

# South Plainfield Environmental Commission

## Official Minutes - August 12, 2020

### 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. This meeting took place at the Highland Avenue Woods Nature Center.

**Present:** Dorothy Miele, Tom Walsh, Debra Leporino, Danielle Hurst (via phone), John Ferguson, 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 (council liaison)

### 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the July 8, 2020 regular 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 (FY2020 = \$2,225) Since the last meeting we spent \$102.45 to inspect fire extinguishers and exit lights at the Nature Center. YTD spent = \$577.45. Balance = \$1,645.55.
- Clean Communities - (2019 grant \$50,329.53) Spent since July 8 = \$2,166.44 on: \$1,282 on sign enforcement and litter removal salary & wages-plus new Wednesday parks litter patrol; \$475 for September litter can maintenance; \$62.50 on 'No Littering' signs and \$278.94 for two dozen grabbers. Spent YTD = \$35,949.31 since 8/15/19. The balance = \$14,379.92. NJDEP announced the 2020 Grants. We will be receiving \$45,370.37 which has not been entered into the Boro's computer system yet.
- 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 \$31,653.78.

### 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 the Planning Board had a virtual meeting on 7/28. They only discussed the Smith Street subdivision. It was approved. Dr. Tempel mentioned the applicant did have a permit to fill in the in-ground pool. SPEC made note again of the large tree on the property that was not shown on the site plan.

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

- The Church in Edison (225 Maple Ave.)(current Berkshire Hathaway) - Change of use application to a church. Adam and Jordan reported there is no proposed changes to the outside of the building. The traffic study states significantly less traffic every day except Sunday. Dr. Tempel said the applicant asked for a waiver for a recycling plan. Their plan shows various office spaces and a conference room. They should provide a recycling plan.
- AMAROK (345 Hollywood Ave.) - The applicant is proposing to install an 8 foot electric fence behind an existing chain link fence. They have high-value equipment on site. Their documentation states no

harm to humans, but doesn't address affect on wildlife. SPEC will convey concern for small animal injury.

**D. ERI -**

- There was nothing new to report.

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

- Dr. Tempel said the NJCCC (New Jersey Clean Communities Council) gave the go-ahead to conduct litter cleanups. There can be no more than 10 people working at a location, must mask and maintain distance. We must provide gloves, hand sanitizer and supervision. Supervision can be provided by a member of the participating group. Scheduled a CCAB meeting for 8/19 @7:00 to discuss details of hosting a cleanup on 10/3.
- Adopt-a-Spot - Debra reported there were no new renewals for the second quarter. Working on third quarter renewals.

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

- Dr. Tempel said there was nothing new to report.

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

- Dr. Tempel said that Pete Smith made an effort to get an answer on who is to enforce the tree removal ordinance. Pete emailed the Rich Wolff (zoning, code enforcement official), Glenn Cullen and Len Miller. No one has claimed responsibility. Dr. Tempel recommends that the whole tree removal ordinance be rewritten. It has never really been workable; have had to make modifications at times. Enforcement has been spotty also. Dr. Tempel said she is not usually consulted when / if the engineering department requests changes on a site plan that affects the proposed tree plan. Dorothy said we need to make a strong recommendation to the Mayor & Council to come up with a workable plan. Adam volunteered to look at the current tree ordinance and come back next month with some literature. The current tree ordinance is on the Boro website.
- OTOSP - Dr. Tempel reported that she, Danielle and Lisa have been pruning sprouts off the stumps left behind when the Eagle Scout candidate thinned the encroaching sweet gums out of the old field area. They vigorously resprout. Dr. Tempel suggested we go up in late September with Roundup and spray the resprouts. Dr. Tempel asked if SPEC approves purchasing Roundup. Members approved. Dr. Tempel mentioned her concern about the large pile of dead brush accumulating from the pruning that could turn into a fire hazard. Maybe we can solicit help from someone with a pickup truck to bring the brush to the yard waste site. Lisa suggested the Boro's Clean Communities' pickup truck. Debra said she would speak with her son who has a large pickup if we need. Dr. Tempel mentioned that while there pruning, we found a Spotted Lanternfly nymph. Dr. Tempel said the DOA (Department of Agriculture) website does not seem to address control in large open space areas.
- Dr. Tempel said that Pete Smith reported that PSE&G is going to be doing curb and sidewalk work on Franklin Avenue, so we will hold off on planting trees.

**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 new to report.

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

- Adam had nothing new to report.

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

- Tom said the Green Team has been meeting virtually to continue with Sustainable NJ actions. We have until December 2021 to file for recertification.

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

- Dr. Tempel reported 6 posts to Facebook, reaching 11,202 people with 2,497 engagements and 69

shares.

**M. Stormwater Advisory Committee- Mr. T. Walsh**

- Tom said there was nothing new to report.

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

- There was nothing additional to report.

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

- Dorothy said we have an opening on our commission for an Alternate II as Nicole Esposito has resigned. Any suggestions for a replacement? Dorothy mentioned Dion Pender who is a Rutgers Environmental graduate, is interested. SPEC is in favor of making that recommendation to the Mayor & Council.

**6. INCOMING / OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE**

- A list of correspondences is attached

**7. OLD BUSINESS**

**8. NEW BUSINESS**

- Dorothy reported that the newly formed Boro Human Relations Committee is looking for one volunteer from each commission / board. Is anyone interested? Debra said she is interested. Dr. Tempel read their mission statement. Dorothy will recommend Debra.
- Tom mentioned someone dumped a bunch of black garbage bags on Metuchen Road by Conrail's tan shed; might be Conrail's property. Dr. Tempel said she will speak with Rich Wolff, Zoning Officer. John offered to speak to a gentleman who is a Conrail representative at his OEM meeting tomorrow.
- John reported the OEM has started their hazard mitigation work with Rutgers University. Rutgers is reaching out to all 25 municipalities. Specifically looking at how the environment has changed and how it will effect emergency responses e.g. - sea-level rise, temperature changes etc. Will be encouraging municipalities to develop mitigation projects that are tied to those changes to be able to protect people and property. The State and FEMA are also involved. John said the finished plan may be used as a guide for the rest of the country.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn was made, all were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for September 9, 2020 @ 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
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