

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date/Time:

Monday, February 24, 2025 – 7:45pm

Meeting Location: Zoom and Borough Hall

Time: Jan 27, 2025 07:45 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88607052830?pwd=Nl0WkwT4RZtB2rL2dtpeFab4Tlt1x.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(A), Michelle Zink-Jojic(P), Planning Board Liaison/Member Sherwin Tsai(P) & Council Liaison Christopher Roche(P)

Approval of Minutes – January 27, 2025 - A motion to approve was made by L. Baldanza and seconded by R. Preston.

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

Meeting Closed to Public - A motion to close was made by S. Tsai and seconded by C. Roche.

Communication/Correspondence:

New Business:

- Review of Planning Board Submissions (if applicable) – No new submissions to review.
- Swim Club Property
 - Steve Rich suggested building affordable housing on the property. Steve was invited to attend the EC meeting this evening but was not able to come.
 - The idea involves volunteers building one and two bedroom homes.
 - C. Roche states that the proposal should be presented to the Mayor and Council prior to the Environmental Commission.
 - C. Roche states that the property is wetlands and building on it would not be permitted.
 - R. Hanrahan states that other ideas for the property include a gazebo for public use which could support large get-togethers. R. Hanrahan shared pictures of potential gazebos.

- R. Preston suggests an area for outdoor volleyball and horseshoes. R. Preston asks if the proposal for a recreation center has progressed.
- C. Roche replies that a recreation center is currently on hold due to the borough navigating the 2025 affordable housing unit requirement. The borough is trying to acquire property for this purpose. C. Roche states that recreation department has budgeted to add a shade structure (pavilion) near Huff Pond where the playground equipment is.
- Montvale Clean Up Day – Saturday, April 19th
 - The event runs from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. We will meet at the red shed across from the fire house.
 - R. Hanrahan states that we will have to purchase the giveaway trees this year. The free-tree program was discontinued by the state. We will purchase 100 trees to give to residents who participate in the event.
 - The county will provide t-shirts, pick-up sticks and other giveaways.
 - The flyer advertising the event was submitted to the borough newsletter and is distributed in the borough lobby.
 - After the event we will submit an article to the local newspapers highlighting the work done.

Old Business:

- Community Project Update (Lisa DePellegrini)
 - Suggests sponsoring the deer resistant gardening presentation and/or the pollinator garden presentation again.
 - Suggests asking Jim Wright from the Celery Farm in Allendale to present on the effects of poisoning rodents and the bird and owl population.
 - Joe D'Angeli would love to come back to present on bats. L. DePellegrini suggests we do this in the month of May.
- Pascack Trail/Huff Pond Update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - Cherry tree planted in memory of S. Tsai's son. We look forward to seeing it bloom.
 - The inlet to the pond gets clogged with debris after every moderate rainfall. R. Hanrahan will speak to J. Voytus this week about possible solutions.
 - S. Tsai asks if the DPW can be contracted to clear the debris.
- Electric Vehicle Update (Antonio Vozzolo) Absent
- Bicycle and Walking Plan (Antonio Vozzolo) Absent
- Community Garden Update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - We will have access to the property in August.
 - We could ask for sponsors from local businesses to help fund the project.
- Repair of Environmental Learning Center, trail discussion (Robert Hanrahan/Michelle Zink-Jojic/Lou Baldanza)
 - Thank you to L. Baldanza and R. Preston for helping to plan for and prepare for the repair of the trail.
 - R. Hanrahan and R. Preston cut the replacement wood planks.
 - The date to repair the trail was cancelled due to the weather. We will come up with a new date and reschedule the work.

- Eagle Scout Project - Hridank Shukla
 - R. Hanrahan is working with Hridank to answer questions and guide the project.
- Update on Tree City Application
 - We have a first approval from the State of NJ. We are waiting for a final approval from the Arbor Day Foundation.
 - The Arbor Day Foundation asked us if we want to nominate a school for the tree campus recognition. Tim Weiland, principal of PHHS said he would be happy to be nominated.
- Update on status of Community Volunteer Form
 - Chris R. states that the volunteer form was approved.
 - J. Voytus said he would manage the form submissions.

Council Liaison Report – Chris Roche

- Council is currently working on the budget.

Planning Board Report – Sherwin Tsai – No news to report.

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

Next EC Meeting will be on Monday, March 17, 2025