

# South Plainfield Environmental Commission

## Official Minutes - May 12, 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 7:32 pm. This meeting took place at the Highland Avenue Woods Nature Center.

**Present:** Dorothy Miele, Tom Walsh, John Ferguson, 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) and Pete Smith (council liaison)

### 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes for the April 14, 2021 meeting were reviewed and all were in favor of approval.

Debra expressed interest in being renamed the ERI chairperson, so Dr. Tempel suggested the agenda be amended to list Debra as the chair. Tom made the proposal and it was seconded by John. No objections.

### 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 = \$491.77. Balance = \$508.23.
- Clean Communities - (2020 grant \$45,370) Spent since April 14 = \$1,685 on: \$1,170 on sign enforcement and litter removal salary & wages; \$475 for litter can maintenance and \$40 for annual Clean Communities seminar. YTD spent = \$7,832.39. Balance = \$37,545.98. Dr. Tempel said when she applied for an extension to spend the 2020 Clean Communities budget in 2021, she found the NJCCC (New Jersey Clean Communities Council) is extending all town's spending deadline on the 2020 grant to 12/31/21. We will be receiving our 2021 grant money soon. Dr. Tempel mentioned she has been thinking about purchasing a new pickup truck for the program. The current 2011 truck was purchased using Clean Communities grant money and recycling program money as it is shared. The truck is showing its age. Dr. Tempel will speak with Glenn Cullen and ask if street sweeping salaries will be taken out of the grant. Grant money only allows up to 25% to be spent on equipment, however, we can use money from last year's grant too. Dorothy mentioned possibly purchasing a drone which can be useful in several ways. Dr. Tempel said the Clean Communities budget can be discussed further at the upcoming summer CCAB meeting.
- Signs Trust Fund – Spent \$0. The balance = \$595.12.
- Harris Steel Tree Fund – Since the last report we spent \$0. Deposits = \$0. Current balance is \$35,378.41.

### 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 board met two weeks ago. Discussed and approved a Ryan Street application. The applicant wants to demolish existing house and construct an office/warehouse. Rich said our previous comments were discussed at the meeting.

- Dorothy asked Rich what the status is on the Longwood Estate application. Rich said the last time the applicant came before the board, they were very unprepared; missing information on their site plan and unable to answer questions. Waiting for them to come back before the board.

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

- 2780 Hamilton Blvd. - Jordan reported that Adam checked the site. The application is for site improvements/beautification. They want to add a patio, sidewalk, landscaping etc. There will be no tree removal; planning to plant 8 trees, 19 shrubs plus flowers. There are wetlands in the rear of the property according to GEOweb. They will not be disturbed. They did not provided a recycling plan. SPEC will ask for 'No Idling' signs. Adam's only suggestion was they consider using permeable patio stones.
- Jordan just received the rest of the site plans and reported on his quick glance:
- 1410 Sage Street - looks like they want to demolish the existing warehouse and make the parking lot bigger. Lot coverage is reduced, but it is still over the maximum, so they need a variance. Jordan will review the plan further and report back.
- 85 Tyler Place - former William Dunham Construction. Change of use application. Interior renovations. Jordan and Adam will review further.
- 1145 Foster Avenue - major subdivision. The applicant proposes to demolish the existing single-family home and construct 3 single-family homes facing Foster Terrace. Jordan and Adam will review further.

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

- Debra said she and Dr. Tempel will be getting together to catch up on the Open Space Index.

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

- Litter Cleanup - Dr. Tempel said we had well over 200 volunteers. Debra Leporino, Jordan Mandel and Walker (Dr. Tempel's husband) were all on hand to help. Great job. Dr. Tempel estimated nearly 5 tons of litter was picked up. Lisa is helping with the 'Certificates of Appreciation'. Debra suggested having a generic certificate on hand for the fall cleanup volunteers.
- Dr. Tempel contacted Rick Wolff, code enforcement, about the litter on Coolidge Street. He contacted the MCIA and got an agreement from them to clean up their frontage. They acquired the property for open space preservation.
- Dr. Tempel reported that the focus this year for the NJCCC is on the Plastic Bag Ban. They received a state grant to conduct an educational campaign so people will be prepared; they want municipalities to participate. The seminar will provide help with that. The ban starts next year. We can discuss this at our summer CCAB meeting.
- Debra said she will be working on a CBA membership drive soon.

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

- There was nothing new to report.

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

- Dr. Tempel met Lee Stanford from Leland Gas, a borough business owner, at the Dog Park to choose a spot for the red oak he is donating. She will be on hand for the planting to take photos for publicity.
- A girl scout troop planted a flowering cherry in Willow Park as a memorial to South Plainfield residents who died from COVID.
- Dr. Tempel said we had been planning on planting 3 redbuds in Willow Park for the last couple years. There have been several times she met Councilwoman Faustini and Len Miller on site to mark the planting spot. For whatever reason, they have not been planted. In the meantime, the Library has offered to plant trees in Willow Park. They asked if they can use the Harris Steel Tree Fund for the project. Dr. Tempel feels it is a good idea to void the PO for the redbuds and let the library go ahead with planting 7 heritage birch. Trees, mulch plus labor = \$3,416. Tom and Jonathan both think the proposed price is reasonable. Dr. Tempel recommends SPEC approve. Debra made a motion to approve, seconded by Tom, all in favor.
- Arbor Day Tree Seedling Distribution Program - Adam picked up 500 seedlings and gave them to

Kathleen Benton to bring to the High School parking lot on 4/24 for distribution; she also brought 10 volunteers. John Ferguson was also on hand. There were 60 + participants. Kathleen took the few seedlings that were left to plant at the edge of the fields or give out.

- Dr. Tempel received a call from resident Mike Marooly at 211 Franklin Avenue who said one of the 2 ivory silk tree lilacs in front of his house died last year; he would like to have it removed and replaced. Dr. Tempel checked the tree on 4/30 and saw a sprout coming up from the roots. Tom said the shoot is from stress, meaning the tree is on its way out. Dr. Tempel said the tree is already dead. When she checked the tree, the trunk guard was missing, and that the tree experienced a lot of deer rubbing/damage.

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

- Dorothy said we won't hear whether we've received the ANJEC grant for the deer fencing until 5/21.

I. Historical Sites Preservation - Mr. L. Randolph

- There was nothing to report.

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

- Cornell-Dublier - Tom mentioned he noticed there is a lot of work going on there; constructing a large pit. Dorothy said the pit has a bulkhead around it and is filled with sand; looks like the beginning of a water structure. Dr. Tempel said the EPA did say that once the polluted soil was removed, they were going to restore the area as wetlands; possibly a pond.

K. Green Team - Mr. T. Walsh

- Tom said all members are working on getting the tasks uploaded to the Sustainable NJ website for Bronze Certification. The next GT meeting is on 5/26. Tom said he is updating the Boro's Fleet Inventory. Danielle has uploaded some actions. Jonathan is working on the 'Green Map'. Tom said we received 109 lbs. at the 'Drug Take-back'. Dr. Tempel will go through the remainder of actions to be uploaded; Danielle offered further help. We have until 6/6 to upload the info.

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

- Dr. Tempel said our posts reached approximately 2000 people with various messages.

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

- John said he read through the storm water information on the Boro's website; it is written well and covers many points. John said he wants to work on better public outreach using that info to coincide with NJDEP's effort to educate more people on the importance of clean water. John is working on writing up info on the effects of pet waste on water quality. This will go towards Sust.NJ points. He plans on following up with write-ups on various topics.
- John reported the county is working with the NJDEP on a project called 'Resilient NJ'. It involves 7 municipalities along the Raritan River. The task is to come up with ways to protect the Raritan; identifying what specific assets are important to each individual town. How residents and businesses can be better prepared for the projected sea-level rise.

N. Environmental Specialist - Dr. A. Tempel

- There was nothing additional to report.

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

- There was nothing additional to report.

6. **INCOMING / OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE**

- A list of correspondences is attached
- Dr. Tempel mentioned the Mayor & Council adopted a resolution to apply for a county grant which will pay overtime to local DPW workers to clean litter on county roads.

7. **OLD BUSINESS**

- John mentioned that the Mayor & Council took SPEC's advice concerning the State's newest storm water amendments to apply to redevelopments as well as new developments. The Boro passed a

resolution, the County reviewed it, and the Middlesex County Water Resources Association approved.

## 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 June 9, 2021 @ 7:30 pm 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
CAG	- Community Advisory Group
CBA	- Clean Business Association
CCAB	- Clean Communities Advisory Board
CFMP	- Community Forestry Management Plan
DOT	- Department of Transportation
DPW	- Department of Public Works
EIS	- Environmental Impact Study
EPA	- Environmental Protection Agency
ERI	- Environmental Resources Inventory
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	- The Lead in Energy and Environmental Design
LOI	- Letter of Interpretation
MCDSWM	- Middlesex County Division of Solid Waste Management
MCUFAC	- Middlesex County Urban Forestry Advisory Committee
NJCF	- New Jersey Conservation Foundation
NJDEP	- New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
NOV	- Notice of Violation
OEM	- Office of Emergency Mgmt.
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