

South Plainfield Environmental Commission

Official Minutes - March 8, 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 7:33 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. Alice Tempel

Absent: Adam Butrico (e)

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the February 8, 2023 regular meeting were reviewed and all were in favor of approval.

3. Invitation for Public Comment

There were no members of the public present.

****RAIN BARREL PRESENTATION BY MICHELE BAKACS, COUNTY AGENT at RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY – via ZOOM**

John Ferguson introduced Michele Bakacs who made her introduction, gave an informative presentation and answered questions at the end. One major point Michele made was for SPEC to decide what we want to accomplish concerning rain barrels. John said rain barrels are one way to address our stormwater issues. Lisa will email the program model as a pdf.file to members.

4. Budget - Dr. A. Tempel

- O&E (FY2023 temporary budget = \$1,500) Dr. Tempel noted that last month she reported an inaccurate temporary budget of \$1,000. Since the last meeting we spent \$35.15 for printer cartridges and \$27 to advertise our meeting schedule in 'The Observer' classifieds. YTD spent = \$567.71. Balance = \$932.29.
- Clean Communities – 2022 grant (\$49,621.17) – Spent since the 2/8 meeting = \$2,651 on: \$1,426 on salaries for litter removal/enforcement; \$570 on litter can maintenance and encumbered \$655 for 'Save the Date' display ad. Total spent = \$42,162 from the 2022 grant. Balance = \$7,488.
- 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 the Boro will be holding a paper shredding event on September 23. DPW and possibly two people from the Recycling Center will set up and break down for the event. Dr. Tempel applied for the grant to use the shredder truck.
- Melanie mentioned she is working on a 'Mental Health/Addiction Seminar' that will be open to the entire Boro. The Boro will be partnering with Rutgers Behavioral Health and a few other groups. It will

take place at the SP Public Library on 5/17, 6-8pm. Tom asked if it is part of the Mayor's Wellness Committee; it is not. In turn, Dr. Tempel asked Melanie if she can provide the Green Team with copies of any publicity, documentation and photos of the event in order to get Sustainable NJ action points. Melanie said she will make sure to mention all upcoming town events at our meetings in case the GT can apply for action points.

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

- Rich said there is nothing new to report.

C. Site Plan Review / Land Use- Mr. A. Butrico / Dr. A. Tempel

- Adam emailed his site plan comments which Dr. Tempel read.
- Ryder Transportation (4305 New Brunswick Ave.) - applicant proposes to remove and replace their fuel island/canopy, relocate a storm drain inlet, construct sidewalks & curb ramps plus assorted improvements. They asked for an EIS waiver; there is ongoing site remediation for underground oil tank (LSRP). Adam recommends asking for a recycling plan, No Idling signs and request a letter of 'No Further Action' on the tank cleanup.
- New York SMS (2002 Park Ave.) – applicant wants to erect a Verizon telecommunications monopole behind Park Avenue Diner. The pole would be 108 feet tall. The ordinance states 35 feet maximum in that zone, therefore, they need a waiver. Adam suggested 'No Idling' signs (during construction?) and request the applicant to reduce the eyesore of the tower for residents and diner patrons.
- 4401 South Clinton LLC (4401 So. Clinton Ave.) – applicant wants to replace existing commercial building (demolish existing one-story structure) with an 8,828 sq. ft. two-story office/warehouse with roll-up doors for truck loading and uploading. Adam said stormwater will be addressed by the addition of drywell structure; no increase to pre-development flow. They asked for a recycling plan waiver. Adam said the new structure will come very close to the wetlands buffer line. Dr. Tempel said they have an LOI from the State, but would like to have the NJDEP verify the line. SPEC will ask for an EIS, 'No Idling' signs and to swap out Red Crepe Myrtle for another non-invasive species. Dr. Tempel will check on the species.

D. ERI - Ms. D. Leporino

- Debra said there was nothing new to report.

E. Clean Communities - Dr. A. Tempel

- Dr. Tempel reported she has started publicizing the Spring Litter Cleanup for 4/29. We will need help in the morning in particular. Tom and Debra said they should be there.
- Adopt-a-Spot – Debra followed up with the two adopters who have not renewed. Keystone said they sent their renewal; Dr. Tempel will re-check. In the meantime, they will resubmit. Debra phoned and emailed First Baptist Church, but has not heard back. She will email the renewal form to see if they return it.

F. Forestry - Mr. A. Butrico

- Dorothy reported that as we discussed last month, Adam emailed her with his idea for a 'Champion Tree' program/contest. We can use the State's Champion tree list and model. Adam offered his thoughts on how we can handle a similar contest. This could be a great educational program for the community. There are a few issues to consider e.g.- manpower and folks with knowledge to confirm

submissions etc. Lisa will forward Adam's email to SPEC members for their thoughts and recommendations.

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

- Dr. Tempel said DPW replaced the air conditioner filters at the Nature Center.

H. Historical Sites Preservation - Mr. L. Randolph

- Colonial Oaks – Dorothy spoke about the developments with the archaeological findings. Part of the site is now protected. The developer has to lessen the number of units to be built. Dorothy had a good conversation with Sean McHugh, the lead archaeologist for this property. Sean said he will personally handle everything, such as getting the property owner to sign 'deed of gift' to the Boro, provide all reports with historical information. There is a second area on site which we just learned about that is more significant and will have the easement. That area can never be disturbed. The library said they will host a permanent display.

I. Pollution - Mr. A. Butrico

- Cornell-Dubilier – Dorothy reported on the press conference that some SPEC members attended on 2/13. As part of the federal government's Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal, the site will receive more funding to bolster the cleanup progress.

J. Green Team - Mr. T. Walsh

- Tom said the GT will be meeting on 3/23. Bob Longo asked each member to come to the next meeting with an action item to propose. As the team progresses with the Sustainable NJ program, action items become more challenging.
- Dorothy mentioned the 'Creative Arts' team is making its debut on 4/1 at the Putnam Park 'Bunny Hop'. The team will have a table and give out coloring sheets/crayons. As a means to pay for the printing, Dr. Tempel came up with the idea of printing a picture of a bunny picking up litter, which would allow us to use Clean Communities funds, if needed. Dorothy also suggested putting our Spring Cleanup date on the sheets.

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

- Dr. Tempel said there was only one Facebook post in February. Work restraints have limited her ability to post more on social media. Dorothy may be able to administer some posts.

L. Stormwater Advisory Committee - Mr. J. Ferguson

- John reported HUD (Dept. of Housing & Urban Development) is giving money to the State for homes that need to be elevated or bought out. John sent the information to all the OEM Directors in Middlesex County. The county government is supposed to forward to all towns' Business Administrators. There should be a link on the Boro website.

M. Environmental Specialist - Dr. A. Tempel

- Dr. Tempel wrote and sent 5 – 6 application review letters to the boards. She will continue to catch up.

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

- Dorothy reported the By-laws that SPEC worked on at our last meeting are null and void. This is because the By-laws as we read were mostly flawed/illegal. We found out Paul Rizzo, Boro Attorney, reviewed our By-laws a year ago and sent a five-page memo with corrections to our clerk; we did not receive them as far as we know. Dorothy said she merged 2022, 2023 and our amendments that Paul

Rizzo agreed to. She will send this draft to Amy Antonides who will forward it to Paul Rizzo. Once they come back, we can review and formally adopt. Dorothy said we found out that SPEC does not have the authority to name Associate members as we follow the State Statute.

6. Incoming / Outgoing Correspondence

- A list of correspondence was provided.

7. Old Business

8. New Business

- Tom mentioned he was asked to be on the Peter J. Barnes Dismal Swamp Preserve Committee. Tom has attended one meeting so far; meetings are every other month. The committee is having meetings on their Master Plan to get public input. South Plainfield's meeting will take place on 3/30 @7pm. Melanie will email Amy Antonides to ensure the meeting date gets posted for the public.
- John said he and a community advisory panel set up a cybersecurity lecture at Middlesex High School with NJCCIC (NJ Cybersecurity & Communications Integration Cell) for April 6 @ 5pm. Contact John if you are interested in attending.

9. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made, all were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:43 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 12, 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