trees in his back yard that he is removing for a pool or deck he would then have to find space for 6 trees. He felt this ordinance was not where it needed to be. He believes they have to go back to the objective. He was a better clearly defined objective of what they want to accomplish and then having all the pieces that follow match what that objective is. He thinks that the majority of the council was in agreement with that. Mr. Teagno stated he believed that with the Mayor and Council turning it back to the Environmental Commission that the focus of the tree ordinance be on “clear cutting”. Councilman Weaver stated there was no clear definition of what “clear cutting” is. Mr. Teagno asked who is going to decide what the objective is. Mr. Hanrahan stated that he would like to form a sub-committee on keeping track of clear cutting properties so they can write it down clearly and properly with examples of the sites that we are trying to avoid in the future and focus around it. Mr. Weaver stated that there were more knowledgeable who came to the meetings who articulated to the council that we were not working under the correct definition of what “clear cutting” is, he would like to become more informed on exactly how it is defined, who defines it and then work from what the definition is to what we want to accomplish. Ms. Russo stated they are making it more complicated than it used to be. She stated that if you remove a tree you replace a tree. She stated that when she worked in the construction department it was the construction official’s job to look at the sites. Mr. Hanrahan stated that Maser has an arborist on staff who was still listening on the telephone. Mr. Hanrahan would like to start a small informal committee to make a plan to work through it. They can use Maser expertise and others from around town stated Mr. Hanrahan. They need to keep it simple. Mr. Weaver stated he has difficulty telling a resident what they can and cannot do with their property when we have difficulty as a Borough maintaining some of our spaces. He would love to see added to the list, how we are maintaining the center of town. The islands are not well maintained, they are overgrown with weeds, and some of the plantings are dead. When he drives past the northern most islands on Kinderkamack Road coming towards Grand, the first island is overgrown and you cannot tell what a weed is and what plants are. When he walks through the pathways he doesn’t know what is weed and plants and on Memorial until recently the beds were overgrown with weeds and he believes that they just mowed them and did nothing to them to freshen it up. He would love to see them look more at our own spaces and how we are maintaining them. Mr. Preston asked as the Environmental Commission what influence do they have over the shared services DPW to point these things out to them. He has a concern over buildings as well over the couple of years. He doesn’t know if River Vale West gets the last look at everything and if they have time in the week. Mr. Weaver stated that was a great question and he is trying to navigate that as well a new councilperson. He believes his role is to serve the commission in bringing issues back to the council and making sure that they are aware of new pieces not only that new businesses trying to bring to town but what are the issues that we have with maintaining. He will bring the pieces back to the council so that they can make sure it

is being addressed in the way that it needs to be addressed. Mr. Hanrahan stated he added it as number 8 on the list. Mr. Weaver stated that when you are going west up to the high school on the Montvale side, the trees were cut by the utility company and the way they cut them is an eyesore. Mr. Weaver also stated that the pavers were looked at as part of the budget when they were looking at capital improvements and a question was raised as who did the work and when it was done. It should have had a longer life span and was the work properly done. Ms. Russo stated that it wouldn't be difficult to fix as she is very familiar with pavers and brick laying. They may only need to be reset and relayed. Mr. Weaver stated that there has been no follow up talks since the budget talks. A motion to open to the public was made by Mr. Teagno and seconded by Mr. Preston. Mr. Wirth, 66 Spring Valley Rd, came forward. He stated he would like to have added to the activity list. Maintenance of Borough properties, especially wetlands, specifically 110 Summit Avenue. Laurel Brook runs right through his back yard, he spends a lot of time de-snagging and making sure it is free running, otherwise he has a heck of a flooding problem. When O&R bought what was the Butler Property, 110 Summit Avenue to put in their substation they offered to the borough a nice piece of land .7 acres and the borough is not maintaining it. It is mosquito central Mr. Wirth stated. There are places all over town that are not being taken care of stated Mr. Wirth. We need to set a good example in maintaining our own property if we are to enforce property owners to maintain theirs. The planning board requires the proper screening to be put in on hard infrastructure and he has seen a lot of activity for commercial property yet our own generator it is not screened. We need to lead by example. This building is not being maintained according to Mr. Wirth, no plantings. The clear cutting term, it is a forestry term where it is intended to cut all the trees on a piece of property so that the regrowth is all the same size and age. It is a harvesting technique where sustain it and keep it going. Here he believes it is used as a scare term. He would like to see the clear cut properties. He has asked for it and has not received it. He states he only knows of one. When the tree ordinance was about to be introduced he believes there was a scurry to take down trees. The last proposal was overwhelming. The quantity of replacement was crazy according to Mr. Wirth. He believes that the size of the property matters in creating a tree ordinance. Taking 4 trees down on a ¼ acre is a lot different than his property over an acre. Mr. Teagno stated that two on Terkuile with brand new houses, and two on West Grand Avenue on the way to Saddle River on the left. Mr. Wirth stated he is aware of the one on Grand Avenue. There are some properties that had to be clear cut like Trailing Ridge where they needed to remove soil due to the orchard there. Ms. Susan Heyman, 64 Summit Avenue came forward. She was thankful for Mr. Weaver pointing out the borough property not being maintained as when she walks in from the parking lot she walks by a little planting area that has a stub of a tree in it and it has been there for years. She spoke about the tree ordinance and how it would affect private property and individual residents with all kinds of regulations yet we have examples all around town where our Borough trees and other landscaping areas are not being maintained. It doesn't set a good example and it adds to the annoyance of having to deal with the proposals that would regulate our properties to the maximum degree yet the borough isn't taking care of its own. We would like to see them taken care of. She also stated that one size doesn't fit all in regard to the tree ordinance. They should be by the acreage, not the zone. There are many houses within a zone that are

not conforming. Some are as small as 5,000 sq. ft. in the R-10, in the R40 where there is supposed to be acre and the property size is only ½ acre. Need to take into consideration that people want to have lawns, playground area for their children and vegetable gardens that requires sunlight and open space. Some small properties can only accommodate one or two small trees. She wanted to thank Councilman Weaver for giving it some thoughtful attention tonight. It should be very narrowly drafted. Mr. Hanrahan asked Ms. Heyman if she would be interested in serving or participating on a committee for the tree ordinance. It would be an informal setting. She wasn't sure. A motion to close was made by Ms. Skoglund and seconded by Mr. Teagno with all stating aye.

New Business

- Website updates and articles-article will be submitted for the website and newsletter
- Other EC Tasks/Efforts-Gus De Blasio stated that they did a final walk through with Lisa Skoglund, on a property looking for a final review. He thanked Lisa for being able to attend on short notice.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Skoglund and seconded by Mr. Preston with all in agreement stating aye.

Respectively submitted:

R. Lorraine Hutter

Acting Secretary