

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date/Time:

Monday, September 15, 2025 – 7:45 p.m.

Meeting Location: Zoom and Borough Hall

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87077020412?pwd=NdhNCLmGizbpuNU8omTdxwpmhOBbsl.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(A), Michelle Zink-Jojic(P), Planning Board Liaison/Member Sherwin Tsai(A)& Council Liaison Christopher Roche(P)

Approval of Minutes – July 21, 2025 - A motion to approve was made by L. Baldanza and seconded by L. DePellegrini.

Meeting Opened to Public Agenda & Non – Agenda – 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 R. Preston and seconded by L. Baldanza.

Communication/Correspondence:

- No news to report.

New Business:

- Review of Planning Board Submissions (if applicable).
 - No new submissions.
- Veolia – 127 Summit Avenue (property located at the corner of Summit Avenue and Paragon Drive)
 - Veolia will be building water pumps and a booster station. Construction will include an access road for the pump station.
 - The property includes wetlands and protected riparian zones.
 - Mill brook and a tributary of Laurel Brook both cross through the property. Page 53 of the open space and recreation plan shows detail of the area.
 - We can build a trail but it has to be done in the proper manner. A hiking trail can be built on the wetlands.
 - L. Baldanza inquires about access to the trail for Montvale residents and states that a safe, designated parking area will be required. There must be room to maneuver and get out safely.

- R. Hanrahan states that we can we add a parking area to the construction plan to be used later for the trail plan. This is not currently provided on the plan provided.
 - C. Roche states that a parking area can be addressed when Veolia comes before the planning board.
 - Possible locations for a parking area include the extreme east side of the property close to Morgan Court and the extreme west side of the property where the driveway will be located.
 - L. Skogland states that the extreme northeast would be an easier access for a parking area for the trail. Access on Summit Avenue could be dangerous.
 - R. Hanrahan states that we already have a plan that shows a parking area on the east side of the property. There is a plan that shows a parking area off the rear of the Morgan Court homes. We need a trail plan to provide further feedback.
- Open Space and Recreation Plan Feedback (plan prepared by Colliers Engineering)
 - The following lots should be listed within the OSRP: Block 713, lot 1 and 12 and Block 1505 lot 1
 - Page numbers missing from p. 27 – p. 41
 - Page 9: No mention about the EC's history relating to the ELC (Environmental Learning Trail) its development and the commission's ongoing investment in the project. The Collier OSRP currently states: *"Additional information the Environmental Learning Center is provided in the "Resource Assessment" and "Recommendations" chapters below.*
 - Page 11: Section titled "Natural Resources in the Community" provides minimal information regarding the ELC.
 - Page 40: States "No parking available" which is not a true statement. Additionally, there is no mention of EC involvement or history of its development and the commission's ongoing investment in the project.
 - Page 50: Under Recommendations it mentions decisions based on "interviews". It is unclear as to who was interviewed. To date, the EC was never contacted regarding input.
 - Page 50: New station signs with QR Codes are in place and connect to information about each station. ELC Trail Kiosk was recently installed at the ELC entrance (should be mentioned).
 - Page 50: The EC suggests adding signage in front of ELC on Philips Parkway depicting the ELC Park, an Open Space Project.
 - The EC suggests universal sign to identify open space/recreation properties.
 - The EC would like to highlight the lack of available play options for children in Montvale during the summer time. The Huff Park playground is occupied by the summer camp during the weekdays and Montvale does not have a town swim club. Even during non-camp hours, the removal of the large shade trees at the Huff Park playground means it is often too hot to utilize the play structures during summer months. A splash pad would be highly beneficial option for local children to safely play and stay cool in the heat. This is something that is frequently discussed as desirable by local parents.
 - Montvale vacant properties list-Erie, Montvale and Penn Avenues (not listed):

Block	lot	owner	area sq. ft
705	1	private	15000

712	1	private	10000
712	10	private	10000
712	11	private	10000
713	1	Montvale	10000
713	2	Montvale	37000
1505	1	Montvale	38000
total			130000

Old Business:

- Community Project Update (Lisa De Pellegrini)
 - No news to report
- Pascack Trail/Huff Pond Update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - Thank you to Mairead, Lou and the DPW for helping to cut back overgrowth on the trail.
 - The broken fence bordering the Bayberry property has not been repaired yet.
 - Thank you to Steve Rich for his continued maintenance of the entrance to the trail; it continues to look great.
- Electric Vehicle Update (Antonio Vozzolo) - absent
- Bicycle and Walking Plan (Antonio Vozzolo) - absent
- Community Garden Update (Robert Hanrahan)
 - R. Hanrahan has been informed by the Mayor that there will be further discussion about the garden.
 - The seniors are excited about the idea and have been promoting it.
 - The EC has already done significant work on the plan. Lots of people around town love the idea.
- Repair of Environmental Learning Center, trail discussion (Robert Hanrahan/Michelle Zink-Jojic/Lou Baldanza)
 - R. Preston, L. Baldanza and R. Hanrahan will schedule time to repair the trail.
 - L. Baldanza is contacting the NYNJ trail conference for help with a trail map. Budget for trail map of 1K or less.
- Update on the Interconnect Trail between the ELC and Wegmans
 - Steve Rich would like to do the work. We are leaning toward a natural path rather than a paved area.

Council Liaison Report – Chris Roche

- We are regrading the swim club property and seeding it. It will be repurposed and used as a sports field.

Planning Board Report – Sherwin Tsai - absent

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

Next EC Meeting will be on Monday, October 20, 2025