

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date/Time:

Monday, December 11, 2023 – 7:45pm

Meeting Location: Zoom and Borough Hall

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88594424256?pwd=czd3ZmJIUk1TZTBiYi8zNUJ1dUIMdz09>

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(A), Planning Board Liaison/Member Robert Zitelli(A) & Council Liaison Christopher Roche(P)

Approval of Minutes – November 13, 2023 - A motion to approve was made by L. Skoglund and seconded by L. Baldanza.

Meeting Opened to Public Agenda & Non – Agenda Items - A motion to open was made by L. Skoglund and seconded by L. Baldanza.

- Dave Swenson, Montvale resident, of 32 Kinderkamack Road is present.
 - D. Swenson was at the last planning board meeting and stated there was a lot of discussion regarding potential building of low income housing at 30 Kinderkamack Road.
 - D. Swenson stated that there was a large contingent of local homeowners at that planning board meeting who were in attendance to voice their opinion against the construction of the new facility.
 - D. Swenson stated his concern about the impact the facility will have on the surrounding homes, traffic and environment (Muddy Brook).
 - R. Hanrahan responds that the proposed plan has not been submitted to the Environmental Commission yet but we will likely have it presented for review in January, 2024.
 - R. Hanrahan states that we post the agenda for the meeting on the borough website, Motvale.org, and asks D. Swenson to look to the January 8th agenda for confirmation of the review of plans.
 - R. Hanrahan confirms that Muddy brook is a Category One waterway which supports drinking water and wildlife.

Meeting Closed to Public - A motion to close was made by L. Baldanza and seconded by L. DePellegrini.

Communication/Correspondence:

- PHHS Interact Club contacted R. Hanrahan regarding service projects.
 - M. Jensen expressed interest in helping to facilitate and R. Hanrahan will help to coordinate a meeting.
 - R. Hanrahan will suggest a clean-up along the bank of Pascack Brook after storms.
 - R. Hanrahan will suggest a project to replenish mulch on Pascack trail.

New Business:

- Tree City Application – E. Riccardi will follow up.

Old Business:

- Community Project Update (Lisa De Pellegrini) – No news to report.
- Pascack Trail/Huff Pond Update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - The trash rack gets clogged periodically. Please notify Ellen if you see it needs attendance and she will submit a work order to the DPW.
 - Suggestion to submit an “open” work order to clean the trash rack out after every significant storm. (This is a good long term solution)
 - Huff Pond inlet and outlet needs to be redesigned. Budget discussion will be addressed on January (8th). Engineering will be required to include design and ground stabilization. Estimated cost of project is \$ 30,000.00.
- Montvale Plastic Bag Recycling - Update on project wind down (Randy Preston/Mairead Jensen)
 - We will notify the community that collection is ending in Montvale and residents should bring plastic bags directly to Wegmans or local supermarkets who support this recycling.
 - Thank you to Randy, Mairead, Bob and Ellen for maintaining the program.
 - We already received 6 benches and have enough collected to earn 1 more bench.
 - We will print signage for posting at collection sites to include “wind down” notification and schedule.
 - L Skoglund states that we did a great job of informing residents about plastic bag recycling and were successful in creating a shift in behavior.
- Electric Vehicle Update (Antonio Vozzolo)
 - Proposal of 4 different locations to include 6 or more lower level chargers
 - Potential locations include the Police Department, Memorial Park near Senior Center, LaTrenta and the DPW.
 - Police Department would require a higher level charging capability.
 - Questions exist regarding cost, 3rd party installation and engineering.
 - A. Vozzolo suggests putting out for bid so multiple companies can provide estimates.
 - A. Vozzolo is working on possibly procuring electric vehicles for the borough. It will make sense to have a charger for these vehicles.
- Community Garden Update (Robert Hanrahan) – No news to report.
- Bicycle and Walking Plan (Antonio Vozzolo)

- Currently gathering materials to make application.
 - Requests participation from other EC members on this large project.
- New Community Center discussion (Robert Hanrahan/Chris Roche) No news to report.
- Repair of Environmental Learning Center, trail discussion (Robert Hanrahan/Michelle Zink-Jojic)
 - Thank you Lou, Michelle and Ellen for meeting this past Saturday and evaluating the current state of the trail and potential improvements.
 - Moss is creating a slippery surface as it regrows each year. We will address with bleach and water. Very effective solution. Some of the moss will need to be scraped up. Potentially a community service project for the boy scouts.
 - Evaluation for structural integrity – We won't request a capital expense for a new walkway this year. We will repair areas in need. We have enough in budget to handle replacing boards for the next few years. We use pressure treated boards that last 12 to 40 years.
 - The project initially started in 2004, with plans completed in 2007 and work completed in 2010.
 - Suggestion to remove trash bins except one at trail head. E. Riccardi will submit a work order.
 - Suggestion for a Kiosk at Trail Head. R. Preston and R. Hanrahan will approach the boy scouts with this project.
 - Kiosk could hold information relating to a nature walk and other places that you can walk to.
 - Suggestion for signage on Philips Parkway and DePiero Drive identifying the trail. Some people don't know the trail exists.
 - Benches are already installed. L. Baldanza, R. Preston and R. Hanrahan will assess structural integrity.
 - Suggestion to install small signage at trail exit to include QR code bringing visitors to kiosk information.
 - When trail is fully repaired suggestion to promote it in Mayor's newsletter and email.
 - Suggestion for a children's scavenger hunt on the trail and live feed to view wildlife.
 - Suggestion to reach out to local business for funding of work on trail and help with repairs.
- Category One, Riparian Zone and Wetland Protection Ordinance Discussion (Robert Hanrahan) – No news to report.
- Sustainable Jersey (Lisa Skoglund)
 - Suggestion to have other members review project for potential.
- Tree Ordinance – update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - Tree ordinance was modified to better describe bamboo on property and delineate who is responsible for what maintenance. J. Voytus wrote revisions and R. Hanrahan reviewed it.
 - Tree Removal during demolition - Look back period will be increased to 12 months from 4 months.
 - Fine for tree removal in violation of ordinance will increase from \$500 to \$ 750.00 per tree.
 - Responsibility will lie with the homeowner and the contractor.

- The DEP wants all the municipalities to have stronger ordinances. Montvale sent an email to DEP with our ordinance asking for feedback.
- The exemptions of the affordable housing requirement can't be in the ordinance if we want to meet the state requirements.
- NJ Model Tree Ordinance and sub-committee
 - We need a subcommittee that includes community members.
- Natural Resource Damage – update – No news to report.
- 2024 Environmental Commission Budget
 - Addition of outlet on Huff Pond
 - Otherwise follow last year's budget

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

Planning Board Report – Bob Zitelli (absent)

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

Next EC Meeting will be on Monday, January 8, 2024