

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date/Time:

Monday, March 17, 2025 – 7:45pm

Meeting Location: Zoom and Borough Hall

Montvale Recreation is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: My Meeting

Time: Mar 17, 2025 07:45 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86907101769?pwd=68DaOgaP12Bkh3FOoo4sfeWQh8nRnX.1>

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

Approval of Minutes – February 24, 2025 - A motion to approve was made by R. Preston and seconded by M. Zink-Jojic.

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

- Jamie Rossig of 16 Highland Road is in attendance. Jamie is a student in graduate school taking a policy class and will be listening in to the meeting to gain more information about what we do. J. Rossig asks how the work we do impacts public health in our town.
 - R. Hanrahan states that water, air and sound pollution are within our purview.
 - R. Hanrahan states that we review plans for new construction and subdivisions. We highlight any state level requirements regarding the environment, including wetlands and vernal habitats and make recommendations about potential issues and violations to builders and contractors that are involved in new construction.
 - R. Hanrahan states that Montvale has 11 category one waterways (ends up in drinking water and used to carry trout and other fish) that the EC oversees.
 - L. DePellegrini states that we try to educate the people who live in town to cut down on the chemicals that they put on their lawns and encourage residents to create pollinating self-sustaining lawns.

- L. DePellegrini states that poisons that are used on rodents are killing the raptors and foxes who eat the rodents.

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

Communication/Correspondence:

- Handy and Harmon Cycle Chem. Inc. – A financial penalty was awarded for the permanent penetration that couldn't be remediated.
 - R. Hanrahan states that some remediation has already been done.
 - R. Hanrahan states that our suggestions regarding best uses for the settlement monies were submitted for consideration.
 - A. Vozzolo states that the claim was for 14 million and 10 million was awarded.
- Communication from J. Voytus regarding EC involvement in the review process of permit submissions to the building department.
 - Communication was sent out with guidance that requests the planning board involve the environmental commission when plans are initially submitted for review for approval.
 - This will increase EC involvement the review process.
- ANJEC - 2025 Fundamentals for Effective Environmental Commission Success Strategies
Date: Saturday May 3rd.
 - L. Skoglund suggests that EC members participate in this seminar.
 - R. Hanrahan states that we encourage EC members to take the training. We are members of ANJEC and there is no additional cost to be part of this training.
- ANJEC 2025 Grant Opportunity
 - M. Jensen suggested via email that we submit a request for funding toward a community garden. The EC will investigate this possibility further.
- A resident inquired about a proposal to build access from Latik Place through to the wetlands.
 - R. Preston states that the proposal for development was dropped due to the proximity to the wetlands.

New Business:

- Review of Planning Board Submissions (if applicable) – No new submissions.

Old Business:

- Community Project Update (Lisa De Pellegrini)
 - Lourdes Osorio will be presenting on Tuesday April 15, 2025. She presented to us last year on pollinator gardens and deer resident gardening. She will provide a list of other topics available for the next presentation.
 - Licensed bat educator, Joe D'Angeli, is available to present again and guide another bat walk.
 - Jim Wright of the Celery Farm and author of the Screech Owl Companion may have availability to present to us. L. DePellegrini will investigate further.
- Montvale Clean Up Day – Saturday, April 19th (Robert Hanrahan)
 - We have 100 trees (50 White Pine and 50 Red Maple) on order to give out to participants at Clean-Up Day.

- The Interact club will be participating. They have 20 members signed up to help.
- R. Hanrahan has been in contact with Bergen County for a donation of gloves, bags, t-shirts and other giveaways.
- E. Riccardi will place work order for pre-event set up and post-event breakdown.
- Pascack Trail/Huff Pond Update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - The pipe and valve in the pond that connects to the outlet is now floating. The damage is possibly due to ice and freezing.
 - Repairs can wait for summer when the pond water level goes down. We may be able to secure it with sand bags.
 - R. Hanrahan will speak to Rich Campanili on how to best repair it.
 - The inlet was again clogged. Boy Scout Troop 33 helped by cleaning it out.
 - EC member asks if this is something that can be maintained by the DPW rather than volunteers.
 - Kiera Luff (scout) has completed the new bat house.
 - She will send us a drawing indicating the final location. It will be installed within 8 feet of the current bat house on a 20 foot pole.
- Electric Vehicle Update (Antonio Vozzolo) - No news to report.
 - Much federal funding has been eliminated.
 - Future funding will be up to the state.
- Bicycle and Walking Plan (Antonio Vozzolo)
 - Application is close to completion.
 - R. Hanrahan recommends that we suggest to the Mayor and Council a new borough ordinance that includes plans for a bicycle path on future road development.
 - R. Hanrahan states that there are many towns similar to Montvale that have bicycle paths in place. They increase the safety for bicycle riders.
 - R. Hanrahan suggests to the EC members to consider drafting a simple ordinance as a starting place and that towns are adopting their own ordinances to go along with the state laws.
 - A. Vozzolo states that vehicles are currently required to give a 4 foot clearance yield to bicycles sharing the road and if that is not possible, the vehicle must stay behind the bike.
- Community Garden Update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - Suggestion to use the borough acquired DePiero property greenhouse.
 - The DePiero family is currently using the location through August 2025.
 - There is a subcommittee to discuss the use of the newly acquired property. R. Hanrahan is on the subcommittee and is ready to meet when the subcommittee schedules a meeting date.
- Repair of Environmental Learning Center, trail discussion (Robert Hanrahan/Michelle Zink-Jojic/Lou Baldanza)
 - R. Preston will help to organize the repair effort. We have the wood ready.
 - L. Baldanza states that some of the materials from the installation of the electric charging station have blown onto the trail and around the area. We will draft an email to J. Voytus bringing this to his attention and requesting a cleanup of the area.
 - L. Baldanza suggests a possible trail reroute from the stairs to around the cell tower to create another connection to the Environmental Learning Center.

- R. Hanrahan asks L. Baldanza to do a markup using google earth to depict the suggestion.
 - Hridank Shukla (scout) is working on the kiosk and will submit a drawing showing where the kiosk will be installed.
- Update on Tree City Application
 - Application has been submitted.

Council Liaison Report – Chris Roche - Absent

Planning Board Report – Sherwin Tsai

- The board is currently reviewing use permits.
- R. Hanrahan asks S. Tsai to investigate the Harmony Hills question.

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

Next EC Meeting will be on Monday, April 28, 2025