

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date/Time:

Monday, October 16, 2023 – 7:45pm

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

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85906847126?pwd=QmtwSlBSVHZvMTRWeXIrcKxNWUxXQT09>

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

Approval of Minutes – September 18, 2023 - A motion to approve was made by R. Preston and seconded by R. Zitelli.

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

- Elena Morrison is in attendance from the public.

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

Communication/Correspondence:

- Girl Scout troop has been in touch regarding installing a new bat house at Huff Pond. Thank you to R. Preston for removing the old bat houses which is in a poor state.
- Pascack Hills High School students want to organize a clean-up. More information to follow.
- Budget Discussion 2024
 - Plans for a similar budget to 2023.
 - Only major expense is the repair of the outlet for Huff Pond. The sluice is overflowing several times per year.
 - Cost to address the issues is approximately 30K which would include a permit, engineer drawing, a concrete frame and larger sluice.
 - L. Baldanza suggests the repair if the Environmental Learning Center be included in the 2024 budget.

New Business:

- Natural Resource Damage Discussion

- R. Hanrahan suggests adding the repair of the Huff Pond Outlet to projects eligible for funding.
- We are including a large expense for the remediation of the DePiero property. Possible uses of the property include a new community center and community garden.
- The attorney has been retained by the borough and has already drafted a letter on behalf of the borough with a position statement.
- We want to be named in the litigation so that we are heard.
- Montvale Grove- Discussion of proposed tree removal
 - R. Hanrahan sent a letter with recommendations to the planning department.
- Day in the Park – Recap
 - Thank you to Antonio Vozzolo, Lisa Skoglund, Regina Hanrahan and Colin Hanrahan who all helped with the event, speaking with the public, setting up and breaking down booth.

Old Business:

- Community Project Update (Lisa De Pellegrini)
 - Update on Bat Education Project (Lisa De Pellegrini) – No news to report.
 - Pollinator Garden
 - L. DePellegrini spoke to the Girl Scout leader and she confirmed the scouts will maintain the garden.
 - Removal of the fence surrounding the garden would facilitate easier access for maintenance and clean-up.
 - L. DePellegrini will recommend some plants to the girl scouts that are deer resistant.
 - L. DePellegrini suggests using a trampoline frame over the garden as a support for plants to grow up high.
 - R. Hanrahan states that the seniors shed needs to be replaced. There is interest by the seniors to put the new shed in the location of the pollinator garden.
- Pascack Trail/Huff Pond Update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - R. Hanrahan, L. Baldanza, and L. Skoglund met with Steve Rich to discuss completing the work at the beginning of the trail head.
 - Environmental Commission members are in agreement with moving forward with the work as proposed by Steve Rich.

A roll call vote was made and approved the proposal of work to be complete by Steve Rich as follows: Lou Baldanza (yes), Lisa De Pellegrini(yes), Chairman Robert Hanrahan(yes), Mairead Jensen(yes), Randall Preston(yes), Lisa Skoglund(yes), Antonio Vozzolo (not present for vote) Michelle Zink-Jojic(yes), Planning Board Liaison/Member Robert Zitelli(yes) & Council Liaison Christopher Roche(not present for vote)

- Montvale Plastic Bag Recycling Update (Randy Preston/Mairead Jensen)
 - The flow of incoming plastic bags has slowed down.
 - We will notify the community in November that the recycling project will end in January.
- Electric Vehicle Update (Antonio Vozzolo) - Absent
- Community Garden Update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - Continued interest in moving forward with the project by the Mayor.
 - We have a few residents who want to help.
- Open Spaces and Recreation Plan (Mairead Jensen/Robert Hanrahan)
 - The borough is moving forward with an alternate plan.

- Will be using the work already completed by the NJ Land Conservancy.
- Environmental Resource Inventory (Robert Hanrahan)
 - R. Hanrahan found a few more items to be corrected.
 - Anticipates the inventory will be adopted by the planning board soon.
- Summit Avenue Open Space Land Purchase/Trail (Robert Hanrahan/Chris Roche)
 - Trail work will be considered for next year's fiscal budget.
 - We are waiting for the completion of the water tower that is already planned for that property.
- Bicycle and Walking Plan (Antonio Vozzolo) - absent
- New Community Center discussion (Robert Hanrahan/Chris Roche) absent
- Repair of Environmental Learning Center, trail discussion (Robert Hanrahan)
 - Thank you L. Baldanza and L. Skoglund for meeting with our DPW and pointing out trees that are in bad shape.
 - L. Baldanza met with R. Campanelli and marked 10 trees that need to come down.
 - L. Baldanza suggests putting up a sign at the start of the Environmental Learning Center pointing to the walking path along Phillips Parkway and Grand Avenue.
- Category One, Riparian Zone and Wetland Protection Ordinance Discussion (Robert Hanrahan) - No news to report.
- Sustainable Jersey (Lisa Skoglund) – No news to report.
- Tree Ordinance – update (Robert Hanrahan) - No news to report.
- Mapping tool that shows potentially regulated land on properties
 - An overlay to an existing tax map.
 - It can include wetlands and category one waterways.
 - A proactive tool available to the borough and residents.

Council Liaison Report – Chris Roche – Absent

Planning Board Report – Bob Zitelli – No news to report.

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

Next EC Meeting will be on Monday, November 13, 2023