

South Plainfield Environmental Commission

Official Minutes - October 12, 2022

1. Call to Order

Notice having been filed with the S.P. Observer and TAPinto SP, Vice Chairman John Ferguson called the Environmental Commission meeting to order in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act at 7:33 pm.

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

Alternate members present:

Associate members present:

Others: Dr. A. Tempel (environmental specialist)

Absent: Dorothy Miele (e), Jonathan Walezak (e) and Lisa Roseo (secretary)

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the September 14, 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 = \$551.07. Balance = \$2,073.93.
- Clean Communities - The 2022 grant = \$49,621.17. Spent since September 14 = \$4,164 on: \$1,422.50 on wages for litter patrol & sign enforcement; \$570 for litter can maintenance; \$1,000 for two assembly programs at Holy Savior Academy; \$51 for blank certificates and \$972 for two smoker's stations. YTD spent since 8/10 = \$26,792. Balance = \$22,829.
- 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 - Mr. P. Smith

- Pete mentioned Dorothy's inquiry to the NJ Office of Historic Preservation on artifacts possibly uncovered at the Colonial Oaks site on New Brunswick Avenue. He said Dorothy has not received a response yet.
- Pete was contacted by the Grant School music teacher with information on an arts organization called 'Bash the Trash'. The organization performs and educates environmental awareness with musical instruments made from reused and repurposed materials. Pete forwarded the info to Dr. Tempel. They are looking for sponsorships. Dr. Tempel will look into possible grants. Pete said Councilwoman Faustini suggested the Cultural Arts Commission may be able to help. Hopefully between Councilwoman Faustini and Dr. Tempel, it will come to fruition.
- Pete wrote a proposal for the HAW deer fencing project based on Dorothy's information and presented it to the Mayor & Council. Pete said they are not opposed to the fence but there are a couple council people who have questions about the location of the fencing and if it will prevent the

deer from going through the woods. They would like clarification on the location. This will be discussed further when the specific location options are presented.

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

- Brian said the Planning Board met last night. They discussed the 1111 Durham Avenue revised site plans. The revisions were based on our engineers/planners' comments. Specifics were agreed upon. Moving forward, we will be meeting monthly with their representatives to ensure adherence to the approved plans. Apparently, they were working off their own changed plans that were not yet approved by our engineers. The project plans are so considerable that it resulted in some miscommunication between our departments. As a result, we have installed new protocols.

C. Site Plan Review – Mr. A. Butrico

- Dr. Tempel said she received an email from the engineer for the 1 Cragwood Road site. The engineer asked for Dr. Tempel's review letter because their site plan is on the Planning Board docket next week. This is a whole revised plan Dr. Tempel needs to review.

D. ERI – Ms. D. Leporino

- Debra had a brief conversation with Rich Wolff. Debra believes the Boro has decided on a new software program. Details are forthcoming. The current paper tax maps are from 2009, which have not been fully updated. Debra said she hasn't proceeded with the ERI while waiting to see if a new program will be available.

E. Clean Communities – Dr. A. Tempel

- Dr. Tempel said the Fall Cleanup on 9/17 was very successful. 150 volunteers picked up 1.3 tons of litter. Dr. Tempel sent out a press release on social media sites. Debra said Kathleen Benton had her high school students very organized. Pete asked if we could offer a reward program, 'See something, Say something', to people who have identified litterers. Dr. Tempel said first we need to get the Police Department to agree to prosecute anybody who has proved to litter. Pete cited a couple littered areas of larger concern e.g. – Metuchen & Kentile Roads where truckers who park along the road, toss their urine-filled plastic bottles. Dr. Tempel said she no longer assigns volunteers to that hazardous area. Pete said the Police Department are currently not in a position to sit and monitor hot spots. Discussion continued on other methods to do public outreach to target specific trash items such as cigarette butts and pet feces. Pete suggested using grant money to erect signage in targeted litter areas. Dr. Tempel said we will need to discuss specifics/details for these proposals. Debra and Dr. Tempel suggested the SPCCA might be able to manage a campaign.
- Debra said the CCAB will be meeting on 10/19 to come up with ideas to roll out the SPCCA to membership.

F. Land Use – Dr. A. Tempel

- There was nothing new to report.

G. Forestry – Mr. A. Butrico

- Street Tree Planting - Dr. Tempel gave an update on the resident's request to have a tree replaced in front of their house on 117 Fairmount Avenue. Dr. Tempel is looking at contractors; she is awaiting a quote from LDS.
- Adam proposed putting together a 'champion tree' list for South Plainfield. He said there is a Black Cherry tree on Randolph Avenue that might qualify as the fifth largest type in New Jersey. Dr. Tempel

mentioned that many years ago, SPEC ran an Arbor Day 'Biggest Tree in SP' contest. The biggest tree nominated was a White Oak on Longhill Drive.

- Dr. Tempel will be digging planting holes in HAW on 10/14 for the Bayberries. She would appreciate anyone able to help.

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

- There was no report.

I. Historical Sites Preservation - Mr. L. Randolph

- There was no report.

J. Pollution - Mr. A. Butrico

- Dr. Tempel reported that on 10/11 Glenn Cullen told her Diego Garcia, EPA, stopped by with a heads up that work on the Bound Brook portion of the Cornell-Dubilier remediation project will begin in December. They will be removing a great many trees because the contamination is all through the flood plain. Dr. Tempel noted the area downstream of Veteran's Park between where the Cedar Brook and Bound Brook come together. It once had a series of nature trails that have been fenced off when contamination was found. The small pond in there was supposedly remediated. However, according to Diego Garcia, it is a big source of contamination that will be a part of the OU4 cleanup. Dr. Tempel wants to speak with Dorothy about prior comments made by Walter Stochel, EWA, about historical artifacts found along that area of the Bound Brook. SPEC wrote a letter supporting his comments that asked for a study to be done. We have not heard back about whether studies were performed.

K. Green Team - Mr. T. Walsh

- Tom reported the Green Team met on 9/22. 'Solar Landscape' gave a presentation. The team will discuss further at the next meeting on 10/27.
- Dr. Tempel said we received Sustainable NJ recertification for the 20 points of actions we submitted. We are certified at the Bronze level for another three years.

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

- Dr. Tempel reported that in September, SPEC's Facebook page carried 5 posts: reached 1,905 people, 270 engagements.

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

- John attended the GBFCC meeting in October. The commission is proceeding with property buy-outs and finalizing contracts. The \$400 million federal dollars received is under the USACOE budget. The commission will be requesting \$70 million to finish a section in Middlesex Boro. More importantly the USACOE went to the federal government and requested money from the new relief flooding fund. They received \$3 million which they will use to re-study the upper basin. They realize that they need to address that to prevent more severe flooding in the lower basin.
- John spoke at the last CRS/MS4 meeting about the county's hazard mitigation project and the towns that are developing projects. A representative from the NJDEP mentioned South Plainfield's stormwater management ordinance passed their approval.
- Dr. Tempel said, relating to what Diego Garcia told Glenn Cullen about the Cornell-Dubilier Bound Brook mitigation, the EPA's project goal is to get rid of the contaminated sediment. They are not allowed to do anything about dredging the stream to increase flood storage volume. However, when they completed the recent project of removing trees and digging up contaminated soil on the C-D site,

they removed a lot of junk in the stream. If there is anything similar along the Bound Brook, removing that trash will help increase flood storage volume.

N. Environmental Specialist - Dr. A. Tempel

- There was nothing additional to report.

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

- There was no report.

6. Incoming / Outgoing Correspondence

- A list of correspondence is attached.

7. Old Business

- Reusable bags – As discussed last month, John spoke with Jennifer Apostol, Director of the Middlesex County Food Bank, about accepting people's overflow of reusable bags. They would gladly accept clean, well-conditioned bags. John said he would be able to drop the donations off. Dr. Tempel will speak with Tree Olan, Senior Center Director, about staging a drop-off box for the bags.

8. New Business

9. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made, all were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for November 9, 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