

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date/Time:

Monday, February 21, 2022 – 7:45pm

Meeting Location: Zoom**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86974413835?pwd=Yi8lWXR5ajFmNzB2SGJYUmV6dU92QT09>

Meeting ID: 869 7441 3835

Passcode: 029429

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)

Approval of Minutes – January 17, 2022 - A motion to approve was made by R. Zitelli and seconded by R. Preston.

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 L. DePellegrini.

Communication/Correspondence:

- Anjec Grant 2022 for Open Space Stewardship Project is open for submission.
- Vicki and Mairead helped out with grant last year.
- Ellen is looking into other grants and could use some support from EC members.

New Business:

- Community Recycling – Questions and Answers
 - There were questions about the recycling process posted on the Montvale Community Facebook Page.
 - One resident posted that a sanitation worker told her that recycling was being included with regular garbage.
 - Complaints posted from residents stated concerns about Montvale's recycling process.
 - R. Hanrahan: Stated that we in fact recycle in Montvale. Some posts on social media may not be based on complete factual information.

- R. Hanrahan: Explained to the resident that Montvale does pay extra money to Westphal to support single stream, co-mingling (sorting not required) recycling.
 - The price/cost of recycling of the materials changes at least weekly and possibly daily. Sometimes we don't make money and sometimes we have to pay to get rid of some the recyclables. This process is run by the Pascack Valley DPW. Our DPW employees always follow procedures and protocols. Please reach out to Rich Campanella of the DWP for more information.
 - Sometimes recycling is contaminated and may need to be thrown out. There is usually someone at the recycling center to assist residents. There are a few residents that refuse to follow the directions.
 - M. Jensen: The co-mingling reduces the amount of time the trucks spent on the road, reduces emissions and is beneficial for the environment. Suggests that we post the benefits for co-mingling. There are DPW employees at the recycling center that monitor those bins and try to educate people on how to properly recycling.
 - R. Hanrahan: The DPW employees are more than happy to help our residents.
 - R. Preston: The DPW employees at the facility, are friendly, try to educate the public, and do their best to help out.
- Tree Removal Request – 7 Ladik Place, Block 802, Lot 11
 - The homeowner presented a request for removal of 4 trees. House has 10 to 15 setback on each side, 55 feet from the front, and 30 feet from the rear.
 - Three trees on the right are in the protected zone per the ordinance. The permit application indicated that the removed trees will be replaced with green giants, 2 caliper. Per ordinance requirement 3 caliper is the minimum. Homeowner willingly offered to put in 3 inch caliper trees per ordinance requirement.

Comments/questions from the EC members:

- Two trees look like they are tearing up the driveway.
- One tree looks diseased or sick in which case it is waived from the ordinance.
- The trees do pose a threat to the house; there are plenty of other trees on the property to support the area.
- Suggestions for compensatory planting: hardwood species which are better from a shade perspective.
- The green giant variety are deer resistant, but there are many in town and they don't all survive.
- We will submit an approval letter to the building department with recommendations on compensatory planting species. Hardwood varieties have deeper root systems which can help to minimize erosion, and water problems in basements, etc.

Approval of tree removal request for 7 Ladik Place, Block 802, Lot 11: 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 (not present for vote) Michelle Zink-Jojic(yes), Planning Board Liaison/Member Robert Zitelli(yes) & Council Liaison Christopher Roche(abstain)

- Bicycle Plan/path/scooter path
 - The main thoroughfares through town are not easy to traverse for a bike or scooter. Sidewalks are not the best places for bikes. Many municipalities in New Jersey are trying to designate a shoulder on roads for bicycles.

- A. Vozzolo did some research and a State Master Plan exists that is a bit old but may be useful in creating a local plan.
- R. Hanrahan reached out to The Land Conservancy of New Jersey and asked for a bicycle plan/path to be included in the Open Space plan.
- R. Hanrahan will reach out to our engineers. There is a setback easement on the properties from the road. It is worth investigating. We see clear value of having a safe thoroughfare through town. Newcomers may not all have vehicles. Bicycles and scooters are an option but our main roads are unsafe for bike traffic.

Comments from EC members:

- C. Roche suggest we ask the state for recommendations on how we can implement it on the local level. Most of our roads are not wide enough.
- R. Hanrahan: States that over time, code is written which applies to new construction. An area is left designated for a path and it could slowly develop over time. We could also reach out to the county to see how much financial support is available.
- A. Vozzolo: Has been in touch with the New York Bicycle and Pedestrian Center liaison and has a meeting scheduled to discuss how to put together a plan. The Department of Transportation has given out grants for the development of bike paths. The State of New Jersey awarded almost 6 million dollars/11 grants to improve the quality of life. Will try to provide more detail as they become available.

Old Business:

- Community Project Update (Lisa De Pellegrini)
 - Update on Bat Education Project (Lisa De Pellegrini)
 - Still collecting wood for the bat house kits.
 - Most bat house requests are from older adults. Suggest to provide fully assembled bat houses to residents.
 - They will be ready for distribution toward the end of spring. Recipients will have fully assembled bat houses to install.
- Pascack Trail/Huff Pond Update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - Was open for resident use until this past Friday when a tree fell across the trail and crushed one of the new benches that the boy scouts installed.
 - R. Hanrahan submitted a work order to have the tree removed.
 - The bench foundation is still in place. We just need to bolt in a replacement bench.
- Montvale Plastic Bag Recycling Update (Randy Preston/Mairead Jensen)
 - Total collection to date is 4,750 pounds and more than 390,000 plastic bags.
 - We have already collected 444 pounds of a 500 pound goal toward another bench.
 - We are almost at our 4th Trex bench. They will be installed in April or May.
 - We are receiving a lot of support as far as contributions.
 - Thank you Randy, Mairead and Vicki for all your hard work in maintain this program.
 - M. Jensen: Some of the colder weeks and months were challenging due to the weather. A lot of collection is coming in and it is a lot to get out. We need to be careful not to overwhelm our relationship with Stop and Shop in Nanuet. Would like to look into another location for depositing the bags. There is another Stop and Shop on Route 303 in Orangeburg. Let's reach out to Trex and confirm if that is an acceptable location.
 - R. Hanrahan: The Middle School Trex collection effort is also up and running.
- Electric Vehicle Update (Lisa Skoglund/Antonio Vozzolo)
 - Lisa and Antonio will work together

- More information on EV initiative to come.
- Community Garden Update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - We are waiting from direction from Mayor and Council.
- Open Spaces and Recreation Plan (Mairead Jensen/Robert Hanrahan)
 - Activity is ongoing with various Montvale agencies.
 - More information will be reported by March or April.
- Tree City Application
 - Thank you Ellen for helping with the application.
 - We are waiting for a response but all submissions are in place.
 - We have an official Montvale Arbor day, a requirement to be a Tree City, Montvale Arbor Day is April 22nd and Earth Day the 30th.
- Clean up day (Robert Hanrahan) – April 23rd, 9 a.m. at the red shed.
 - We get together for ½ a day from 9 a.m. to noon and clean up all the municipal areas around town and 7 waterways.
 - L. DePellegrini: There is a lot of garbage on Kinderkamack from the border into the center of town.
 - R. Hanrahan: We can always bring the problem to the attention of the DPW.
 - C. Roche: Possibly due to not sweeping the streets.
 - R. Hanrahan – request everyone to make note of areas around town that require clean up.
- Tree Give Away
 - Suggestion to procure approximately 100 trees to give away for Arbor Day/Clean Up Day.
 - Mayor offered to budget up to \$ 500.00 toward the purchase.
 - Suggestion of species: Red Oak
 - Tree City US has an organization that sells trees for very low prices.
 - If a resident doesn't have a house, we could offer to plant the tree for them along the trail.
 - C. Roche: Suggests Arbor Day Foundation sells 50 trees for \$ 69.00

Approval of decision to purchase trees to give to residents total amount up to \$500.00: 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 with caveat to find the best deal), 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)

Council Liaison Report – Chris Roche

- It is budget season. Hopefully everything will be approved at beginning of April.
- DPW will start work at Huff pond as soon as the weather allows.

Planning Board Report – Bob Zitelli

- Former Western Union building – Plan to change it into a rehabilitation facility with 180 beds, some long term and some memory care some.
- Developer is cooperative with suggestions being made.
- Next meeting is March 1st.

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

Next EC Meeting will be on Monday, March 21, 2022