

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

March 21, 2016

Mayor Ghassali called the meeting of the Environmental Commission to order at 7:45 pm. 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).

The roll call attendance: W. Antczak (P), D. Eichhorn (A), R. Hanrahan (P), R. Johnson (P), R. Preston (P), L. Skoglund (P), J. Russo (Secretary, P), Acting Chairman Mayor Ghassali.

Also in attendance: Councilwoman LaMonica

Approval of the Minutes from the February 8, 2016 Meeting

A motion to approve the minutes from the February 8th meeting was made by R. Hanrahan and seconded by L. Skoglund. The minutes were approved & will be posted on the website.

Communication/Correspondence - No correspondence.

Natural Resource Inventory Committee Report - No update.

Environmental Commission Issues List - No update.

Applicant- None

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

D. Teagno reported that several use permits were issued.

New Business

Mayor Ghassali said the EC will be asked to become involved in planting of native trees along a walking trail connecting Montvale to Park Ridge. More details to follow.

Mayor Ghassali invited the EC to the town hall meeting which will be held on March 31 at borough hall. Perhaps a representative from the commission would like to be present to answer questions from the residents. Members can email Mayor Ghassali if they are interested in participating.

R. Hanrahan asked if informal meetings between members can be scheduled. Mayor Ghassali explained not if they meet under EC, but if sub-committee is formed it would be permitted. Mayor Ghassali will contact the borough attorney regarding the legality.

Old Business

The Environmental Commission's Alternate #2 position remains vacant. Position of Chairman and Vice Chairman are currently open. Mayor Ghassali said that he will appoint the existing members for these openings. Mayor Ghassali suggested that the Chairman and Vice Chairman appointments can rotate annually.

The EC members agreed that they would like to have a presence in *MyMontvale*. The first article that will be submitted will be a description of the commission and the projects that they will be involved in during the year. The goal is to have an article ready for the May newsletter. The secretary will contact the members next week for a draft of an article and the commission will decide on the final submission. The suggestions for future articles included but are not limited to; installation of solar panels, radon testing, filtering of water, limiting use of disposal food store plastic bags, disease of black walnut, and education regarding the value of mature trees.

The EC members had attended a PB meeting regarding the pending tree ordinance. Comments will be gathered and submitted to borough planner. The ordinance will be adopted by Mayor and Council and fees will be set by the governing body. Mission of the tree ordinance is to prohibit clear cutting and to have a tree replacement program. The open discussion was about the percentage of trees that could be removed from a developed and un-developed site. Tree replacement and the definitions of terms. R. Johnson and R. Hanrahan had forwarded their suggestions to D. Teagno, a member of tree ordinance committee. All suggestions will be forwarded to Borough Planner, Mrs. Green. All suggestions from the EC members will be retained in a file in the EC office.

Mayor Ghassali said the tree ordinance needs to be adopted and the ordinance can be amended as new circumstances arise after adoption. Once the ordinance is adopted the borough will review the ordinance and know where adjustments are required. The governing body wants the ordinance to be simple and not harsh. Enforcement of the ordinance will be the responsibility of Mr. Fette, Code Enforcer; however, the EC will remain involved in reviewing requests for tree removal and replacement. A definition of a 'year' is not clear whether it is a calendar year or a twelve (12) month period. Establishing a data base and having it maintained was discussed. At this time a tree data base does not exist, and there is no immediate plan to develop one. D. Teagno and Council Liaison La Monica will discuss the feedback from tonight's meeting with the tree ordinance committee and borough planner. R. Hanrahan said he would like to start with Montvale registering the large tree in front of School #2 located on Grand Avenue on the National Tree Registry.

Adjournment

Mayor Ghassali 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 April 18. 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 the Secretary if they are unable to attend.