

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date/Time:

Monday, March 20, 2023 – 7:45pm

Meeting Location: Zoom and Borough Hall

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82106428996?pwd=Z2M5djUxd3ppMm9VZDlBZ0hwRWdjZz09>

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

Approval of Minutes – February 13, 2023 - A motion to approve was made by L. De Pellegrini and seconded by R. Zitelli

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

Meeting Closed to Public - A motion to close was made by M. Jensen and seconded by R. Zitelli.

Communication/Correspondence:

- Congratulations to Michelle Zink-Jojic on the birth of her son.
- A resident sent an email to E. Riccardi asking for more information regarding Radon mitigation as the homeowner was preparing to sell the house.
 - R. Hanrahan responded with recommendations on cost effective mitigation.
 - R. Hanrahan forwarded Radon article to the Pascack Press for publication.
- Clean-up Day/Arbor Day celebration event (4/22) article sent to Pascack Press and Community Life for publication.
- Girl Scout planting project at Huff Pond
 - The Girl Scout leader reached out with updates on their planting project for the spring. They proposed a syphon pump to assist in watering the plants. L. De Pellegrini will assist the scouts in designing the garden.
- Work to be completed by Downes Tree Service should be underway currently. An additional change order cost applies. The entire project cost came to approximately 68K; of which 25K were the extra plantings.
 - Work to be completed includes:

1. All previously planned tree and shrub plantings as per plans;
 2. planting of 550 live stakes; deep rooted plants;
 3. final grading and seeding of grass;
 4. silt removal and digging to return the pond to the original plan.
- R. Preston poses the question/issue regarding checking of the intake and outtake valves.

Old Business:

- Community Project Update (Lisa De Pellegrini)
 - Update on Bat Education Project (Lisa De Pellegrini) – no news to report
 - Update on Pollinator Garden Project (Lisa De Pellegrini) – no news to report
- Clean Up Day 2023
 - Work order submitted to DPW; E. Riccardi will follow up.
 - Sloan Kettering reached out wanting to help.
 - Question proposed if we should allow local organizations to promote and set up a table at EC sponsored events. It was suggested that Montvale organizations who participate in our events can send a “clean-up team” but we would not allow them to solicit to the public/set up a table.
 - Please email E. Riccardi if you can help at Clean-Up day. Arrival time for EC members helping is 8:30 a.m.
 - R. Hanrahan has gloves and bags donated by Bergen County. The county is no longer donating t-shirts.
 - We will not be providing beverages or food.
 - We have sapling trees to give to participants.
 - We have maps of the target areas for clean-up.
 - Please email E. Riccardi with any locations in need of attention.
- Pascack Trail/Huff Pond Update (Robert Hanrahan) – See communication/correspondence section above.
- Montvale Plastic Bag Recycling Update (Randy Preston/Mairead Jensen)
 - Thank you to Randy and Mairead for all of their hard work and commitment.
 - We have new, larger collection boxes next to the library entrance.
 - R. Hanrahan requests EC members to please assist by helping to transport the plastic bags to Wegmans.
 - We have approval for a new bench from Trex.
- Electric Vehicle Update (Antonio Vozzolo/Lisa Skoglund)
 - A. Vozzolo, C. Roche, J. Voytus and R. Hanrahan met to discuss options for moving forward.
 - Advantages and disadvantages were discussed.
 - Examined current inventory of borough owned vehicles that would be suitable for change to EV.
 - Starting with a few vehicles could help to transition the borough to EV.
 - Next step is to identify available programs for funding.
- Community Garden Update (Robert Hanrahan) – On hold waiting for guidance from Mayor and Council.
- Girl Scout Garden – Huff Pond – See communication/correspondence section above.
- Open Space and Recreation Plan (Mairead Jensen/Robert Hanrahan)
 - Discussion/Feedback from EC members on Draft Two – Open Space and Recreation Plan

- EC complied and discussed numerous changes to the OSRP Draft 2 and forwarded to the NJ Land Conservancy for inclusion.
- Environmental Resource Inventory (Robert Hanrahan)
 - NJ Land Conservancy is working on ERI and should have a draft to us by the beginning of April.
 - NJ land conservancy will create a final version to go planning board/building department.
- Summit Avenue Open Space Land Purchase/Trail (Robert Hanrahan/Chris Roche)
 - We are waiting to hear from Peter from the trail conference to provide a quote for a plan for the trail.
- Bicycle and Walking Plan (Antonio Vozzolo)
 - Working on arranging for a DOT representative to come to Montvale to meet.
 - Looking toward mid-April/early May.
- Tree City Signage (Robert Hanrahan)
 - R. Preston and R. Hanrahan took pictures of specified site location and forwarded them to the DPW for the installation of 6 signs.
- 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) – no news to report.
- Repair of Environmental Learning Center, trail discussion (Robert Hanrahan)
 - The trail is in good shape but in need of minor repairs/maintenance.
 - R. Hanrahan will request assistance from EC or community members in repairing floor boards.
- Category One, Riparian Zone and Wetland Protection Ordinance Discussion (Robert Hanrahan)
 - We do have a draft ordinance.
 - R. Hanrahan states an ordinance will assist in enforcing wetland zone protections.
 - Currently, protections are enforced at a State level only.
- Sustainable Jersey
 - L. Skoglund and E. Riccardi will report at the next meeting on what the EC has already accomplished that will earn credit toward achieving Sustainable Jersey certification.
 - There are different levels of achievement that qualify towns to realize grant money.
 - Different grants require varying levels of Sustainable NJ certification.

Council Liaison Report – Chris Roche – No news to report.

Planning Board Report – Bob Zitelli

- Spring Valley Road and Grand Avenue
 - Developer wants to build 19 residences, 16 single family and 1 three-family.
 - Plan does not fit into any of Montvale’s current zoning.
 - Area is zoned for 1 acre homes.
 - 137 variances submitted initially. Developer made significant changes and reduced variance requests to 7.
 - Most residents in area are not supportive of this development.

R. Zitelli will ask the Planning Board if the EC can review all permits submitted moving forward.

Adjournment - A motion to close was made by R. Zitelli and seconded by M. Jensen.

Next EC Meeting will be on Monday, April 17, 2023

