

South Plainfield Environmental Commission

Official Minutes - January 11, 2023

1. Call to Order

Notice having been filed with the S.P. Observer and TapInto SP, Chairwoman Dorothy Miele called the Environmental Commission meeting to order in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act at 7:51 pm.

Present: Dorothy Miele (chairwoman) Tom Walsh, John Ferguson, Debra Leporino, Genevieve Helbo, Melanie Mott (council liaison) and Rich Houghton (planning board liaison).

Alternate members present:

Associate members present: Lisa Roseo (secretary)

Others: Dr. A. Tempel (environmental specialist)

Absent: Adam Butrico (e)

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the December 14, 2022 meeting were reviewed and all were in favor of approval.

3. Invitation for Public Comment

There were no members of the public present.

4. Budget - Dr. A. Tempel

- O&E (FY2022 = \$2,625) Since the last meeting we spent \$65 on: \$55 for a printer cartridge and \$10 for potting soil. YTD spent = \$721. Balance = \$1,969.00. The 2022 budget finished on 12/31.
- Dr. Tempel said we received an invoice from ANJEC for yearly dues - \$400 (includes training workshops) plus \$35 for each additional member. Lisa looked at last year's minutes. Seems she and Pete Smith were the only additional members listed. Went through the preferred mailing method for each member. We will list Melanie Mott, Jonathan Walezak and Lisa Roseo as additional members for 2023. John made a motion to approve the ANJEC membership expenditure, seconded by Tom and all were in favor.
- O&E 2023 – We have a temporary budget of \$1,000.
- Clean Communities – 2022 grant (49,621.17) – Spent since the 12/14 meeting - \$4,403 on: \$1,325 on salaries for litter removal/enforcement; \$570 on litter can maintenance; \$536 for truck repairs; \$209 for ROW sign violation stickers; \$1,000 for Franklin School assembly program and \$115 reimbursing postage meter. Total spent = \$33,838 from the 2022 grant. Balance = \$12,562.
- Signs Trust Fund – Spent \$0. The balance = \$640.12.
- Harris Steel Trust Fund – Since the last report we spent \$0. Deposits = \$0. Current balance is \$35,433.00.

5. Committee and Liaison Reports

A. Council Liaison - Ms. M. Mott

- Melanie Mott said she has nothing new to report yet.

B. Planning Board Liaison - Mr. R. Houghton / Mr. B. Bythell

- Rich said he has nothing new to report. The Planning Board has their reorganization meeting on 1/24.

C. Site Plan Review - Mr. A. Butrico

- Dr. Tempel said Adam picked up an application to review. Two revisions came in that we have previously reviewed. The Planning Board's professionals will review the revisions for compliance.

D. ERI - Ms. D. Leporino

- Debra said there is nothing new to report.

E. Clean Communities - Dr. A. Tempel

- Dr. Tempel reported that MCDSWM has funds available to pay towns to do litter cleanups on County Roads. DPW had previously signed an agreement to do this a few years ago but never did any cleanups. Therefore Dr. Tempel did not forward the info to Len Miller this time.
- Our part-time Recycling Center groundskeepers are still doing weekly litter patrol on Wednesdays & Thursdays, where they first focus on our public parks.
- Tom mentioned that the 7-11 on Park & Maple is accumulating litter. Dr. Tempel said she will inform code enforcement. Melanie asked if we should increase the fine for littering on Metuchen Road. Most felt the problem of catching the people who litter would still remain. They may end up finding another location to dump. Video cameras would be too cost prohibitive.
- Debra suggested the CCAB meet quarterly; currently meet twice a year. Now that we are trying to revitalize into the SPCCA, the extra meetings would be helpful. Dr. Tempel suggested more meetings might be difficult for those who are engaged in other commitments. If anything can be discussed via email and phone calls it may be better. Dorothy said let's see how the current schedule goes and call an impromptu meeting if needed. Debra said we can discuss this at the 1/25 CCAB meeting.
- Debra reported Kathleen Benton and her science club students did a 'business walk' on 1/9. They handed out the flyer they helped create to approximately 85 businesses. They gave Debra the information in a spreadsheet.
- Adopt-a-Spot – Debra and Dr. Tempel had a prior discussion about volunteer clean up reports. Dr. Tempel does not always receive them from the participants. The reports are needed to provide to the State because the cleanup supplies are State funded. Debra suggested revising the agreement to include a statement that adoptees have to submit a yearly cleanup report. Also, Debra explained resident volunteers sign a 'Hold Harmless' agreement and businesses submit a copy of their insurance certificate. We recently found that one of the business owners declined to provide his insurance certificate because his policy does not include coverage for volunteer activities; none of the things his business is listed as being covered for are volunteer activities. He signed a 'Hold Harmless' agreement instead. Is this typical for most businesses? Melanie said she will speak with Paul Rizzo and ask how to proceed. We can assume businesses are only covered for what occurs on their own property; some businesses have adopted other spots off their premises.
- Debra briefed Melanie on the 'Glitter Award'. Debra suggested maybe we can also reward residents who catch litterers at the act. We will discuss it further at the CCAB meeting.

F. Land Use - Dr. A. Tempel

- Dr. Tempel said there was nothing new to report.

G. Forestry - Mr. A. Butrico

- Tree Seedling Distribution Program – Dr. Tempel asked members if they want to participate again this year. She spoke with Adam Butrico who is willing to pick up the seedlings again. Dr. Tempel explained

what is involved with the whole process. Discussed participation, logistics and dates. Should we involve the Seniors? Members felt we should but ensure better communication with Tree Olano, Director Senior Center. Dr. Tempel will contact Tree Olano to see if she wants the Center to be involved again. If not, we will ask Kathleen Benton about using student participation and the High School parking lot. Adam can pick up the seedlings at the State Nursery in Ocean County between 4/4 & 4/28. We decided on 300 seedlings. Seedling distribution will tentatively be on 4/15 and the litter cleanup on 4/29.

H. Highland Avenue Woods / Public Education - Mrs. D. Miele

- Dorothy said it was discovered there might be an animal carcass under the Nature Center. DPW has been notified.
- Deer Fencing - Dorothy spoke with Dr. DeVito. He will pick up the Purchase Order and then the truck & supplies from the NJCF. He will get a crew together and then let Dorothy know.

I. Historical Sites Preservation - Mr. L. Randolph

- Colonial Oaks – Dorothy said this is in the hands of Glenn Cullen to contact the property owner about possessing / borrowing any artifacts. Dorothy will follow up. She said we have several professionals in town that might be available to advise us on publicity/displays etc.

J. Pollution - Mr. A. Butrico

- John reported that the State of NJ was sued under the CERT-Community Right-to-Know Act because most of our chemical facilities do not follow the proper standards e.g.- having an emergency response plan. John explained that the State Police hired a contractor to help Counties write response plans for all the facilities that have at least one of the 352 most hazardous chemicals. EPCRA (emergency planning and community right-to-know act) states that is what is required. Each of the 21 counties will be a separate division with their own plan. Middlesex County has the most chemical facilities in the State. South Plainfield has one facility. The plans should be ready for review by the end of February.

K. Green Team - Mr. T. Walsh

- Tom said the GT will be meeting on 1/26. We need to get our first action item submission into Sustainable NJ in February.
- Dr. Tempel mentioned Sustainable NJ sent notification about opportunities for assistance to help towns with specific projects. We can look at options to discuss. It is hard for the team to take on more projects/programs without additional volunteers.
- Dorothy said the 'Creative Arts Team' is meeting via Zoom next week. We will be gathering information to do outreach to artists which will be followed up with a regular meeting. We will then prepare a list of potential art installations.

L. Public Information & Technology - Dr. A. Tempel / Mr. C. Cioffi

- Dr. Tempel reported in December, SPEC's Facebook page carried 2 posts: reached 171 people with 6 engagements.

M. Stormwater Advisory Committee - Mr. J. Ferguson

- John gave updates on the state's 'Resilient NJ' plan. The USACE's plan recommends a series of measures including a storm surge barrier across the Arthur Kill at Perth Amboy which would provide flood protection to portions of Perth Amboy, Woodbridge, and Carteret, in addition to measures along the Rahway River.

- The NJDEP has proceeded with several regulatory updates as part of NJPACT, the state's regulatory reform initiative to address climate change impacts. This information is attached.

N. Environmental Specialist - Dr. A. Tempel

- Discussed a possible Paper Shredding event that would be funded by the County, but would have to be organized and staffed by Boro personnel. The County would pay \$1,000 for one shredding truck. There is a Recycling Enhancement Grant we could apply for if the Mayor & Council pass a resolution. Melanie will inquire. Dr. Tempel said she cannot handle it with just Recycling Department personnel. She will speak with Len Miller about enlisting DPW workers. We would also need Police for traffic control.

O. Chairwoman's Report - Mrs. D. Miele

- There was nothing to report.

6. Incoming / Outgoing Correspondence

- A list of correspondence was provided.
- Debra asked Dr. Tempel if she could send SPEC members the commission's year-end report that she submits to Glenn Cullen which becomes part of Mayor Anesh's reorganization speech.

7. Old Business

- As discussed at our last meeting, John reached out to our County Engineering Dept. about the poor lighting on New Market Avenue near Harris Steel. John was told that is the responsibility of the municipality and to contact PSE&G. John suggested using a light meter to make a definitive determination. Melanie will ask if the Boro has one.

8. New Business

9. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made, all were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for February 8, 2023 @ 7:30 p.m. in the Borough Hall Conference Room.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa Roseo
Environmental Commission Secretary

Acronyms

ANJEC	-Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions
BOA	-Board of Adjustment
CBA	-Clean Business Association
CCAB	-Clean Communities Advisory Board
DOT	-Department of Transportation
DPW	-Department of Public Works
EIS	-Environmental Impact Study
EPA	-Environmental Protection Agency
EWA	-Edison Wetlands Association
FEMA	-Federal Emergency Management Agency
FOW	-Friends of the Woods
GBFCP	-Green Brook Flood Control Project
HAW	-Highland Avenue Woods
KCS	-Known Contaminated Sites
LEEDS	-Lead in Energy and Environmental Design
LOI	-Letter of Interpretation
MCDSWM	-Middlesex County Division of Solid Waste Management
MCOEM	-Middlesex County Office of Emergency Management
MCUFAC	-Middlesex County Urban Forestry Advisory Committee
NJCF	-New Jersey Conservation Foundation
NJDEP	-New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
NOV	-Notice of Violation
OTOSP	-Oak Tree Open Space Parcel
PRP'S	-Potentially Responsible Parties
ROSI	-Recreation and Open Space Inventory
ROW	-Right of Way
SPBA	-South Plainfield Business Association
SPEC	-South Plainfield Environmental Commission
USACE	-United States Army Corp of Engineers