

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION AGENDA

Meeting Date/Time:

Monday, September 18, 2023 – 7:45pm

Meeting Location: Zoom and Borough Hall**Join Zoom Meeting:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83714689419?pwd=ay9pRUI1cHU1cnkrQys4VUVDTFEYUT09>

Join by phone/Dial by your location +1 929 436 2866 US

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

Approval of Minutes – August 21, 2023 - A motion to approve was made by L. Skoglund and seconded by L. DePellegrini.

Meeting Opened to Public Agenda & Non – Agenda Items – A motion to open was made by Lisa DePellegrini and seconded by Lisa Skolund.

Meeting Closed to Public – A motion to close was made by Lisa Skoglund and seconded by Lisa DePellegrini.

Communication/Correspondence:

- Girl scouts leader contacted R. Hanrahan about installing bat houses in Montvale.
 - R. Hanrahan suggested a location at Huff Pond where there is an existing pole.
- Lantern fly traps
 - The traps at Huff Pond are full of flies. They are designed to be emptied.
 - Cost for additional traps is \$ 29.00 per trap.
 - Commission members agree that the prevalence of lantern flies has decreased in past weeks.
- Tree work
 - A tree had fallen at the environmental trail. The tree was removed within 2 days of notification.
 - A tree fell across Pascack Brook which the town paid to have removed.

New Business:

- Natural Resource Damage Discussion (NRD)
 - We are working on compiling a list of projects that can be funded with NRD funds.
 - Suggestions:
 - Environmental Learning Center
 - Needs replacement of rotted boards.
 - We would like to install placards with QR codes that provide supplemental information.
 - Trail head entrance could have a QR code with a learning self-guided tour.
 - Connect Memorial Trail to the Inter-Municipal trail
 - To connect in front of the firehouse across Grand Avenue
 - Will include a pedestrian crossing and connect to a property that is wetlands.
 - Create a wooden walkway all the way over to Mill Pond.
 - Cost would be approximately \$ 60,000 without acquisition of the parcel (would be an additional \$ 200,000), that would have to be a borough acquisition for us to use it.
 - A traffic light system with a wireless remove would cost approximately \$ 45,000.
 - L. Baldanza suggests an easement rather than a purchase because the property is unbuildable. A more economical option.
 - L. Baldanza suggests putting crosswalk closer to Mill Pond, because the sight lines are poor by the firehouse.
 - R. Hanrahan states that even though it is wetlands it is still considered a buyable parcel. There is some advantage to buying and designating a property.
 - R. Zitelli suggests a pedestrian bridge over Grand Avenue for safety.
 - Open Space Preservation of Swim Club Property
 - We could use the space for a community garden.
 - We did a lot of research on this suggestion and the hesitation of moving forward lies in the cost of project and long term management.
 - There have been 4 to 5 community members who stepped forward to manage it.
 - Design and create a gazebo or a pavilion which can be used by residents for get -togethers, parties, etc.
 - Open space preservation of Borough owned Section of DePierro's farm.
 - Cost would be approximately \$ 300,000 to design and create public access areas.
 - Wetland preservation and trail design
 - Summit Avenue - engineering design and DEP applications would cost approximately \$ 30,000 to \$ 40,000.
 - There are a few properties in town that are 90% wetlands; objective in purchasing them is to supplement the affordable housing percentage.
- Day in the Park – Postponed to September 30 (discussion of new handout)
 - E. Riccardi will confirm our attendance with the recreation department.
 - L. Skoglund and R. Hanrahan can attend

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- Review of Planning Board draft ERI changes and suggestions
 - September 13th updated draft from B. Davis included:
 - Typographical changes
 - Map units add definition
 - Tree City Designation
 - EC category one waterway article as basis for documentation
 - Two tributaries will be marked on the map and not counted as individual waterways
 - footnotes as well as hyperlinks
- 14 Summit Avenue
 - Tree removal proposal.
 - Homeowner is installing a pool.
 - Currently working with the building department.
 - R. Hanrahan spoke with C. Gruber and both agree that the tree removals requested does not require an approval.
- Montvale Grove- Environmental impact discussion and feedback
 - Two parcels of property that are across the street from Akers Avenue.
 - There should be two setbacks on the plan around each lot; proposed tree preservation zone should be around each lot rather than both together as presented.
 - No plans for affordable housing units.
 - Significant area of the lots lies within category 1 Riparian Zone and FHS SWARPA (both lots are also encumbered with a vernal habitat); 2 streams
 - When category one waterways are piped the riparian zone disappears around the piped area.
 - Waterway significantly encroaches the proposed development.
 - 250 trees shown to be removed all within this zone.
 - All proposed disturbance must be minimized and avoided.
 - All cleared or cut vegetation must be replaced; disturbance mitigated.
 - Approval of the plan is subject to DEP approval; our concern is the waterways in the 300 ft. area.
 - Development as currently presented is 100 percent within the vernal habitat.
 - R. Hanrahan will develop a short environmental impact document from the EC to the planning board.

Old Business:

- Community Project Update (Lisa De Pellegrini)
 - Update on Bat Education Project (Lisa De Pellegrini)
 - Original plan was to build the houses but we did not collect enough wood.
 - Decided to look for ready-made bat houses.
 - Update on Pollinator Garden Project (Lisa De Pellegrini)
 - L. DePellegrini reached out to the girl scout leaders.
 - We are looking for ideas on educational projects.
 - Raptor trust
 - Botanical Garden Presentation

- Rain barrel presentation
- Pascack Trail/Huff Pond Update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - Brian Lanius met with R.Hanrhan to discuss building a trench.
- Montvale Plastic Bag Recycling Update (Randy Preston/Mairead Jensen)
 - Suggestion to set up a time frame and education plan for community members (newsletters /websites) to inform them that the program will be ending. We need 3 to 6 months lead time to full termination of the program.
 - All the supermarkets now accept plastic bags for recycling.
 - Anticipated end of program will be March 2024.
 - We need to put signs in Borough Hall and at the recycling center.
 - We can put a message on the billboard at Memorial park.
 - R. Hanrahan will discuss with Rich Campanelli, the Superintendent of Public Works.
- Summit Avenue Open Space Land Purchase/Trail (Robert Hanrahan/Chris Roche) No news to report.
- Bicycle and Walking Plan (Antonio Vozzolo)
 - Currently gathering materials to facilitate an application.
- New Community Center discussion (Robert Hanrahan/Chris Roche) No news to report.
- Repair of Environmental Learning Center, trail discussion (Robert Hanrahan) No news to report.
- Category One, Riparian Zone and Wetland Protection Ordinance Discussion (Robert Hanrahan) No news to report.
- Sustainable Jersey (Lisa Skoglund) No news to report.
- Electric Vehicle Update (Antonio Vozzolo)
 - Currently gathering materials to facilitate an application.
- Community Garden Update (Robert Hanrahan) – No news to report.
- Tree Ordinance – update (Robert Hanrahan) – No news to report.

Council Liaison Report – Chris Roche – Absent

Planning Board Report – Bob Zitelli

- The last few planning board meetings involved use permits (when a tenant in a rental property changes).

Adjournment

A motion to close was made by L. Skoglund and seconded by L. Baldanza all in favor stating aye

Next EC Meeting will be on Monday, October 16, 2023