

South Plainfield Environmental Commission

Official Minutes - August 11, 2021

1. Call to Order

Notice having been filed with the Courier News and S.P. Observer, Chairwoman Dorothy Miele called the Environmental Commission meeting to order in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act at 7:33 pm. This meeting took place at the Highland Avenue Woods Nature Center.

Present: Dorothy Miele, Debra Leporino, Danielle Hurst, John Ferguson, Adam Butrico and Pete Smith (council liaison)

Alternate members present:

Associate members present:

Others: Dr. A. Tempel (environmental specialist)

Absent: Tom Walsh (e), Jordan Mandel (e), Jonathan Walezak, Brian Bythell (planning board liaison) and Lisa Roseo (secretary)

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the July 14, 2021 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 (FY2021 = \$2,225) Since the last meeting we spent \$367.59 on a Green Team table cover. YTD spent = \$875.82. Balance = \$1,349.18
- Clean Communities - (2020 grant \$45,370) We received the 2021 grant = \$48,287.91. We also have an additional \$3,221 (unexplained) in the budget. Dr. Tempel is asking for clarification. Spent since July 14 = \$2,140.52 on: \$475 on litter can maintenance; \$1,029.26 on litter removal/sign enforcement salary & wages; \$156.26 for truck maintenance and \$480 for foldable tote bags. YTD spent = \$14,050. Balance = \$82,628.
- Signs Trust Fund – Spent \$0. The balance = \$595.12.
- Harris Steel Trust Fund – Since the last report we spent \$0. Deposits = \$0. Current balance is \$35,981.00.

5. Committee and Liaison Reports

A. Council Liaison - Mr. P. Smith

- Woodbrook Road – Pete reported that he will be meeting with the current landowners to propose a solar farm on site. The farm would be partially on Boro-owned land. He is trying to encourage the owners not to build by offering a tax break and/or purchasing the generated electricity from them. Pete continues to do research on solar farms.
- Pete offered to donate, via the Elks Lodge, a tent/canopy for SPEC/Green Team with their logo. Pete is encouraging the lodge to be more community oriented. Dorothy said the Historical Society could benefit from one as well. They also participate in community events. Pete agreed.
- Pete mentioned that he voted no on the Cannabis Ordinance. The reason being that the State has not finalized all the details of legalization. Details such as how much a license will cost, can it be transferred, licensing priorities etc. have not been decided. However, towns were required to decide what they will or will not allow by August 22. Pete explained there are six types of licenses: cultivation, delivery service,

manufacturing, wholesale (only sell to stores), retail and distribution (trucking). The Boro decided to prohibit all classes of licensed business in residential, commercial and historical downtown districts. They approved permitting manufacturing, wholesale and distribution within areas of the M-3 zone.

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

- There was no report.

C. Site Plan Review - Mr. A. Butrico / Mr. J. Mandel

- Dunkin Donuts (2007 Park Ave.) – Adam reported the applicant wants to cut down the two drive-thru lanes into one. They will be installing a walk-in freezer and moving the trash enclosure. No recycling plan was provided. Adam suggested recommending the applicant return some of the unused pavement to grass/plants.
- Clean Harbor Environmental (165 Ryan St.) – Applicant plans on installing a 20,000 gallon above-ground fuel tank – 10,000 gallons for gasoline & 10,000 for diesel. The steel tank will be double walled. Adam noted the plans do not show secondary containment that would hold all 20,000 gallons in case of catastrophic failure; also, does not show a ‘lip’ around the tank to contain small leaks. They did not provide an EIS. John said they will have to provide a SPCC (spill prevention control & countermeasures) plan.
- JDN Enterprises (800 Montrose Ave.) – Current VALID building. They propose to demolish existing building. Only the five monitoring wells will remain. It will be replaced with a 112,000 sq. ft. building with 27 loading docks. Impervious coverage will increase from 32.7% to 54.2%. They will incorporate 10% pervious pavement into their construction. Will be constructing three drainage basins. They did not provide a formal tree plan, recycling plan and traffic impact statement. The plan shows planting of 28 new trees. Adam & Jordan estimated removal of approximately 200 trees. Dr. Tempel noted that our current tree ordinance, which is part of the subdivision ordinance, is designed for residential subdivisions. The ordinance allows removal, without replacement, trees growing in the footprint of the building and driveway. If you translate that to a commercial development, the parking lot might be akin to a driveway; it is unclear. That is why the Boro needs to adopt a specific tree ordinance. All these large warehouses that are being constructed are not required to replace the trees removed. For this plan, we can calculate for the trees being removed where the drainage basins will be installed. SPEC will request stormwater calculations.
- Cragwood Warehouse (50 Cragwood Rd.) – Applicant proposes a 60,000 sq. ft. warehouse with 7 loading docks. This plan was formerly introduced as a firearms training facility. They will be incorporating some pervious pavement. There is a basic recycling plan provided; will request a more specific plan. Proposing to remove 142 trees and replace with 17. SPEC will also request a formal tree removal/replacement plan. Dr. Tempel noted there is a large area of wetlands. Adam said there is a drainage swale they will replace with a four-foot underground pipe that would handle what would normally flow in with a storm plus parking lot runoff.

D. ERI - Ms. D. Leporino

- Debra reported that she and Dr. Tempel started using the updated tax list to update the open space index.

E. Clean Communities - Dr. A. Tempel

- Dr. Tempel reported the CCAB met on 7/21. Mostly discussed the plastic bag ban. We started to implement the public outreach at ‘National Night Out’. We directly spoke with approximately 200

people. Dorothy worked up a new set of questions for the prize wheel. Set 9/18 as the Fall Litter Cleanup date. Debra is planning a CBA membership drive, pizza party for members and Glitter Awards.

- Dr. Tempel said we need to figure out how to secure the Boro's litter cans before we put more out. Pete suggested securing them to a cement pad. Dr. Tempel said we need to purchase the type of cans that can be secured. The most common type we use would cost \$1,100 for a set of two from 'Kettle Creek'.
- Adopt-a-Spot - Debra finalized the Pender Family and Pack 207 contracts for Willow Park and the Nature Reserve. Debra said the Nu Xi Omega Sorority wants to have a BBQ and cleanup at Putnam Park but has not updated and renewed their contract yet. Debra is working on getting their renewal. Dr. Tempel said they need to make those arrangements through the Recreation Department and can still do a cleanup at their BBQ.
- Debra could use help in making 100+ phone calls to the businesses on the CBA list to see how many still exist and to see if the contact information is current.

F. Land Use - Dr. A. Tempel

- Green Brook Flood Control Project – Dr. Tempel attended the 8/7 meeting. It was an annual event to memorialize those people who died in the 1973 flood and in the flood caused by Hurricane Floyd. The current state of the project was also summarized. The federal budget has \$35,000,000 for the current fiscal budget; the NJDEP needs to come up with a 25% match to access those funds. They have come up with \$10,000,000. At the current funding rate, the project will be done in 2045.
- Dr. Tempel said there is a possible wetlands violation at 6305 South Clinton Avenue. There was a complaint from an adjacent business that a residential property is being used illegally by a paving contractor; that is an unpermitted use. Rich Wolff found the owner was not aware; the property manager was renting the space to the contractor. Looks like the contractor has encroached on the riparian buffer. Dr. Tempel looked at the property and found the stream is a good ten feet below what looks like old fill. It doesn't look like there are any wetlands on the property anymore, although next door, Randazzo was forced to leave nearly half his land unused.

G. Forestry - Mr. A. Butrico / Mr. J. Schmidt

- Dr. Tempel received a report from a resident on Highland Avenue that the Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) is infesting the Nature Reserve behind his house. They discussed the lack of helpful information from the State. More calls are coming in. Dr. Tempel tried reaching out to the Middlesex County Parks Department to see if they have a strategy in place because people are concerned. They have not responded yet. John offered to reach out to someone at the MC Parks Department.
- Dr. Tempel said she is planning a visit to the OTOSP with Lisa and Danielle to check on the sweetgum sprouts.

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

- Dorothy said there was nothing new to report.

I. Historical Sites Preservation - Mr. L. Randolph

- There was nothing to report.

J. Pollution - Mr. A. Butrico / Ms. D. Hurst

- There was no report.

K. Green Team - Mr. T. Walsh

- Dr. Tempel reported the GT was at 'National Night Out'.
- Sustainable NJ has responded to our application. Twelve of our actions need to be revised and some actions need a little work. It looks like we will be recertified.
- Dr. Tempel has not had the time to review the proposed solar ordinance Pete provided. Bob Longo and Dr. Tempel think the GT might table the solar discussion because they probably have enough points for certification. Pete agreed. Dorothy asked if there were any changes to Jonathan's 'Green Map'. Dr. Tempel said we are going to need to explain how the community can use the map. She came up with an idea to have a link to the map on the Boro website "Welcome to South Plainfield" line. It would contain some of the many resources available in the Boro. It can also have an avenue where people can upload their info to the site. Dorothy suggested the site could have links to the official websites of each resource in town with a little description. Someone would need to administer to this site.

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

- Dr. Tempel reported in July, SPEC's Facebook page carried 5 posts: reached 5,434 people, 676 engagements and 23 shares. The GT Facebook page had 4 posts, reaching 62 people with 2 engagements and 1 share. Dr. Tempel wants to see the GT page reach more people. Dorothy suggested 'boosting' the GT page. Dr. Tempel agreed.

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

- John mentioned his 'Rain Garden' article that was published.
- John reported the OEM is finishing up the 'Hazard Mitigation Plan' for 25 municipalities. It is in the final stages; towns are reviewing their sections. The County will review and send to the State.
- The CRS/MS4 meeting is tomorrow. A contractor from Rutgers will be discussing the Hazard Mitigation Plan and several other topics.
- The County is working on the 'Destination 2040' Master Plan. There will be a few more open forums taking place.
- The 'Resilient NJ' Project for towns along the Raritan River continues. John noted that, Woodbridge Twp. is doing great work.

N. Environmental Specialist - Dr. A. Tempel

- There was nothing additional to report.

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

- Dorothy announced that today is Danielle's last meeting as she is relocating out of state to pursue a new job offer. Thanked Danielle for her contribution.

6. Incoming / Outgoing Correspondence

- A list of correspondence was provided.

7. Old Business

- Debra said the Human Relations Committee had a booth at 'National Night Out'. There is meeting next week. Debra will give the Plastic Bag Ban info and Fall Litter Cleanup info to the Chairman and Secretary to disperse to committee members to bring back to their respective committee members.

8. New Business

9. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made, all were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for September 8, 2021 @ 7:30 p.m. in the Highland Avenue Woods Nature Center – 115 Sylvania Place.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa Roseo
Environmental Commission Secretary

Acronyms

ANJEC	-Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions
BOA	-Board of Adjustment
CBA	-Clean Business 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
SPBA	-South Plainfield Business Association
SPEC	-South Plainfield Environmental Commission
USACE	-United States Army Corp of Engineers