

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date/Time:

Monday, December 16, 2024 – 7:45pm

Meeting Location: Zoom and Borough Hall

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81075171271?pwd=pdSFPwBEnUIILLBELpt5VfbkILQMWm.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 (P), Antonio Vozzolo (P), Michelle Zink-Jojic (P), Planning Board Liaison/Member Sherwin Tsai(P) & Council Liaison Christopher Roche(P)

Approval of Minutes –November 18, 2024 - A motion to approve was made by L. Skoglund and seconded by L. Baldanza. .

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

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

Communication/Correspondence:

- Arbor Day Proclamation 2025
 - The proclamation was read and signed at the Mayor and Council meeting officially recognizing April 19, 2025 in honor of Arbor Day.
 - We will have our annual Clean-Up event on this day.
 - We hope to buy trees to give to participants as we have done in past years.

New Business:

- Review of Planning Board Submissions (if applicable) – No submissions to review.
- Review of Community Volunteer Form
 - R. Hanrahan discussed the need for a form with J. Voytus and both agree that the form makes sense.
 - We have had recent volunteer projects that did not have a sponsor within the borough overseeing the work. The form will create a process for approving projects and

ensuring the work done is being guided by borough representatives. It will provide a path for notification and approval by appropriate borough departments (Mayor and Council, Borough Administrator, Building Department, Environmental Commission)

- Feedback on tentative 2025 EC meeting dates:
 - Dates distributed by E. Riccardi were approved.
 - The March meeting will be on Monday, March 17th.
- Update on ERI
 - R. Hanrahan submitted an article to the Pascack Press describing our ERI, it's uses and benefits.
 - R. Hanrahan contacted the School Superintendent of the Pascack Valley Regional High School District and submitted the ERI for her review. She did forward it to her staff for use as an educational tool.
- Philips Parkway and DePiero Drive
 - L. Baldanza states that many people have been walking on Phillips Parkway and DePiero Drive. A cross walk may be needed.
 - L. Baldanza will submit a hand sketch to that can be emailed to C. Roche and the Mayor and Council for further discussion.
 - E. Riccardi will put it on the agenda for January 2025.
 - R. Hanrahan requests that the EC members evaluate for discussion at the January meeting.

Old Business:

- Community Project Update (Lisa De Pellegrini) – No news to report
- Pascack Trail/Huff Pond Update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - Update on stocking of Huff Pond with fish
 - On September 11, 2024 Bergen County stocked Huff Pond with 200 bluegills, (approximately 6 inches in length).
 - The county previously stocked Huff Pond with 200 largemouth bass as well as a few pails of minnows.
 - The county and state will keep us on the list for the spring stocking of fish.
 - Steve Rich and crew completed the contracted work to clean out Huff Pond.
 - R. Hanrahan visited the pond yesterday and it has filled with water and is in very good shape. The aerators have been removed for the winter.
 - Kiera Luff Scout Project
 - Kiera has done work to mitigate naturally occurring erosion.
 - She is working on building a new bat house.
 - She put in plantings to support the mitigation of erosion.
- Electric Vehicle Update (Antonio Vozzolo) – No news to report.
 - R. Preston asks C. Roche for an update on the chargers contracted to be installed at borough hall.
 - C. Roche will check with J. Voytus and report any updates.
- Bicycle and Walking Plan (Antonio Vozzolo)
 - Currently working on the plan. Anticipates completion at the beginning of 2025.
 - Current state regulations require drivers to give a 4 foot yield to bikers when sharing the road. This is not always feasible.

- R. Hanrahan states that we could consider supporting this state regulation with a borough ordinance.
- Future work on the roads can include consideration for potential bike lanes.
- Community Garden Update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - The borough will have access to the DePiero property in August.
 - R. Hanrahan sent the community garden plans to Mayor Ghassali and J. Voytus.
 - R. Hanrahan asked the borough if the EC could use one of the greenhouses for the community garden.
 - There may be grants that we can apply for that will support the project.
- Repair of Environmental Learning Center, trail discussion (Robert Hanrahan/Michelle Zink-Jojic/Lou Baldanza)
 - Thank you to L. Baldanza, R. Preston, the Boy Scouts and the PHHS Interact Club for their hard work on the trail.
 - Hridank Shukla – Scout Project
 - L. Baldanza marked out the survey for electric power.
 - Both entrances to the trail will have a QR code for a trail map and the 15 stations along the trail.
 - R. Hanrahan suggests the when Hridank is finished updating the educational information for the trail heads and stations, we should confirm data with W. Vogt who built the original trail.
 - L. Baldanza suggests we remove the trash cans that are on the trail now and replace them with an environmentally friendly option.

Council Liaison Report – Chris Roche

- Anticipates the borough will have possession of the DePiero property in August.
- The mayor is putting together a committee to help guide the use of the newly acquired property.
- R. Hanrahan states that he will be part of the new committee.

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

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

Next EC Meeting will be on Monday, January 27 (4th Monday), 2025