

**Meeting of the Montvale Environmental Commission  
12 Mercedes Drive, Montvale, NJ  
Council Chambers at 7:45 pm**

**February 8, 2016**

Chairman Vogt called the meeting of the Environmental Commission to order at 7:45 pm. adequate notice of this meeting was provided to The Record and 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).

The roll call attendance was: W. Vogt (Chairman, P), P. Cohen (Vice-Chairman, P), W. Antczak (P), D. Eichhorn (A), R. Hanrahan (P), R. Johnson (P), R. Preston (P), L. Skoglund (P), J. Russo (Secretary, P).

Also in attendance was: Council Liaison Weaver & Mayor Ghassali.

**Approval of the Minutes from the January 18, 2016 Meeting**

A motion to approve the minutes from the January 18<sup>th</sup> meeting was made by L. Skoglund and seconded by R. Preston. The minutes were approved & will be posted on the website.

Chairman Vogt welcomed newly appointed alternate member, Richard Johnson and Mayor Ghassali to the Environmental Commission.

**Communication/Correspondence** -There was no new correspondence.

**Natural Resource Inventory Committee Report**—No update.

**Environmental Commission Issues List** – No update.

**Applicants**

**LC Developers, LLC; 69 Montvale Avenue (Block 712/Lot 9)**

The applicant was not in attendance to present the landscaping plans (revision date: 11/5/15) for a single family home. The new plans were reviewed by the members and were found to satisfy all Borough Code requirements. There is minimum landscaping because the lot size is 100x100. A recommendation to approve memo will be emailed to the PB secretary.

**LSREF4Rebound, LLC; 5 Paragon Drive (Block 2002/ Lot 3)**

Mr. Vorghi presented the landscaping plans (revision date: 1/28/16) for a 125,000 sq. ft. office building. The parking lot will be re-striped to accommodate 560 parking spaces & 12 handicapped spaces. There is no change to the parking lot landscaping. Landscaping will be added to the front of the building, on side of access into the building and the west side. The plans consist of Pear trees, which have limited life expectancy, therefore, Chairman Vogt asked for the species to be changed. Chairman Vogt asked why Pin Oaks, which produce acorns was chosen to be planted in the parking lots. (Chairman Vogt said they are viewed as undesirable in that setting). Mr. Vorghi said that Pin Oaks currently exist along the side and he wanted it to be consistent. One tree on the plan requires identification. Mr. Vorghi will correct the error & change the Pear trees to specie. A recommendation to approve memo will be emailed to the PB secretary.

### **Meeting Opened to the Public**

A motion to open the meeting to the Public was made by L. Skoglund and seconded by R. Hanrahan. Public did not wish to be heard.

### **Meeting Closed to the Public**

A motion to close the meeting to the Public was made by L. Skoglund and seconded by R. Preston.

### **Planning Board Liaison Report**

Chairman Vogt reported on the following:

- The Planning Board approved several use permit applications.
- A resolution for 225 Summit Avenue for major soil permit was approved.
- A resolution for 225 Summit Avenue for a 5,000 sq. ft. expansion was approved.
- A waiver for 225 Summit Avenue was granted for two detached trailers, which will be used temporarily, until a CO is approved. The landscaping will not be disturbed.
- Draft of the Tree Ordinance was reviewed.

### **Inspection** - none

### **New Business**

Mayor Ghassali thanked the EC members for their time and dedication to Montvale. He said that currently the process regarding how plans are reviewed requires modification. Presently, Chairman Vogt previews the landscaping plans prior to the applicant appearance before the EC. The landscape architects would either in person or by phone discuss the necessary modifications of the landscaping plans to be in compliance with the borough code. In addition, Chairman Vogt verifies that the standard format in which the species and botanical names are written is acceptable. This process began several years ago to reduce the amount of time and or the frequency the applicant would be required to appear before the Commission for an approval. Mayor Ghassali believes this is not a true representation of the entire Commission's input and may be perceived as less than 100% transparency. Vice-Chairman Cohen said it was done like this for years because Chairman Vogt is more knowledgeable in regards to landscaping than the Commission members. The EC members review the plans, ask question and then vote.

The process was changed at this month's meeting and will continue to be done as per Mayor Ghassali's request for next two months. After that time, the EC will report to Mayor Ghassali how the changes are affecting the applicant's time frame. In addition, the EC will not approve/disapprove the landscape plans; instead provide a recommendation via memo to the Planning Board Secretary. The PB will reserve the right based upon the EC's recommendation to either approve or disapprove. The EC secretary has designed a new form to reflect the changes in the reporting process.

Mayor Ghassali spoke regarding the additional projects the EC may be interested in getting involved in. At a recent Pascack Valley Mayor's meeting there was discussion regarding a walking path connecting several neighboring boroughs. There would be grant money available to help with this project. The details are still developing, but this is a project that may require landscaping and the Mayor would like to count on the EC for their assistance. Mayor Ghassali is interested in forming an outdoor reading library or a community garden. These projects are in the preliminary stages and once more information becomes available the EC will be asked for input.

Mayor Ghassali said all the borough social media, including *My Montvale* newsletter will be undergoing changes soon. A new webpage will be launched in a few months which will generate the information for an electronic newsletter.

R. Hanrahan said he would like the EC to contribute articles to the borough newsletter. The instructions for submission will be sent to Chairman Vogt & J. Russo. J. Russo will then forward to the members starting next month.

Montvale Clean Community is scheduled for the spring and R. Hanrahan asked the EC if any of them are interested in taking an active role in the town wide clean-up. Once more information is available, members will be notified. R. Hanrahan will design a flyer for this event.

Chairman Vogt said that with the changes he is unsure whose responsibility field inspections will be under. Chairman Vogt sent an email to PB Chairman DePinto regarding this matter. Chairman Vogt will report back to the EC once he given new directions.

### **Old Business**

The Environmental Commission's Alternate #2 position remains vacant.

### **Adjournment**

Chairman Vogt asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was made by R. Preston and seconded by L. Skoglund. The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 21. Members will be emailed in the event the meeting is cancelled. The agenda will be posted on the Borough website. Members are reminded to notify Chairman Vogt and the Secretary if they are unable to attend.