

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date/Time: Monday, April 15, 2024 – 7:45pm

Meeting Location: Zoom and Borough Hall

Join Zoom Meeting

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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(A), Antonio Vozzolo(A) Michelle Zink-Jojic(P), Planning Board Liaison/Member Sherwin Tsai(P) & Council Liaison Christopher Roche(P)

Approval of Minutes – March 18, 2024 - A motion to approve was made by R. Preston and seconded by L. DePellegrini.

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

- In attendance from the public: Malika Mustafokulova
 - Malika is an 11th grade student at Bergen Tech with interest in community gardens. She would like to help increase the awareness of community gardens and does so with her website about sprouting community gardens. She is interested in working with the Environmental Commission to develop the concept in Montvale. She will record a documentary about the process. We also have a few residents who would like to participate in the process as well. The location of the community garden will be on the DePiero property.
 - C. Roche states that the DePiero family will continue using the property through the end of this year.
 - R. Hanrahan will contact the DePiero family to see if they will make an exception for this use case.
 - S. Tsai states that this could be a good project for future eagle scouts.
- William Wallace of 25 Dogwood Lane in attendance at the meeting via phone.

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

Communication/Correspondence:

- Bergen County sent the EC a commitment to donate minnows to Huff pond. The State DEP may donate fish as well. Sunfish will not be here before June. There will be an additional delivery in the fall.
C. Roche states that Frank DiPalma, OEM Coordinator, is working on stocking the pond with fish.

New Business:

- Review of Planning Board Submission
 - Spring Valley Road Development
 - Waterways, buffer shown and vernal habitat are not shown on the submitted plans.
 - There should be some notation in the plans that states there are two category one waterways within 300 feet of the property.
 - Engineer's checklist should be more specific to category one waterways. R. Hanrahan asks S. Tsai to bring this to the attention of the planning board.
 - The trees within the protected zone are removed from the plan. Per the tree ordinance compensatory planting of trees is allowed when it is impossible or impracticable to retain the trees being removed. In the case that it is possible to leave the trees, compensatory plantings shall be required for each live tree being removed with a 1:1 replacement ratio.
 - Suggestion to substitute cottonwood trees for some of the maple trees due to their ability to soak up a lot of water.

Roll call Vote: As per ordinance 369-4, the EC observed that all trees in the preservation zone on subject plan C-02 are designated to be removed. As per 369-4, only trees that must be removed because it being impractical or impossible should remain and applicant is requested to resubmit updated plans after adjustment for EC review as follows: Lou Baldanza (yes), Lisa De Pellegrini(yes), Chairman Robert Hanrahan(yes), Mairead Jensen(yes), Randall Preston(yes), Lisa Skoglund(A), Antonio Vozzolo (A) Michelle Zink-Jojic(yes), Planning Board Liaison/Member Sherwin Tsai(yes) & Council Liaison Christopher Roche(abstain)

- Clean Up Day– April 20, 2024
 - The trees arrived in dormant state on Saturday.
 - We have 150 trees to give to the community; 100 white pines and 50 red maples.
 - Bergen County is donating 80 to 100 shirts, pick up sticks, gloves and garbage bags.
 - M. Jensen, R. Preston, L. DePellegrini, L. Skoglund can help with clean-up day.

Old Business:

- Community Project Update (Lisa De Pellegrini)
 - Lourdes Osorio from the NJBG will present to the community on Pollinator Gardens. She works for the Laurel Wood Arboretum and is the creator of the Native Plant Channel on YouTube.
 - Date: May 7th at 7:00 p.m.
 - We need a flyer with a QR code.
 - E. Riccardi will reserve the Senior Center and prepare the flyer.
- Pascack Trail/Huff Pond Update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - A “shout out” to Boy Scout Troop 33 who laid mulch on the trail extending it by 100 feet.
 - The high pressure bubbler aerator is in the pond but not the fountain aerator. A fair amount of silt came through the pipe.
 - R. Hanrahan met with Jamie Giurintano (engineer) to talk about stabilization over the pipe. He recommended installing biodegradable mats for stabilization at Huff Pond. He also recommended repairing the outlet.
 - A large tree came down across the trail. The DEP was quick to remove it.
- Montvale Plastic Bag Recycling Update (Randy Preston/Mairead Jensen)
 - Wind down of the program is almost complete. A few more deliveries of bags are required.
- Electric Vehicle Update (Antonio Vozzolo)
 - S. Tsai states the Mayor and Council encouraged the planning board to submit comments on the current proposal.
 - C. Roche states that the proposal is tabled for 30 days pending comments from the planning board.
 - R. Hanrahan states that as an alternative start for EV charging, low cost type 2 EV chargers can be installed at the DPW and Borough Hall. They are very cost efficient for overnight charging of Borough vehicles.
 - C. Roche states that the current proposal includes a 5 year, parts and service warranty. The Borough would receive 91%, of the sales and the company would receive 9 % of the sales.
 - A grant is paying for equipment and installation.
 - It was approved by Mayor and Council.
- Community Garden Update (Robert Hanrahan) as per above
- Bicycle and Walking Plan (Antonio Vozzolo) - absent
- New Community Center discussion (Robert Hanrahan/Chris Roche) No news to report.
- Repair of Environmental Learning Center, trail discussion (Robert Hanrahan/Michelle Zink-Jojic)
 - Educational Placards
 - M. Zink-Jojic found some great placards and presented examples.
 - R. Hanrahan requested the Mayor and Council to fund the replacement of the trail. We can get scouts to help. The trail is approximately 18 years old. We will need to replace it. L. Baldanza is ready to assist.
 - L. Baldanza suggests a kiosk at the trail head as an Eagle scout project.
- Tree City Application -2023
 - The application is approved.

Council Liaison Report – Chris Roche

- April 30th is the budget presentation and final vote. The open space tax will be increasing from .5 percent to 1 percent.

Planning Board Report – Sherwin Tsai

- The planning board voted to approve the DePiero subdivision.
- The borough plans on converting it to a strawberry farm.
- There is some question of drainage issue.

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

Next EC Meeting will be on Monday, May 20, 2024