

# South Plainfield Environmental Commission

## Official Minutes - October 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 7:32 pm.

**Present:** Dorothy Miele (chairwoman), Tom Walsh, Debra Leporino, John Ferguson, Adam Butrico, Genevieve Helbo, and Brian Bythell (planning board liaison).

**Alternate members present:**

**Others:** Dr. Alice Tempel (Environmental Specialist) and Lisa Roseo (secretary)

**Absent:** Melanie Mott (e)

### 2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the September 13, 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.

### 4. Budget - Dr. A. Tempel

- O&E (FY2023 budget = \$2,625) Since September 13, we spent \$0. YTD spent = \$662.71. Balance = \$1,962.29.
- Clean Communities – 2023 grant (\$55,655.96) – Spent since the 9/13 meeting = \$27,664 on: \$1,638 on salaries for litter removal/enforcement; \$655 (new contract price) on litter can maintenance; \$3,000 on school assembly programs; \$200 on Adopt-a-Spot signs; \$128 for dog waste bags and \$22,043 on street sweeper salary through May. Total spent = \$39,739. Balance = \$23,610. Dr. Tempel added that three schools have requested grants for Clean Communities programs; each school gets two programs.
- Signs Trust Fund – Spent \$0. We spent \$87 of the County grant to reimburse Jonathan for the Creative Art Team’s online survey expenses to try and gauge interest in the team and its activities. Deposited \$0. The balance = \$605.21.
- Harris Steel Trust Fund – Since the last report we spent \$0. Deposits = \$0. The current balance is \$36,278. Dr. Tempel voided the \$995 encumbered to LDS for the crabapple tree at 117 Fairmount Ave. that was never planted. Dr. Tempel tried repeatedly to contact LDS.

### 5. Committee and Liaison Reports

#### A. Council Liaison - Ms. M. Mott

- Dorothy said Melanie is not attending tonight’s meeting because her HWE committee is meeting to talk about the Green Team’s request for two resolutions.

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

- Brian said the Planning Board hasn’t had a meeting since Rich reported last month.

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

- Dorothy noted the developer cleared one of possibly two treed lots at the active site at Montrose & Clinton Avenues. Dr. Tempel does not believe they were issued a tree permit. They had applied for a

permit, but we were waiting for everything to be finalized; the State has to approve their wetlands permit. Dr. Tempel said she will speak to Dominic Demico about the status.

#### D. ERI - Ms. D. Leporino

- Debra said there is nothing new to report.

#### E. Clean Communities - Dr. A. Tempel / Ms. D. Leporino

- Fall Cleanup – Dr. Tempel said it was a rainy day. Some groups cleaned that day, others are scheduled to clean. So far, she has received 20 reports on cleaned locations. As of 10/11, we have had 87 people clean up and spent 181 hours collecting 66 bags of trash and litter. We had advertised the SPCCA as a co-sponsor, soliciting donations of clean used reusable bags for the Food Pantry. Only one volunteer brought bags, but she brought a whole bag full of them.
- Debra spoke about the SPCCA education presentation being planned for Thursday, 11/2 @7pm at the Senior Center. The main topic will be Comprehensive Floodplain Management and Nature-based Solutions, presented by Thomas Flynn, Environmental Specialist – Floodplain Administer for Woodbridge Twp. He will talk about what towns can do to reduce the impacts from storms/flooding and how to deal with insurance costs. Debra will be speaking about our Adopt-a-Spot program. Debra made a ‘Save the Date’ flyer which was distributed to ‘The Observer’ and ‘TAPinto’. SPEC said they are hopeful the Mayor, Council & Administrators will attend.
- Adopt-a-Spot – Debra sent the renewal agreement for HAW to Troop Leader Rob Bartholomew. We also have two new adopters: Americold for Shadyside Park and Liftec for South Clinton from New Market Ave. to Montrose Avenue. There will be four renewals going out for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.
- Dr. Tempel reported that Luke Melick cleared 30+ storm drains, collected 9 bags of litter plus 60 lbs. of roadside debris.
- Litter Can Contract – The Mayor & Council adopted a resolution to award the contract to Pinto Brothers at \$655/month; the new contract will start November 1.

#### F. Forestry - Mr. A. Butrico

- Big Trees of SP – Adam reported receiving an email from Dr. Tempel with information from a resident’s message on our ‘Big Trees of SP’ Facebook post. The resident stated she is aware of a large Pin Oak in town. Adam said he will try and contact her. Adam plans on doing a ‘photo shoot’ with his brother’s family who submitted their Pin Oak. He will include the photo with a write-up of the contest to submit to ‘The Observer’ and our website/social media sites.

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

- Dorothy said there was nothing new to report.

#### H. Historical Sites Preservation - Mrs. D. Miele / Mr. L. Randolph

- Dorothy mentioned she has not heard from Richard Grubb & Associates who were supposed to be filing information on the historical artifacts found on the proposed ‘Colonial Oaks’ site on New Brunswick Avenue. They were to file their report to the State in September and forward the info to her. Dorothy will follow up with Sean McHugh.

#### I. Pollution - Mr. A. Butrico

- There was nothing to report.

### J. Green Team - Mr. T. Walsh

- Tom said he submitted his fertilizer article to 'The Observer'. He is working with DPW on the fleet inventory. He is running into some difficulty because they switched their software. There will be another 'Drug Take-Back' on 10/28. Tom will reach out to Chief Papa to acquire the necessary reports to file with Sustainable NJ. Tom contacted Captain W. Born to have CERT assist with traffic control at the upcoming paper shred event on 10/28.
- Dr. Tempel said Melanie is not here because she is meeting with the HWE committee on the two resolutions the Mayor & Council had adopted about 3 years ago. The Land Use & Green Building pledge adopted policies where the Council asserts that new building construction by the Boro should include green infrastructure where feasible. The Boro will also use sustainability principles when making land use decisions. The Green Team needs to have them adopt the resolution again and then write a memo to all departments explaining the resolution and asking for cooperation to further those policies. For some reason it was tabled; hopefully the HWE committee will resolve.
- Dr. Tempel said the GT really needs new members if anyone knows of interested residents.
- Tom mentioned there is another uncovered salt mound behind Aldis. He reported it a couple weeks ago. Dr. Tempel thought Rich Wolff addressed it. Tom said he sees evidence that the salt is draining into the storm sewer nearby.
- The next GT meeting will be in January.
- Dr. Tempel said Divon Pender is supposed to be documenting the school's anti-vaping education campaign.
- The Rain barrel demonstration will be on Wednesday 10/18 at the Senior Center.
- Dr. Tempel reported that residents are calling Anne Daley with questions she cannot answer about the 'Solar Landscape' letter and webpage. Residents are confused about the requirement to pay online. Dr. Tempel said the Boro is considering getting a representative from Solar Landscape to do a presentation during the day. Dr. Tempel will talk with Bob Longo.
- Jonathan and the 'Creative Arts' team have had meetings.

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

- Dr. Tempel's report: in September, SPEC's Facebook page carried 6 posts – reached 1,349 people, 171 engagements, 6 shares and 11 comments.

### L. Stormwater Advisory Committee - Mr. J. Ferguson

- John reported that Governor Murphy, in response to mitigation projects and such, formed an executive committee. John listed those who were appointed. The overall plan is to manage the money available to complete the projects.
- GBFCP – John and Dr. Tempel attended the virtual meeting. The project is basically status quo. John mentioned there are homes in Middlesex Boro on Heather Court where, unfortunately, the ground/soil is disappearing because the brook is getting closer to the homes. The homeowners are claiming the USACE is causing it. It is on the onus of the homeowners to prove it however.
- John reported on Stormwater Management rules relating to groundwater recharge. A proposed major land development must comply with one of the following two groundwater requirements:

1. Demonstrate through hydrologic and hydraulic analysis that the site and its stormwater management measures maintain 100 % of the average annual pre-construction groundwater recharge volume for the site; or
  2. Demonstrate through hydrologic and hydraulic analysis that the increase of stormwater runoff volume from pre-construction to post-construction for the projected two-year storm, as defined and determined pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:8-5.7(d) is infiltrated. This does not affect our municipality.
- Dr. Tempel pointed out that the upcoming Rain barrel workshop would help satisfy the NJDEP's requirement for public stormwater education.

#### M. Environmental Specialist - Dr. A. Tempel

- There was nothing new to report.

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

- Dorothy reminded members to work on their 2023 year-end committee summary reports. Please submit to Dorothy in November.
- Dorothy said the discussion to possibly amend our by-laws to limit the public comment period to three minutes is not a pressing issue. We can amend our by-laws at any time.

#### **6. Incoming / Outgoing Correspondence**

- A list of correspondence was provided.
- Received notice of application to the NJDEP for a Presence/Absence LOI for 318 Belmont Ave. There are plans to subdivide and develop. There are definitely wetlands in the area. We can assume there will be a site plan to follow.
- Received notice of application to the NJDEP for a Flood Hazard Area Verification and Flood Hazard Area Individual Permit for 1202 New Market Avenue. We looked at this last month. Owner to improve an existing gravel lot.

#### **7. Old Business**

#### **8. New Business**

#### **9. Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made, all were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for November 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
CCA	-Clean Communities 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
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