

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date/Time:

Monday, December 15, 2025 – 7:45 p.m.

Meeting Location: Zoom and Borough Hall

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82402749246?pwd=GqnWzb1fBN515io9lQ9gEISXryfKMb.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(A), Lisa Skoglund(P), Antonio Vozzolo(P), Michelle Zink-Jojic(P), Planning Board Liaison/Member Sherwin Tsai(A) & Council Liaison Christopher Roche(P)

Approval of Minutes: – November 17, 2025 - A motion to approve was made by L. Baldanza and seconded by L. Skoglund.

Meeting Opened to Public Agenda & Non – Agenda: A motion to open the meeting to the public was made by Lisa Skoglund and seconded by L. Baldanza.

Meeting Closed to Public: A motion to close the meeting to the public was made by L. Baldanza and seconded by L. Skoglund.

Communication/Correspondence:

- Grant opportunity PSE & G
 - R. Hanrahan asks EC member to volunteer to research the grant and report back to the committee.
 - We have projects that meet the criteria.
- 2025 Tree City Application
 - We have met the requirements to qualify this year and will report back with updates on the application process.
 - C. Roche reports that the 2026 Arbor Day Proclamation acknowledgment was read at the last Mayor and Council meeting.

New Business:

- Review of Planning Board Submissions
 - Veolia Property
 - A walking trail will require a parking area. There is possible access from the north but the property is privately owned.
 - C. Roche states that Veolia is focusing on building the water tower. A trail and parking area will come at a later date in the development of the property. It is not part of the original plan.
 - R. Hanrahan states that we should inform the planning board that a trail drawing with parking is needed.

- L. Baldanza states that a public access hiking trail would be a great opportunity for Montvale residents.

Old Business:

- Community Project Update (Lisa De Pellegrini) – No new to report.
- Pascack Trail/Huff Pond Update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - The damage to the fence (bordering Bayberry Drive) has been repaired successfully.
 - We need to provide a plaque for the eagle scout contributions to Huff Pond (Kiera Luff)
- Electric Vehicle Update (Antonio Vozzolo)
 - Incentives only exist for consumers/homeowner.
 - The State of New Jersey has not made any recent announcements.
- Bicycle and Walking Plan (Antonio Vozzolo)
 - Working on collecting plans to circulate to the committee.
- Community Garden Update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - 8 x 4 garden beds with 2 feet of space between plots.
 - 3 foot aisles will allow for ADA accessibility.
 - Initial installation will be 40 garden beds.
 - A fence is required to keep deer out of the garden which will be a major expenses. It was discussed and recommended that an 8 foot fence will be sufficient rather than a 12 foot fence.
 - L.Skoglund states that deer do not like to jump over a fence that obstructs their ability to see through it.
 - We will need to budget for compost and an entry gate.
 - R. Hanrahan requested a proposal from Anchor Fencing for a fence with an entry gate that will allow for a vehicle to enter for things like dumping soil, mulch, etc.
 - We could consider building a covered pavilion. It would make lot of sense to have a restroom, storage and an area for educational purposes.
 - A seasonal fee of approximately \$50 per plot would be charged to residents.
 - We will consider suggesting approximately 5 hours of garden service per contracted plot. Tenants would assist with garden upkeep, composting, watering, etc.
 - We will need a Community Garden subcommittee.
 - Suggestion to have a plot that the tenants take care of and the vegetable grown are donated to a food pantry.
 - The proposed budget initial budget is \$ 69,350 which include raised beds, fencing, plumbing, addition for misters, garden fabric, pea gravel, soil fertilizer, electricity, tools, etc.
 - C. Roche suggests the possibility of installing sprinklers on top of the fencing.
 - R. Hanrahan suggests the possibility of misters.
 - M. Zink-Jojic suggests purchasing utility wagons/wheelbarrows.
 - R. Hanrahan states that we will also require tools.

Roll Call Vote:

A roll call vote was made and approved to use Environmental Commission funding to purchase 40 4x8 raised garden beds. : Lou Baldanza (yes), Lisa De Pellegrini(yes), Chairman Robert Hanrahan(yes), Mairead Jensen(A), Randall Preston(A), Lisa Skoglund(yes), Antonio Vozzolo (yes) Michelle Zink-Jojic(yes), Planning Board Liaison/Member Sherwin Tsai(A), Council Liaison Christopher Roche(yes)

- Repair of Environmental Learning Center, trail discussion (Robert Hanrahan/Michelle Zink-Jojic/Lou Baldanza)
 - Thank you Lou Balandanza, Robert Hanrahan and Colin Hanrahan for replacing wood plants on the trail; they were able to accomplish a lot of required repairs.
 - We need to provide a plaque for the eagle scout contributions to the Environmental Learning Center Trail (Hridank Shukla)
 - We do have a volunteer who may do a trail map.
- Update on the Interconnect Trail Between the ELC and Wegmans
 - L. Baldanza suggests that we may be able to create a connecting trail with volunteer participation.

Council Liaison Report: – Chris Roche

- We have affordable housing on the agenda for Friday. A few groups are trying to build more multifamily housing units.
- The mayor did make request to put all the multifamily housing units on one site.

Planning Board Report: Sherwin Tsai (Absent)

Adjournment:

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

Next EC Meeting will be on Monday, January 12, 2026