

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date/Time:

Monday, October 18, 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/86933110167?pwd=WU9pekJEcHJORXh5M2wyTEJPS2p6QT09>

Meeting ID: 869 3311 0167

Passcode: 269237

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(P), Antonio Vozzolo(P), Michelle Zink-Jojic(P), Planning Board Liaison/Member Robert Zitelli (P) & Council Liaison Christopher Roche(P), Shannon Stemper (intern)(A)

Approval of Minutes – September 20, 2021 – A motion to approve was made by L. Skoglund seconded by R. Zitelli.

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

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

Communication/Correspondence:

- St. Josephs Regional High School contacted the EC inquiring about student intern opportunities.
 - We can include these students in the Friends of the EC distribution list.
 - R. Hanrahan offered them the opportunity to come join a meeting and listen in to learn about the work we do.
 - We would also like to offer this opportunity to the local public schools.
 - The students are required to complete volunteer hours to meet graduation requirements.

New Business:

- Welcome Antonio Vozzolo to the Environmental Commission. Antonio is a lawyer and has been a resident of Montvale for over 15 years.

- Tree Removal Request – 11 Ellsworth Terrace, Block 2101, Lot 10
 - The house was originally a single story cape but was a knock down. This home has been under construction for over two years.
 - There are no trees currently on the property.
 - Tree removal permit was submitted on September 23, 2021 after the trees were already removed.
 - The EC will make recommendations for compensatory plantings moving forward.
 - Compensatory plantings must be approximately 4 feet high and 2 inches in diameter.
 - Montvale’s Tree Ordinance was put in place in 2017; prior to the removal of the trees on this property.
 - R. Hanrahan spoke to the homeowner who indicated they are planting ten Green Giant Arborvitaes which will provide screening for the neighboring property.
 - R. Hanrahan and M. Jensen counted over 10 stumps that were left. There were over 20 trees removed from the property.
 - Suggestions/comments from the EC:
 - Native plantings; some pines or native evergreens or native hardwoods.
 - Concern that the Green Giants Arborvitaes will fall in the first rain or severe weather.
 - The property is steep. A large amount of trees on the west side of the property have been removed. There is no current plan for screening on the west side of the property.
 - Suggestion to replant trees that have substantial root systems in order to protect the neighboring properties.
 - Suggestion of hiring an arborist for professional consultation/recommendation due to the “clear cutting” event.
 - Suggestion to calculate original tree count from google earth photos.
 - Suggestion to ask for invoices from tree removal service/s which would show the number of trees that were removed.
 - Topographic survey may be required.
 - The EC will make a recommendation to the building department. There is currently a lack of protection for neighboring properties. The recommendation will not be less than 24 compensatory plantings.

Denial of tree removal request as a function of the drawing submitted showing removal of 10 trees and installation of 10 green giant arborvitaes by property owner for 11 Ellsworth Terrace, Block 2101, Lot 10: A roll call vote was made and denied the request as follows: Lisa De Pellegrini(no), Chairman Robert Hanrahan(no), Mairead Jensen(no), Randall Preston(no), Lisa Skoglund(no), Vicki Solis(no), Antonio Vozzolo (no) Michelle Zink-Jojic(no), Planning Board Liaison/Member Robert Zitelli(no) & Council Liaison Christopher Roche(abstain)

- Tree Removal Request – 7 Blue Sky Lane- Block 2601, Lot 35
 - The owner is putting in a pool and making a major architectural landscape investment in the property.
 - The property is wooded and somewhat overgrown; trees have not been removed yet.
 - Drawings submitted last month were inaccurate but we were able to confirm what is being removed.
 - 13 to 14 trees were marked by tagging with a ribbon for removal.
 - The quantity of compensatory planting is acceptable; but species was not noted. Many of the plantings are identified as “evergreen”.

- Suggestions/comments from the EC:
 - Swap out a few of the arborvitae for something else; recommend native assortment.
 - They are putting in a pool; they may want some screening.
 - EC members are in agreement with the plan as presented but suggest some native plantings.
 -

Approval of tree removal request submitted by property owner for 7 Blue Sky Lane- Block 2601, Lot 35: A roll call vote was made and approved the request as follows:

Lisa De Pellegrini(yes), Chairman Robert Hanrahan(yes), Mairead Jensen(yes), Randall Preston(yes), Lisa Skoglund(yes), Vicki Solis(yes), Antonio Vozzolo (yes) Michelle Zink-Jojic(yes), Planning Board Liaison/Member Robert Zitelli(yes) & Council Liaison Christopher Roche(abstain)

Old Business:

- **Montvale Street Fair**
 - Thank you to Lisa DePellegrini, Lisa Skoglund and Mairead Jensen for representing the EC at the street fair. It was a very busy, successful event.
 - 24 members of the community signed up to make bat houses.
 - There was much interest in what the EC does in Montvale. Discussions included:
 - Tree Ordinance
 - Pollinator Garden
 - Recycling
 - How to reduce the use of chemicals.
 - Friends of the Montvale EC Facebook page
- **Community Project Update (Lisa De Pellegrini)**
 - Update on Bat Education Project (Lisa De Pellegrini)
 - We are asking for donations of scrap wood for use in the bat houses kits.
 - Suggestion to ask lumber yards for donations.
 - We can post on Friends of the EC Facebook page a request asking community members for wood donations.
 - After Christmas, the boy scouts can cut the wood for kits.
 - Some people requested help in installing the bat houses.
 - Bee Education Event - November 19th at 7:30 p.m.
 - It will be a 2 hour program at the Community Center.
 - We can start a sign-up for attendees on our Friends of the Montvale EC Facebook page
 - We can post the event on the Memorial Drive bulletin board.
 - The room has a capacity of 300 people prior to COVID restrictions.
- **Pascack Trail/Huff Pond Update (Robert Hanrahan)**
 - The trail is open.
 - Boy scouts are installing 3 benches along the trail. The footings is in and benches will be installed shortly.

- Montvale Plastic Bag Recycling Update (Randy Preston/Mairead Jensen)
 - To date, we have collected 4039 pounds of plastic bags with the Trex program.
 - 383 pounds have been collected over the past 6 month period. We will break the 500 pound mark very soon and get a new bench.
 - Seniors have new bocce courts. Suggestion to donate benches (three) to their location.
- Plastic Bag Legislation (Robert Hanrahan)
 - May of 2022 will commence the plastic bag ban in New Jersey.
 - Polystyrene containers will not be given out by businesses.
 - Beginning next month the ban will start with businesses using plastic straws.
- Electric Vehicle Update (Lisa Skoglund) – no news to report
- Community Garden Update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - R. Hanrahan spoke with a resident interested in working on the garden.
 - The Mayor is supportive of the project.
 - There are reservations about the swim club property as a location for the garden. This location may be used for other purposes.
 - There is space on north side of the property for the community garden.
- Open Spaces (Robert Hanrahan/Shannon Stemper)
 - We are working on understanding the ratio of open space to residents.
 - We are looking to document this ratio as it stands today, what it will be 2 to 3 years out, and what we can do to maintain an acceptable ratio for the future.
- Pollinator Garden Update (Robert Hanrahan/Shannon Stemper)
 - The garden was moved to a location near the community center.
 - Girl scouts will seed the pollinator garden beginning next week. The seeds are planted for spring growth.
 - The girls have promised that they complete the project in the spring and will work on finding people to maintain it moving forward.
- Tree city (Robert Hanrahan)
 - A plaque entering town shows the status once the designation has been awarded.
 - Some grant application requires tree city status.
 - Will report out on details moving forward. (Ellen will check with Shannon)

Council Liaison Report – Chris Roche

Planning Board Report – Bob Zitelli

- The last few meetings had a few use permits presented.
- No new construction presented to the planning board.

Adjournment- - A motion to adjourn was made by L. Skoglund and seconded by L. DePellegrini all in favor stating aye.

Next EC Meeting will be on Monday, November 15, 2021