

# South Plainfield Environmental Commission

## Official Minutes - December 8, 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 7:35 pm.

**Present:** Dorothy Miele, John Ferguson, Tom Walsh, Debra Leporino, Adam Butrico, and Brian Bythell (planning board liaison).

**Alternate members present:** Jordan Mandel

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

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

**Absent:** Pete Smith

### 2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the November 10, 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 \$0. YTD spent = \$947.86. Balance = \$1,227.14
- Clean Communities - (2020 grant \$45,370) We received the 2021 grant = \$48,287.91. Spent since November 10 = \$2,218 on: \$475 on litter can maintenance; \$655 for display ad (Bag Up NJ) and \$1,088 on litter removal/sign enforcement salary & wages. YTD spent = \$20,239 from the 2021 grant, \$45,370 from the 2020 grant (2020 grant balance = \$0), plus \$5,819 from the 2019 grant = \$71,437. Balance = \$31,270.
- 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. Dorothy said the \$73,500 check from the Park Ave. storage facility was found. It is sitting in the Borough budget. It will be placed in the tree fund if we need it.

### 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

- Brian said there was one plan discussed at the last meeting – Minford Avenue subdivision. The applicant made several changes but didn't submit new plans. SPEC made prior comments on this site plan; we claimed there were wetlands on the property. The applicant's engineer stated the wetlands are caused by lack of storm sewers on Minford and the surrounding area. Brian said the applicant obtained an LOI from the DEP, which we requested. Dr. Tempel has not seen the LOI or the permit from the DEP. Dr. Tempel said the serious environmental impact from this subdivision will be the loss of all the mature trees. The small, isolated wetlands are not really a functioning ecosystem. Brian said the site application is postponed till January 25.

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

- David Riccadonna (1804 Woodland Ave.) – applicant proposes to subdivide his oversize residential lot into two undersized lots. There is currently one house and one proposed construction. Jordan said several trees will be removed but, the applicant did not provide a formal tree removal/replacement plan. They waived an EIS and need several variances. The proposed lot coverage does fall under the 25% maximum. SPEC will ask for a formal tree plan.

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

- Debra said she and Dr. Tempel will be meeting Friday to compare and update the open space list and map using the current tax list. Any changes will be made manually on the map with colored pencils; maps are no longer digitized. Debra asked if we could request the maps be digitized. Dr. Tempel said we would then need someone to become literate in mapping software to make use of our data. It is a very specialized field. Debra suggested asking John Abbruzzese if he is familiar with any software programs.

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

- Plastic Bag Ban – Dr. Tempel ordered a half-page full-color ad in the SP Observer borough-wide 11/26 issue.
- Dr. Tempel applied to the County for their 2022 ‘Recycling Enhancement Grant’ of \$5,000 for the purchase of reusable shopping totes. This would cover 1000 bags @ \$4/bag (heavy-duty canvas) Dr. Tempel had to include a plan for distributing the bags to the public. She wrote that volunteers would staff booths at all appropriate Boro events. Also, we have 250 foldable bags that can be handed out at the Spring Litter Cleanup.
- Riley School had an Illusion Maker program early in November.
- CBA – Debra started updating the CBA membership spreadsheet. The mailing list has over 200 names/addresses that Debra will create mailing labels for. First, we need to review the list to omit businesses no longer in town and those who are not members.
- Adopt-a-Spot – Debra said she will look at who needs to receive a 1<sup>st</sup> quarter renewal form. She reported on the 2021 summary – there were 7 renewals, 2 new adopters & 2 pending. Dr. Tempel said Kevin Kober notified her that he will not be renewing his agreement for the Clinton Ave. extension effective 12/31/21. We need to find a new adopter. Dr. Tempel sent an email blast to adopters asking for their year-end reports.

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

- There was nothing new to report.

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

- Adam mentioned an article he read about a new Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) trap. He explained you wrap a wide wick coated with cooking oil around the tree. Then you place a plastic strip above the wick. The SLF will slip and fall off the tree to the ground. Lisa suggested having a demonstration for the trap. Dr. said we can set up a demo in HAW.
- Dr. Tempel received a request from resident Rene Despinos at 117 Fairmount Avenue for a replacement tree in front of his house. DPW took down a tree he had asked to be pruned; they may have determined it was hazardous. Dr. Tempel asked members if we want to pay for the replacement tree out of the tree fund. Members were in favor. We will ask DPW to replant.

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

- Dr. DeVito contact Dorothy. He checked the deer fencing, it is secure. He plans on planting 24 native American Strawberry bushes within the deer enclosure.
- Dorothy said two steps were replaced in the back of the Nature Center. Also, DPW plans on fixing the ceiling in the History Center room and will look at the electrical box on the outside of the building, which is rusting.

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

- There was nothing to report.

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

- Adam mentioned that while recently in Philly, he reported a possible violation to the DEP. He noticed a heavy equipment operator picking up loads of soil with probable oil contamination and dropping it on the ground instead of in a proper container. Adam asked SPEC about the appropriate procedure associated parties should take. Jordan said the property owner should have an environmental consultant or LSRP (Licensed Site Remediation Professional). He suggested if Adam is near the site again, to look for a posted sign stating 'Environmental Remediation in Progress' along with contact info.
- Brian asked if there is an update on Middlesex Water Company's high level of PFOA's (perfluorooctanoic acid). No one was aware of any. John said they will need to install an addition to the plant to clean to acceptable levels.

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

- Tom reported he, Bob Longo and Dr. Tempel attended the Sustainable NJ ceremony awarding our Bronze Certification at the League of Municipalities convention on 11/16. Dr. Tempel sent a press release to several media/social media sites.
- Tom said the GT will be meeting tomorrow to review action items in order to apply for recertification yearly. Dr. Tempel noted we need to pursue new action items. She picked up some fliers at the convention. There are many new action items and some items have been reorganized. There are a lot of opportunities in the EV area; there are EV cars listed on the NJDEP's state contract list. There are grant funds available to help purchase. Dr. Tempel said we really need more volunteers to tackle additional actions.
- Tom said he met with the irrigation company for the High School greenhouse. Tom forwarded the pricing he received to Shanti Murray, Kathleen Benton and Angela Green. He was given three prices for separate plans. They will be looking for funding/grants.

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

- Dr. Tempel reported in November, SPEC's Facebook page carried 8 posts: reached 1,807 people, 43 engagements, 3 shares and 2 comments. The GT Facebook page had 4 posts, reaching 550 people, 50 engagements and 4 shares. Idle Free SP had one share reaching 1 person

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

- Tom wrote a 'Clear the Drains' article that was posted in TAPinto, The Observer and our social media sites.
- Dr. Tempel reported that every year the Boro is required to submit a report to the NJDEP on how we are complying with the stormwater management rules; SPEC takes the lead in this. Dr. Tempel said that

despite a series of excellent articles by Tom Walsh and John Ferguson, she thinks our education program may not have satisfied the DEP's requirements. She wrote the report to try and fit our activities into their point-bearing categories. Dr. Tempel printed info on actions from different categories for Tom and John to look at. We need to accumulate 12 points from the actions; three of five possible categories must be performed. Dr. Tempel suggested the stormwater committee get together to discuss what we can do beyond writing articles. Dorothy asked if our tree sapling giveaway can be tied in as an action. All this will be discussed further.

- John reported the County put in their hazard mitigation plan to the State; all 25 towns participated. The State asked for a few adjustments; after the State approves, it will be sent to FEMA.
- John said the NJDEP, and State Police are pushing municipalities to implement a LEPC (local emergency planning committee) with an emergency response plan for each facility within their town that has chemicals/hazardous materials. Technically the plans will be the same e.g., notification, how to isolate, who needs to be contacted etc.

## 6. Old Business

- Human Relations Committee – Debra said the committee hosted a dance for special needs people – Buddy Ball Dance. The next meeting is on 12/16. Debra asked members if they approve Debra's reappointment to the committee. Members voted yes unanimously.
- John said the County will be putting 'No Idling' signs in Spring Lake Park.

## 7. New Business

- Jordan announced he will not be seeking reappointment from SPEC. He expressed his pleasure with working with everyone and his experiences. Dorothy mentioned that Jordan would have been eligible for Danielle's vacant seat. Therefore, Jordan must notify Amy Antonides before Jonathan Walezak can be appointed instead. SPEC will then have Alternative I & II appointments available.
- Dr. Tempel asked members to submit any accomplishments in 2021 and goals for 2022. Please email her at [atempel@southplainfieldnj.com](mailto:atempel@southplainfieldnj.com).

## 8. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made, all were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m. The next reorganization and regular meetings are scheduled for January 12, 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
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