

ENVIRONMENTAL MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date/Time:

Monday, May 20, 2024 – 7:45pm

Meeting Location: Zoom and Borough Hall

Topic: Environmental Commission Monthly Meeting

Time: May 20, 2024 07:45 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89702913474?pwd=WVhob0J0UXRWZUtrWmxKNE5ERzBqdz09>

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Meeting ID: 897 0291 3474

Passcode: 823062

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(A), Mairead Jensen(A), Randall Preston(P), Lisa Skoglund(P), Antonio Vozzolo(P), Michelle Zink-Jojic(P), Planning Board Liaison/Member Sherwin Tsai(P) & Council Liaison Christopher Roche(A)

Approval of Minutes – April 15, 2024 - A motion to approve was made by L. Baldanza and seconded by S. Tsai.

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

- Tom Van Dyk a resident of Montvale is present from the public.
 - T. Van Dyk states that someone moved to his neighborhood and removed all the trees in the back of the house. T. Van Dyk came to the EC meeting tonight to bring this to the attention of the EC and find out if what this neighbor is doing is environmentally sound for the Town of Montvale as well as the State of New Jersey.
 - T. Van Dyk states that he is concerned the neighbor is clear cutting the property to open up space and that he may be encroaching on town property as well. Mr. Van Dyk now has runoff in his basement which he attributes to the removal of the trees.
 - T. Van Dyk states that the building inspector is aware of what is happening.
 - According to Mr. Van Dyk the police to have intervened with cease and desist orders. A stop work order has also been issued and fines have been levied by the town.

- L. DePellegrini spoke to the owner of the property and he assured her he had the necessary permits. The piece of property to the right is an easement and the homeowner is building on it.
 - L. Baldanza states that generally when you apply for permits you are required to show a plot plan describing where you are going to disturb things. Usually the town engineer and the building inspector reviews that plan.
 - L. Skoglund states that when a person ignores the cease and desist order there has to be a stop work order issued and monetary penalties imposed.
 - A. Vozzolo states that we can follow up with the town and suggests to Mr. Van Dyk to take photographs.
 - S. Tsai will talk to the planning board as well as Collier and discuss the ramifications and remedies.
- Steve Rich Environmental Contractors (SREC)
 - Present to discuss the erosion issues with the Pascack Brook and the immediate area around Huff Pond.
 - EPA regulations prohibit us from bring in dirt or soil.
 - The lowlands are a barrier to alleviating the flooding/overflow.
 - We want to try to keep the silt and sand out of Huff Pond.
 - S. Rich discussed solutions with R. Hanrahan. S. Rich recommends repairing the area with a culvert where the pipe is exposed and installing larger rocks (12' x 12') and plants (wild raspberries) for erosion control.
 - The rocks can create a barrier where the water comes over Pascack Brook and continues down toward Huff Pond.
 - We will put the plants in between the joints of the rock to create a natural net/natural silt fence.
 - The rocks will act as a retention basin.
 - L. Baldanza suggests consulting with an engineer.

Roll call Vote: To move forward with the recommendations of Steve Rich Environmental Contractors as presented to the EC committee on May 20, 2024: Lou Baldanza (yes, but would recommend first consulting with an engineer), Lisa De Pellegrini(yes), Chairman Robert Hanrahan(absent), Mairead Jensen(absent), Randall Preston(yes), Lisa Skoglund(yes), Antonio Vozzolo (yes) Michelle ZinkJojic(yes), Planning Board Liaison/Member Sherwin Tsai(yes, but would recommend first consulting with an engineer) & Council Liaison Christopher Roche(absent)

In attendance via zoom is a resident, Megan: Present for observation.

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

Communication/Correspondence: No news to report.

New Business:

- Review of Planning Board Submissions
 - Phillips Parkway – storage unit
 - Very poor scan, especially of the planting list. Very blurry and difficult to read.
 - EC members in agreement that they are not able to make a determination based on the provided documentation
- Clean-Up Day 2024 –Recap
 - People did show up despite the weather and we were able to clean several areas around town and Huff pond. Another successful clean-up event.
- Revisions to Tree Ordinance – Discussion
 - The suggested statewide ordinance is similar to what we have had in Montvale in the past. The Montvale residents did not support it.
 - The state says if you want to cut anything down on a property a permit is required.
 - We need to speak to the town attorney to see if that is a minimum standard and if we are required to adopt that ordinance. Are the state guidelines recommended or mandated?
 - S. Tsai states that J. Giurintano of Collier recommends we confer with Chris Gruber on this matter.

Old Business:

- Community Project Update (Lisa De Pellegrini)
 - Lourdes Osorio presented to the community on pollinator gardens.
 - Helped to clarify commonly seen invasive plants growing in Montvale.
 - Residents commented on Facebook that they went to nurseries to purchase native pollinators to plant in their home gardens.
 - Next presentation will be on deer resistant planting: Monday June 10th at 7:00 p.m.
- Pascack Trail/Huff Pond Update (Robert Hanrahan) – Not present.
- Montvale Plastic Bag Recycling Update (Randy Preston/Mairead Jensen)
 - Wind down – No news to report.
- Electric Vehicle Update (Antonio Vozzolo)
 - The company will cover software updates and repairs for 5 years.
 - A. Vozzolo would like to see the contract terms.
 - If this is used for emergency vehicles will need a backup source of power. Especially for a police vehicle.

Important points to consider (from March 18, 2024 meeting):

- Location at Borough Hall. Would be used for charging of borough vehicles.
- Would be a start to building the infrastructure for electric vehicles.
- Possible security concerns. Components of units are not American made.
- Possible cyber security concern. Is there surveillance equipment in the chargers?
- Cost is funded through an Orange and Rockland grant.
- Cost if purchased through an American made company, would exceed 114K.
- Do we have any research to refer to the viability of this equipment?

- Concern over access to non-residents for charging use. Should it be restricted to borough use only?
 - Does the borough have any input on the cost charged to individuals who use it?
 - We currently don't have any vehicles in our fleet that could use the charger. Are there any grants for funding of vehicles?
 - Could it be installed at the DPW?
 - EC would like to present their research on EV's to the Mayor and Council.
 - Contractual information is required to make a recommendation on this proposal.
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- Community Garden Update (Robert Hanrahan) – Not present.
 - Bicycle and Walking Plan (Antonio Vozzolo) – No news to report.
 - New Community Center discussion (Robert Hanrahan/Chris Roche) – Not present.
 - Repair of Environmental Learning Center, trail discussion (Robert Hanrahan/Michelle Zink-Jojic)
 - Educational Placards
 - L. Baldanza,, R. Hanrahan and M. Zink-Jojic met with an eagle scout and discussed repairing boards, trimming brush, and cleaning debris. Hopeful this will be a summer project for the scout.

Council Liaison Report – Chris Roche – Not present.

Planning Board Report – Sherwin Tsai

- Proposed ERI has been approved by Mayor and Council.
- EV ordinance - The council wants comments from the planning board – No indications of setbacks. Suggested to amend to 100 ft. setback.

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

Next EC Meeting will be on Monday, June 17, 2024