

# South Plainfield Environmental Commission

## Official Minutes - September 13, 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 7:44 pm.

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

**Alternate members present:**

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

**Absent:**

### 2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the August 9, 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 August 9, we spent \$0. YTD spent = \$662.71. Balance = \$1,962.29.
- Clean Communities – 2023 grant (\$55,655.96) – Spent since the 8/9 meeting = \$3,770 on: \$2,141 on salaries for litter removal/enforcement; \$570 on litter can maintenance; \$1,020 on promos and \$40 for an adopt-a-spot sign for Americold. Total spent = \$19,984. Balance = \$51,275.
- Signs Trust Fund – Spent \$403 - reimbursed Jonathan Walezak \$403 out of the grant for expenses relating to the ‘Bunny Hop Event’. Deposited \$500 (grant from Middlesex County for the ‘Creative Arts Team. The balance = \$1,140.12.
- Harris Steel Trust Fund – Since the last report we spent \$0. Deposits = \$0. The current balance is \$35,283.

### 5. Committee and Liaison Reports

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

- Melanie informed members of the Police Department promotions: Peter J. Papa is our new Chief of Police. Captains D. Hoppe & W. Born. Lieutenant M. Bullock and Sergeant Indano. Wendell Born is the OEM Coordinator and J. McConville, L. McNelly & A. Louise are Deputy Coordinators.

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

- Ryder Truck – Rich said they want to remove four 10,000-gallon fuel tanks and install one 20,000-gallon tank. Rich said they are supposed to consult with Dr. Tempel on recycling and landscaping plans.

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

- 1202 New Market Ave. – applicant needs a use variance. They have been storing vehicles on their property without one. They will be reducing their impervious coverage from 85% to 65% by dismantling an old office building on site. Adam suggested requesting a formal tree removal/replacement plan and anti-idling signs.

- 40 Cragwood Rd. – plans for a speculative warehouse – 300,000 sq. ft, including 14,000 sq. feet of office space, 175 parking spaces, 59 trailer spaces and 50 loading spots. Currently there is an office building on site. Construction of the warehouse will disturb a regulated wetlands buffer that lies nearby across I287. The applicant did submit a wetlands transition area waiver plan to the NJDEP. 90% of the trees will be removed; the trees along the I287 buffer will remain. SPEC will request a formal tree plan, stormwater calculations and anti-idling signs.

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

- Dr. Tempel distributed the original updated ERI from 1990 to members who did not have one. The ERI was researched and created by SPEC members. There are some digitized updates available. We do have mylar map layers in the storage room next to Dr. Tempel's desk to look at: Base map, streams, wetlands, erodible soils etc., that when put together will show environmentally sensitive areas in the Boro that should not be developed on.

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

- Debra said the SPCCA presentation is set for Thursday, 11/2 @7pm at the Senior Center. The main speaker will be Thomas Flynn, Environmental Specialist – Floodplain Administer for Woodbridge Twp. His topic will be 'Comprehensive Floodplain Management and Nature-based Solutions'. Debra explained there will be information on our Adopt-a-Spot program as well. Debra said since we have the Glitter Award incentive for businesses, she wanted to reach out to the Police Chief to discuss an incentive to residents to help keep the community clean by identifying polluters, as we previously discussed. However, since Chief Papa was just appointed, Debra will wait before approaching him. Debra will speak to Kathleen Benton about having her environmental science students participate at the presentation. Any other ideas are welcome. SPEC discussed having Thomas Flynn direct his presentation more toward solutions that residents can help with. John said he would reach out to Tom. Debra said she will be handing out fliers advertising the presentation at the upcoming Fall Litter Cleanup and post an announcement in The Observer and on social media. Melanie suggested distributing the flier to specific teachers to give their students.
- Dr. Tempel said she posted a press release for the Fall Litter Cleanup taking place on 9/30. She also registered the event with the Recycle Coach Clean Communities web page and created an event on our Facebook page. A company called 'AllEvents' contacted Dr. Tempel about posting our cleanup, so it is now on this 'broader reach' website. So far, we have 10 groups preregistered and 50 people. Dr. Tempel will contact Kathleen Benton to ask if her students will be participating.
- Litter Can survey – Dr. Tempel priced cans to replace some that were 'lost'. To get a set of recycle/trash with lids and liners will cost \$1,400, a significant price increase. Dr. Tempel will check further for better prices.
- Litter Can Contract – Quotes were solicited. Pinto Brothers was the only response. The new price proposed is \$655 a month, which is a 15% increase over last year.
- Clean Campus – Roosevelt School has booked the 'Illusion Maker' Clean Communities presentation.
- Dr. Tempel ordered more promotional items: adult coloring books, sidewalk chalk and car air fresheners that look like reusable bags.
- Adopt-a-Spot – Dr. Tempel reported Americold applied to adopt Shadyside Park and Liftec applied to adopt So. Clinton Ave. from Montrose to New Market. Keystone Community corrected their

application, and the agreement was finalized and signed. Debra said Cub Scout Pack 207 was sent a renewal for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter.

- Paper Shredding Event – will take place on 9/23. Dr. Tempel asked for a volunteer to check on residents' IDs to ensure they are from town. Tom said he will speak to Officer Born who is coordinator of CERT; they are generally available to help out at community events.

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

- Big Trees of SP – Adam reported he submitted the article for the program and has received one response so far to the email he set up: [bigtreessp@gmail.com](mailto:bigtreessp@gmail.com) Adam will work on more outreach and continue to release the article in 'The Observer' and Dr. Tempel will post it on our Facebook pages

#### 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 said there was nothing new to report.

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

- There was nothing to report.

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

- Tom said the GT met on 8/31. We continue to work on action items for Bronze Certification. Information for the 'Community Solar' action has been posted on our Boro webpage. Tom is working on getting POs from the Police Department for the hybrid vehicles the Boro purchased and contacting Kristina, DPW, for the fleet inventory. Dr. Tempel added that she started documenting some non-mandatory items the Boro has been recycling e.g. – used cooking oil, fluorescent lights and grass clippings, which we will get Sustainable NJ points for. The next 'Drug Take-back' initiative will be on 10/28 10 – 2pm.

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

- Dr. Tempel's report: in August, SPEC's Facebook page carried 4 posts plus 1 post shared from AmeriCorp, seeking volunteers – reached 2,794 people, 119 engagements, 45 reactions, 11 shares and 5 comments.

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

- John made mention of a court case brought forth by a family who was fighting the EPA's 'Clean Water Act' which went to the Supreme Court. The family won the case. The 'Clean Water Act' states that wetlands are part of our waterways, and anything considered to be a part of the waterways, for people to use, is protected; not buildable upon. The family wanted to build on their farm where there are wetlands present that do not go into any water stream that is used for drinkable water. So now the EPA and Coast Guard have to re-adjust their regulations. The case was brought in Colorado.
- The NJDEP has decided that elevating homes in high-flood areas is not cost effective. Homeowners either have to stay in their homes without protection or sell to the government.
- John reported that the State wants residents to better understand 'point-source pollution'. They have added power plants, chemical facilities and normal operations such as driving on roadways to the list of polluters.

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

- Dorothy mentioned forwarding members the article about 'Sinister Diesel' to SPEC members. The company was selling equipment that would disable air pollution controls on trucks, race cars, diesel fuel vehicles and the like. Truck drivers would buy them in order to save on fuel costs.

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

- Dorothy gave an early reminder that SPEC members are responsible to submit their 2023 Committee Annual Report by 12/1. Members should start compiling their information and completed actions.
- Dorothy proposed a change in our By-laws as it relates to the public comment portion. Dorothy conferred with Melanie prior and received clarification from Amy Antonides to limit comment time to three minutes per person. Discussion ensued about specific language. SPEC will give this more thought and discuss it at a future meeting.

### 6. Incoming / Outgoing Correspondence

- A list of correspondence was provided.

### 7. Old Business

### 8. New Business

- Debra asked for advice in dealing with truck idling that takes place behind Dunkin Donuts which is next to her house. A truck was idling for over an hour. Members suggested contacting the property owner/manager asking if he can put up 'No Idling' signs on the building, although refrigerated trucks do have to run their units. If it is not a refrigerated truck, call the police next time.

### 9. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made, all were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:17 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for October 11, 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