

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date/Time:

Monday, June 17, 2024 – 7:45pm

Meeting Location: Zoom and Borough Hall

Join Via Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83103662281?pwd=wD90iUtoIktYdsHqEAxXlmksIRvPrr.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 (A), Lisa De Pellegrini (P), Chairman Robert Hanrahan (P), Mairead Jensen (P), Randall Preston (A), Lisa Skoglund(P), Antonio Vozzolo (A), Michelle Zink-Jojic (A), Planning Board Liaison/Member Sherwin Tsai (P) & Council Liaison Christopher Roche (A)

Approval of Minutes – May 20, 2024 - A motion to approve was made by S. Tsai and seconded by L. DePellegrini.

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

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

Communication/Correspondence:

- Boy Scout Troop 34 contacted R. Hanrahan to request community service opportunities.
 - The scouts helped with maintenance on the Pascack trail by mulching.
- Project Sunroof - Solar Panel Installation – Community Project
 - An example of a community effort to cost effectively install solar energy systems on residential homes by homeowners.
 - Systems are installed using volunteers instead of contracting out the work and effectively cutting out the costs of the “middle man”.
 - Everyone who participates has the project installed on their home by the volunteer group.
 - We can arrange someone to present the idea to the EC committee.

New Business:

- Review of Planning Board Submissions
 - 21 Phillips Parkway – storage facility
 - The submission shows 69 trees slated to be removed. It appears they are clear cutting the entire lot to the edge.
 - There are 42 trees slated to be removed from the tree preservation zone. The submitted tree preservation zone notes incorrectly state 31 trees are being removed.
 - Of the 31 trees noted to be removed at 6 inch caliper or larger, none are indicated to be replaced due to exemptions per Montvale ordinances. The EC does not see which exemption(s) apply.
 - Per ordinance 369.28 permissible exemptions are driveways or roadways but this is not the case per submitted plans.
 - They are stating 31 trees for removal because some are not 6 inches in caliper.
 - No trees are identified to be replanted.
 - They are claiming exemption, per tree removal note #3, page CO4 of the plans.
 - Multiple established ornamental trees under 6 inch caliper are being removed and it will be recommended by the EC committee that they be replaced with 8 trees of 2 inch caliper or greater.
 - 11 are within the tree preservation zone.
 - The Environmental Impact Statement (page 3) states that a portion of the existing area on the rear side of the property will be enhanced, but the drawing provided shows only 5 out of 47 trees being retained.
 - There is no additional planting indicated contrary to comment of enhancement.

Proposed planting:

- Proposal to replant Green Giant Arborvitae
- We could suggest leaving 6 trees that are scheduled to be removed in addition to enhancing as shown in the planting schedule on the Landscape Plan.
- Suggestion to organize a visit to walk the property for Friday, June 21st.
- More feedback to follow the visit.

Old Business:

- Community Project Update (Lisa De Pellegrini)
 - Recap of Deer Resistant Garden Presentation
 - There were over 30 residents in attendance.
 - R. Hanrahan suggests advertising the next event using all platforms including the website, social media and an article in the Pascack Press.
 - L. DePellegrini is working on organizing a presentation by the Raptor Trust. More information to follow as it becomes available.
 - Pollinator Garden
 - A new Girl Scout leader, Lauren, is assuming leadership of maintenance of the Pollinator Garden.
 - Lauren conferenced with L. DePellegrini, took photos of the garden and went with Lisa to Metropolitan Farms in Closter. She received at least 40 plants as donations for the garden.
 - She needs a key to access the water. Lisa will help facilitate this with Ed Hutter from the borough office.

- Pascack Trail/Huff Pond Update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - At the May EC meeting several EC members suggested contacting an engineer for input regarding the proposed work as presented by S. Rich.
 - The borough engineer gave feedback to S. Rich who updated his plan based upon the recommendations.
- Revisions to Tree Ordinance
 - J. Voytus requested feedback from the EC members regarding updating the ordinance.
 - L. DePellegrini will lead up a tree ordinance subcommittee and seek out support from EC members.
- Montvale Plastic Bag Recycling Update (Randy Preston/Mairead Jensen)
 - No news to report.
- Electric Vehicle Update (Antonio Vozzolo) (Absent)
- Community Garden Update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - We need to contact DePieros Farm to ask for permission to put a community garden on the property. Will check with C. Roche for assistance.
- Bicycle and Walking Plan (Antonio Vozzolo)
- New Community Center discussion (Robert Hanrahan/Chris Roche)
 - No news to report.
- Repair of Environmental Learning Center, trail discussion (Robert Hanrahan/Michelle Zink-Jojic)
 - A local Boy Scout will be doing work on the trail toward his Eagle Scout project.
 - L. Baldanza will lead up the project.
 - Work to be completed includes replacing some of the floor boards and installing educational placards and a trail head kiosk.

Council Liaison Report – Chris Roche (Absent)

Planning Board Report – Sherwin Tsai –

- No news to report.

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

Next EC Meeting will be on Monday, July 15, 2024