

South Plainfield Environmental Commission

Official Minutes - December 14, 2022

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 7:31 pm.

Present: Dorothy Miele, Debra Leporino, John Ferguson, Adam Butrico, Pete Smith (council liaison) and Brian Bythell (planning board liaison)

Alternate members present:

Associate members present: Lisa Roseo (secretary)

Others:

Absent: Dr. Alice Tempel, Tom Walsh (e), and Jonathan Walezak (e)

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the November 9, 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 \$0. YTD spent = \$656. Balance = \$1,969.00.
- Clean Communities - The 2022 grant = \$49,621.17. Spent since November 9 = \$3,030 on: \$954 on wages for litter patrol & sign enforcement; \$570 on litter can maintenance; \$1,000 for assembly program for Roosevelt School and \$260 for new Adopt-a-Spot signs. YTD spent since 8/10 = \$35,268. Balance = \$14,353.
- Signs Trust Fund – Spent \$0. The balance = \$640.12.
- Harris Steel Trust Fund – Since the last report we spent \$0. Deposits = \$846 for payment in lieu of planting on Kenneth Ave, SEMA. Current balance is \$35,433.00.

5. Committee and Liaison Reports

A. Council Liaison - Mr. P. Smith

- Woodbrook Rd. - Pete said we are still waiting to hear on possible use of site as a solar farm. The Mayor & Council had a video conference scheduled today with Senator Booker's office, however, it was postponed until 12/21.
- Colonial Oaks – Pete has not heard further on the archaeological findings.
- Cornell-Dubilier – After touring the site, Dorothy directed some information to Pete Smith. Someone at the tour suggested the property could be condemned by the Boro for construction of a solar farm. Although it might not yield as many tax dollars as other development would, a solar farm would be less disruptive to the site and quicker to obtain permits etc. There was mention at the site tour, that the property may end up as a tractor trailer terminal. Pete said that back when he was on the Planning Board and the site was in its first stages of cleanup, he suggested a solar farm. However, the property was sold to a developer. Pete explained that his understanding is if the Boro were to attempt to condemn, we would need to pay the EPA/State for the cost of the remediation. The landowner and developer are going back & forth while the Boro is telling them they cannot build warehouses. They

have filed a lawsuit against the Boro for denying them the opportunity for trade. The Boro is trying to prevent additional exposure and cleanup that would result from breaking the cap to develop. Pete said we have conveyed the idea of a solar farm to the developer stating they may receive a tax break. Plus the Boro could buy the energy in order to power our schools/public buildings.

- Pete said the Mayor & Council approved purchasing additional deer fencing for HAW.

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

- Brian said last night's Planning Board meeting was cancelled, so there is nothing new to report.

C. Site Plan Review - Mr. A. Butrico

- Touch Dynamics (121 Corporate Blvd.) – Adam reviewed the plan that SPEC looked over last month. He will forward his comments to Dr. Tempel. The closest residence at Traditions is approximately 70 feet from this site. The current green buffer is 40 feet in height and will be removed. It will be replaced with six Sweet Gum trees which seem inadequate. There is a playground in close proximity to the loading dock area. Adam suggests they beef up the barrier.
- Oak Park Commons (formerly Fitness 19)(903 Oak Tree Rd.) – Existing building will be converted to a Popeyes restaurant. 66% of the building will be used as a restaurant and 33% will be available for lease. Adam noted the building footprint is in an area contaminated with lead, arsenic and other toxic substances. Will suggest the applicant get a recommendation from the NJDEP. There are small trees that will be removed. We will ask for a recycling plan.
- Fusion Fantasies (124 Case Dr.) - Applicant proposes a 2500 sq. ft. addition to the existing banquet hall. There will be no increase in impervious surface as the addition will be on existing paved area. Dr. Tempel has recommended a 'green roof'. There were no concerns.

D. ERI - Ms. D. Leporino

- Debra said according to Rich Wolff, we are still waiting for the Boro to approve a new cloud-based software program. John made mention that we should make sure we obtain a license to use the portion of the program we need.

E. Clean Communities - Dr. A. Tempel

- Debra reported that Kathleen Benton and her science students did a 'business walk' on 12/9 to distribute the flyer they helped develop. They reached out to approximately 70 businesses. Kathleen will send that list to Debra and Dr. Tempel. The science students have been a big help.
- In November Luke Melick cleared 81 storm drains and picked up 21 bags of litter and 25 lbs. of road debris.

F. Land Use - Dr. A. Tempel

- There was no report.

G. Forestry - Mr. A. Butrico

- Dorothy said she has all three Salem Oaks at her house. She dug the pots into the ground for the winter.
- OTOSP – Dr. Tempel's notes stated we should get up there to treat the sweetgum sprouts and see what is happening. Adam said he may be able to look over the area.

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

- Dorothy said the purchase order for the deer fencing has been generated. We will wait until Dr. DeVito is available with the equipment necessary and then get a crew together.

I. Historical Sites Preservation - Mr. L. Randolph

- Concerning the archaeological findings at the proposed Colonial Oaks site: Dorothy spoke with Glenn Cullen. It was decided that the negotiation to obtain or borrow the artifacts, which is a transaction of property, would have to be done legally. So, Glenn Cullen will need to follow thru on behalf of SPEC. The property owner can do whatever they want with artifacts, other than disposal.

J. Pollution - Mr. A. Butrico

- Cornell-Dubilier – Some SPEC members met on the 12/7 for a PowerPoint presentation and tour of the EPA's wetlands restoration. Dorothy said it was a great talk/walk by Diego Garcia and company. Dr. DeVito was very impressed by the success of the plantings. Vegetative growth was phenomenal for 1.5 years and the area looks like a natural marsh; all native species. Doug Partridge, Arcadis consultant, said they found a bunch of Mud Turtles and relocated them downstream towards the Pony Farm. We saw the effluent pipe where treated ground water is being released into the Bound Brook. This treatment will be done perpetually to prevent the PCB and TCE contamination in the ground water from entering the Bound Brook and re-contaminating the sediment after the remediation is finished. Dorothy noted that work should start at the end of the month on the 1st phase of OU4 starting in back of Sherbans into Veteran's Park. While the EPA might not be lowering the stream bed, they will be cleaning the sides of the banks and removing debris from the stream which should help lower the water level. They will be remediating behind Veteran's Park also. We should have our walking trails available afterwards.
- John distributed two EPA memos (attached): one on funding to the State for the DWSRF (Drinking Water State Revolving Fund) and CWSRF (Clean Water State Revolving Fund). The second memo addresses information to states providing directions on how to deal with PFAS (polyfluoroalkyl substances) discharges.

K. Green Team - Mr. T. Walsh

- Dorothy read Tom's report: Tom submitted the 'Keep the Storm Drains Clear of Leaves' to The Observer, TapInto and Boro website. Tom enjoyed the presentation and the representatives at the Cornell-Dubilier site visit. There will be no Green Team meeting this month; the next meeting is 1/26/23. Tom emailed Dr. Tempel about another uncovered road salt pile behind Aldis. Tom conveyed his 'thanks' to Councilman Pete Smith for being an effective voice for SPEC; Pete did an outstanding job. Everyone concurred.
- Dorothy read Dr. Tempel's report: Tom, Pete and I attended the Sustainable Jersey awards luncheon at the League of Municipalities Convention on 11/15. Bob Longo posted photos and explanation on Facebook, and I sent a press release to The Observer, TapInto and Boro website.
- Dorothy reported that Jonathan Walezak has resigned from SPEC due to his work schedule. He will remain active with the 'Creative Arts Committee'. The commission now has one regular and two alternate member vacancies to fill.

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

- Dr. Tempel posted on the Boro website an infographic from the NJDEP with tips for a more sustainable holiday season.

M. Stormwater Advisory Committee - Mr. J. Ferguson / Mr. T. Walsh

- John handed out copies of a 'Guide to Stormwater Management for Homeowners & Small Businesses' composed by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation. This is a good example to use to get individuals involved in trying to protect water quality. We'd like to train people to be able to demonstrate/teach folks about rain gardens/barrels etc. Pete said the High School Environmental Science students have been looking into that. Perhaps we can work together.
- John and Dr. Tempel attended the GBFCC meeting last week. Conflict still exists whether NJ has to pay back 25% (\$125,000,000) to the Federal government.

N. Environmental Specialist - Dr. A. Tempel

- There was no report.

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

- There was nothing additional to report.

6. Incoming / Outgoing Correspondence

- A list of correspondence is attached.

7. Old Business

- Dorothy asked Debra if the 'Diversity Committee' will be revived. Debra said the committee will be opened up to residents. Pete said we will see after a new Council President is elected in 2023.

8. New Business

- Pete Smith announced he will not return as SPEC's Council Liaison. He asked to be reassigned in order to broaden his knowledge of the workings of the Boro. It has been his honor and pleasure to work with members of SPEC, The Green Team and Kathleen Benton and her students. Pete will continue to pursue solar power for the Boro. Pete believes the Boro should look for hybrid vehicles and solar stations powered exclusively by solar panels as opposed to all electric.

9. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made, all were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m. The next reorganization and regular meeting are scheduled for January 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
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
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
SPCCA	-South Plainfield Clean Communities Association
SPEC	-South Plainfield Environmental Commission
USACE	-United States Army Corp of Engineers