

# South Plainfield Environmental Commission

## Official Minutes - July 14, 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 7:30 pm. This meeting took place at the Highland Avenue Woods Nature Center.

**Present:** Dorothy Miele, Tom Walsh, Debra Leporino, Danielle Hurst, and Rich Houghton (planning board liaison)

**Alternate members present:** Jordan Mandel

**Associate members present:** Jonathan Walezak and Lisa Roseo (secretary)

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

**Absent:** Adam Butrico (e), John Ferguson (e) and Pete Smith (council liaison)

### 2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the June 9, 2021 meeting were reviewed and the following clarification was made: under Green Team, 6<sup>th</sup> line should read: Councilman Pete Smith previously suggested. After the correction, 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 temporary budget = \$1,000) Since the last meeting we spent \$0. YTD spent = \$508.23. Balance = \$491.77. Dr. Tempel said she wanted to ask Councilman Smith if the final budget has been adopted because Edmunds is only showing \$1,000, not the \$2,225 we requested. Dorothy mentioned that the letter that accompanied the last tax bill stated that our tax amount is higher due to State aid not being allocated yet due to Covid. So perhaps the budget was not adopted yet.
- Clean Communities - (2020 grant \$45,370) Spent since June 9 = \$2,716 on: \$475 on litter can maintenance; \$1,591.00 on litter removal/sign enforcement salary & wages and \$650 for NPS Pollution Tip Cards. YTD spent = \$12,066. Balance = \$33,313. We received the 2021 grant for \$48,287.91. It is not active in the budget yet.
- Signs Trust Fund – Spent \$0. The balance = \$595.12.
- Harris Steel Trust Fund – Since the last report we spent \$0. Deposits = \$0. We spent \$300 less on the Library tree planting than anticipated. Current balance is \$35,981.00.

### 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. There were no site plans reviewed. The board did comment on a 'Land Use' decision for cannabis warehousing/distribution. The board elected to allow zoning in the industrial area (M-3 zone) with no retail. The board wanted to determine what specific area it would be allowed if the town decides to allow the business. Rich said the State has not finalized their cannabis laws/regulations yet. In addition, it is still in violation of Federal law. There is deadline for towns to decide what they will or will not allow. There will be a re-evaluation period where local laws can be

adjusted based on what the State decides. It will be up to the Mayor & Council to adopt this at their 8/16 meeting.

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

- 511/513 Carmine Ave. – Jordan reported: current two-story multi-family dwelling. Applicant is proposing to subdivide into two single-family lots. There are no environmental concerns because there are no planned improvements.
- Jordan received three new site plans this evening:
  - Clean Harbors – Jordan will review further, paying particular attention to whether there will be secondary containment for the proposed 20,000 gallon above-ground fuel tank.
  - Jordan and Adam will review the three new site plans and bring their comments to next month's meeting.

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

- Debra reported that MaryFrances sent the most recent tax list which Debra will compare to the list from two years ago. Will look at what parcels have been sold, rezoned etc. in order to update the open space index.

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

- Adopt-a-Spot - Debra said she followed up with two adoptees about renewals. Nu Xi Omega Chapter wants to renew their agreement for Putnam Park, but they've never submitted a clean-up report in the past. Therefore, we don't know if they have been performing clean-ups. Debra said their chapter representative was not aware of clean-up reports. Dr. Tempel explained that their agreement was a little different than most. Their group stated they would go into the park a few times a year to assess the condition of the park/equipment and maintain/spruce up etc. But they never did. Debra will ask the group to fill out a new agreement. Debra also said she plans on putting out press releases by the quarter.
- Debra said she will be working on a membership drive for the SPCBA; considering a press release. She's also considering mailing information about the upcoming fall litter cleanup and available Adopt-a-Spots to current members in hopes businesses will permanently adopt. Jonathan and Lisa asked if the available Adopt-a-Spots are listed on the Boro website. Debra will work on these details.
- Dr. Tempel reported she attended an ANJEC webinar 'Rolling Out the New Plastic Pollution Reduction Law'. It focused on how to publicize the law and promote use of reusable bags. We need to alert people to the fact that come next May, they will not have access to single-use bags at stores. Dr. Tempel suggested using grant money to buy reusable bags e.g., a bag that folds up to wallet-size. She will also speak to Councilman White and ask if his business contacts are aware of this upcoming ban. There are things the commercial sector will need to take into consideration e.g., what to use in place of single-use bags, use up current inventory. Debra said she will also invite Councilman White to the SPBAG meeting.
- Dr. Tempel mentioned that the MCIA did get out to clean up their part of Coolidge Street.
- Dr. Tempel said she received another complaint about litter in the Community Pool wooded area. Kristina at DPW forwarded the complaint to Dr. Tempel thinking the property is Green Acres. Dr. Tempel emailed Kristina to state that is Boro land, and the problem is access. Dr. Tempel asked if DPW can talk with the Recreation Department about getting the lock off the gate.
- The litter can contract expires on 7/31. Dr. Tempel inquired if she can just contact Pinto Brothers with a new RFP (request for proposal) as they have been the only company that has responded to quote

requests for the last several years. Glenn Cullen said if the quote is under \$6,000, only one quote is needed. The current contract is \$5,700.

- Dr. Tempel reported that two litter cans are missing on South Plainfield Avenue and four cans in Putnam Park. Jonathan noticed the recycling can in Cotton Street Park seems to be missing. He will check to see if it was relocated. Debra suggested chain-locking them. Dr. Tempel said she will consider that, although it will make it difficult to empty them. We may have to consider purchasing cans with removable liners that can be bolted to the ground.

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

- There was nothing to report.

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

- Dr. Tempel mentioned we have been getting complaints from residents near Franklin School about Spotted Lanternfly activity. Apparently, they have infested the Tompkins Avenue Open Space. Discussed some control methods e.g., contact insecticides, systemic insecticides, traps. Dr. Tempel posted information on SPEC's Facebook page. She said it might be assumed that they are also at the OTOSP because we found a nymph last year. Dr. Tempel suggested doing a field trip to also check the sweet gum sprouts.
- Dr. Tempel said the River Birches were planted in Willow Park.

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

- Dorothy said DPW sanded and painted the doors at the Nature Center.

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

- There was nothing to report.

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

- Dorothy mentioned the tree replacement planting was done at the Cornell-Dublier site.

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

- Dr. Tempel said the GT will have a booth at 'National Night Out' on 8/3. She looked into purchasing a durable table cover with a color logo that will say 'South Plainfield Green Team'. The cost is approximately \$380. Debra made a motion to purchase, seconded by Jonathan, all were in favor. Dr. Tempel said help will be needed to staff the table.

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

- Dr. Tempel reported in June, SPEC's Facebook page carried 5 posts: reached 3,973 people, 344 engagements and 8 shares. Dr. Tempel also posted to 'Idle Free' on the Boro Facebook page. The GT Facebook page had one post, reaching 27 people with 5 engagements.

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

- Tom reported that John Ferguson wrote an article explaining what groundwater is and why it is important, which was posted on the Boro website.
- Dr. Tempel attended an ANJEC webinar on things Environmental Commissions should know to look for during site plan review regarding the new stormwater management regulations. It is extensive, so she would like to discuss this at next month's meeting. Maybe the Stormwater Committee should discuss first.

- Tom read John's email stating that he attended a CRS/MS4 meeting. John is asking SPEC members if there is any subject he can post on the Boro website to keep the information flowing. Dr. Tempel said John has been reporting/following towns' flood management plans.

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

- There was nothing additional to report.

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

- There was nothing new to report.

**6. Incoming / Outgoing Correspondence**

- A list of correspondence was provided.

**7. Old Business**

- Debra said the Human Relations Committee is holding a special meeting tomorrow night to talk about the winners of the 'Juneteenth' essay contest, which were announced at Monday's Boro Council meeting.

**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 August 11, 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