

# South Plainfield Environmental Commission

## Official Minutes - July 13, 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 7:35 pm.

**Present:** Dorothy Miele, Debra Leporino, Adam Butrico, Jonathan Walezak and Rich Houghton (planning board liaison)

**Alternate members present:**

**Associate members present:** Lisa Roseo (secretary)

**Others:** Dr. A. Tempel (environmental specialist)

**Absent:** Tom Walsh (e), John Ferguson (e) and Pete Smith

### 2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the June 8, 2022 meeting were reviewed and all were in favor of approval.

### 3. Invitation for Public Comment

Former member Walter Kalman was in attendance to observe.

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

- O&E (FY2022 = \$2,625) The permanent budget was adopted. Dr. Tempel asked for ideas for spending. Since the last meeting we spent \$80 for fire extinguisher inspections at HAW. YTD spent = \$551.07. Balance = \$2,073.93.
- Clean Communities - The 2021 grant = \$48,287.91. Spent since June 8 = \$2,026.60 on: \$1,245 on wages for litter patrol & sign enforcement; \$183.60 on help wanted ad and \$475 for litter can maintenance. Total spent = \$48,452.84. Balance = \$3,056.57. Dr. Tempel said the 2022 grant = \$49,621.17 which was added to Edmund's account. So, our overall balance = \$52,677.54. We filled Kevin Kober's vacant position. Dr. Tempel hired a gentleman whose application she kept on file since we last hired Kevin Kober five years ago.
- Signs Trust Fund – Spent \$0. The balance = \$595.12. Dr. Tempel noticed a change to this account of a \$65 deposit as of 5/2020. Not sure where this came from. Dr. Tempel gave a history on the origin of the Signs Trust Fund.
- Harris Steel Trust Fund – Since the last report we spent \$0. Deposits = \$0. Current balance is \$35,433.00. Dr. Tempel checked the Edmunds account today. We did encumber \$20 to pay NJDEP for the bayberries, but the State hasn't submitted their invoice yet. There was a deduction of \$1,920 with no explanation. The Hawkeye Development 'in lieu' of planting payment of \$17,500 has not been credited to this account as well as the \$73,500 from the Park Avenue storage site. Pete Smith wants to sit down with Dr. Tempel and Len Miller to talk about a genuine street tree planting project.

### 5. Committee and Liaison Reports

#### A. Council Liaison - Mr. P. Smith

- There was no report.

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

- Rich said the Planning Board met last night and discussed the proposed solar farm behind Ames Goldsmith on South Clinton Avenue that SPEC previously commented on in March. We noted this being listed as a KCS as well as wetlands and requested an LOI. Rich said the applicant is waiting for a letter from the State; approval is contingent.
- Rich spoke to Bob Ackerman about naming a street after Dave Street. Bob just needs a brief description of Dave's legacy/contributions. Dr. Tempel will provide.
- Rich found out the proposed 'Colonial Oaks' apartments on New Brunswick Avenue is being developed by 'Premier Development of Raritan Borough'. We would need to talk with Len Miller, Boro Engineer, to ask if this plan is going ahead in light of the historic artifacts recently found on site.
- Dr. Tempel mentioned she attended a virtual Water Resources Association meeting on 7/11. They heard an application by Edgewood Properties to expand the sewer service area in Monroe Twp. for a 923-unit housing development. There are wetlands in the area, including Exceptional Value wetlands, and documented habitat for two Endangered species. Dr. Tempel ended up voting no in the chat box due to the problems we've experienced with Edgewood not following their approved plans/permits. However, most followed the Planning Department staff's recommendation to approve contingent on the NJDEP granting the permits.

## **C. Site Plan Review - Mr. A. Butrico**

- M&M Realty (1111 Durham Ave.) Adam went over the amended site plan. Applicant is enlarging the clubhouse, installing pickle ball courts and a 40 x 40 dog park. Adam recommends signage be placed at the dog park to pick up after pets to avoid fecal coliform pollution and keeping sick dogs away. Ensure waste bags are provided as well as a water source. Dogs should be registered at the complex for vaccinations.
- TFJ South Plainfield (Park Ave. & township line) – Adam suggested anti-idling signs near the U-Haul rental loading area.
- South Plainfield Realty Development (4801 Stelton Rd.)(Middlesex Mall) – Adam checked the site and application SPEC had briefly reviewed at a previous meeting. Adam said there are approximately 16 trees @ 2' in diameter in the parking lot that were not shown on the plans; should be included in their calculations. Applicant proposes 13 Eastern Red Buds. These trees do not tolerate road salt well. Dr. Tempel mentioned our commission had previously commented that we would like to see a more diversified planting plan. SPEC will request a formal tree plan, a more robust planting plan and anti-idling signs at the loading docks and drive-up spaces.

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

- There was nothing new to report.

## **E. Clean Communities - Dr. A. Tempel**

- Litter Cleanup – Lisa formatted and printed out all the 'Certificates of Appreciation'. Most were mailed. Dr. Tempel hand-delivered the High School Environmental Club certificates and Lisa delivered one to a neighbor. We will plan for the Fall Cleanup at the upcoming CCAB meeting.
- Litter can contract – Dr. Tempel requested quotes from two haulers. The Mayor & Council approved the contract for Pinto Brothers; price has increased to \$570/month. They haven't raised their prices since 2015.

- Dr. Tempel reported she submitted the 2021 Statistical Report to the NJCCC on time. She also requested an extension for spending the grant money. The report narrative asks for the number of littering citations issued. Dr. Tempel couldn't include that because she did not receive an email response from a few department heads requesting that information.
- Bag Up NJ – We will be setting up a 'Green Team' table at the upcoming 'Christmas in July' event on 7/23. The SPBA is advertising the event as 'litter free' as requested by Dr. Tempel and the CCA; Dr. Tempel also put out a press release. We will be handing out small plastic litter bags for people to use as they walk around, reusable totes and providing info on our 'Adopt-a-Spot' program. Any help would be appreciated. We also need to find additional venues for bag distributions.

#### F. Land Use - Dr. A. Tempel

- There was nothing new to report.

#### G. Forestry - Mr. A. Butrico

- Dorothy said the donated tree was planted in Putnam Park by the sign. She did not see a gator bag attached and is concerned about its survival in the summer heat. The Boro has started the COVID Memorial in the park where our Salem Oak will be planted. Jonathan said he had submitted a landscaping plan, however, the budget is limited. He will bring the plan to next month's meeting.
- Adam mentioned it looks like the homeowner at Lakeview/Church Street deliberately cut out a 3-4" girdle on the trunk to kill the tree. He asked if the Boro has an ordinance against that type of situation. D. Tempel said that is private property which our tree ordinance excludes. If the tree becomes a hazard, the homeowner can be summonsed.
- PSE&G tree removal – Dr. Tempel reported their permit is still pending. They revised the permit to reflect that they do plan to clearcut .3 acre (100 x 100) to perform a Phase II soil sampling. Dr. Tempel requested a signed statement from the property owner that they agree to the removal, which they provided. PSE&G agreed to make a payment in-lieu-of-planting of \$14,475. Their replacement estimate turns out to be a little more than twice the value of the unplanted trees.

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

- Dr. Tempel reported that on 7/10, a Troop 207 Eagle Scout candidate executed his project. He cut out 6 large fallen trees over trails, re-blazed the white trail and delineated the trail edges. Dr. Tempel advocated for the two bridge repairs.

#### I. Historical Sites Preservation - Mr. L. Randolph

- There was nothing new to report.

#### J. Pollution - Mr. A. Butrico

- Dr. Tempel presented a letter for a PPP (public participation plan) received from the current LSRP (licensed site remediation professionals) that was sent to all property owners within a 200-foot radius for 105 New Era Drive. The report explains the status of a cleanup that has been going on for years. The property is next to HAW and has housed a series of trucking companies. There is onsite pollution and additional migrating pollution.

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

- Jonathan said the team is working to stay ahead of actions so there isn't a major push to recertify at the Bronze Level. We are pursuing several actions e.g. diversity survey, anti-idling map. The survey was sent to all commission/committee chairs. It is supposed to be distributed to all members of those

groups to be filled out individually. Lisa will forward to all SPEC members. The Creative Arts team is meeting next Thursday. We will be working on a creative assets inventory. The team will be joining the GT table at 'National Night Out'.

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

- Dr. Tempel reported that in June, SPEC's Facebook page carried 8 posts: reached 8,221 people, 780 engagements, 85 comments and 13 shares.
- Dr. Tempel shared a post from the NJDEP about the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, seeking participation in a survey of ideas about what actions NJ should fund to combat global warming.

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

- John had sent several links to sites dealing with mitigation of stormwater damage to homes. Lisa will make sure members received via email.
- Dr. Tempel had 6,400 NPS pollution stormwater fliers printed to be included with the next tax bills. The \$598 was paid out from the Clean Communities Grant.

**N. Environmental Specialist - Dr. A. Tempel**

- Dr. Tempel said the Municipal Department received a letter from one of the HS Environmental Science Club students which Dorothy read aloud. The student expressed her thanks and appreciation to the department for their work in keeping our Boro clean of litter. The letter is appreciated.

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

- There was nothing new to report.

**6. Incoming / Outgoing Correspondence**

- A list of correspondence is attached.

**7. Old Business**

**8. New Business**

- Dr. Tempel mentioned Target Corporation submitted a plan to expand the Drive-up parking stalls. Lisa suggested 'No Idling' signs for those pickup spots.

**9. Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made, all were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for August 10, 2022 @ 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