

South Plainfield Environmental Commission

Official Minutes - July 8, 2020

1. CALL TO ORDER

Notice having been filed with the Courier News and S.P. Observer, Secretary Lisa Roseo called the Environmental Commission meeting to order in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act at 7:00 pm. This meeting took place at the Highland Avenue Woods Nature Center.

Present: Danielle Hurst, Debra Leporino (via phone), John Ferguson, Pete Smith (council liaison) and Rich Houghton (planning board liaison)

Alternate members present: Jordan Mandel

Associate members present: Lisa Roseo (secretary)

Others: Dr. A. Tempel (environmental specialist)

Absent: Dorothy Miele, Tom Walsh, Adam Butrico and Nicole Esposito

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the June 10, 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) (\$500 temporary budget was increased to \$1,500) Since the last meeting we spent \$0. YTD spent = \$475. Balance = \$1,025.
- Clean Communities - (2019 grant \$50,329.53) Spent since June 10 = \$1,047 on: \$1,047 on sign enforcement and litter removal salary & wages-plus new Wednesday parks litter patrol. August litter can maintenance of \$475 not yet encumbered pending new contract. Spent YTD = \$32,966.31 since 8/15/19. The balance = \$17,362.42. NJDEP announced the 2020 Grants. We will be receiving \$45,370.37.
- 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

- Sustainable NJ - Pete said the Mayor & Council passed several resolutions for Sustainable NJ. Bob Longo will talk to Rich Wolf, Zoning Board, about how our Zoning requirements compare with what Sustainable NJ considers to be a solar friendly town. Once that happens, the Mayor & Council will discuss further.
- The Mayor & Council have been working with Dr. Tempel about recycling/litter problems in the Boro: placement of additional litter cans, new anti-littering signs in our public parks etc.
- Pete also spoke with the Mayor & Council about starting a 'weed & feed' program next spring in our parks. The turf is overgrown with clover. Pete will obtain information from Home Depot and Lowes.
- Carco Autoworld on Durham Avenue - Pete asked Dr. Tempel if she has heard anything on the illegal tree removal. Dr. Tempel said she received no response yet from her email to several Boro officials. Pete said he will find out whose job it is to enforce tree removal.
- Dr. Tempel mentioned she received a resident complaint about people not wearing masks at the Recycling Center. The governor recently mandated wearing masks outdoors when distancing is not

possible. The Recycling Center gets very busy at times. Dr. Tempel spoke with Glenn Cullen; signs will be posted by the weekend requiring masks be worn. The situation will be monitored.

- Discussed the influx of cardboard at the Recycling Center and difficulty maintaining it neatly due to boxes not being broken down by residents. Dr. Tempel said sometimes the center is very busy and the workers are at various locations plus helping residents unload. In addition, we haven't had any community service workers since March. Any volunteers?

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

- Rich said there is nothing new to report as the Planning Board hasn't met since March. There is a meeting scheduled for 7/28.

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

- Lorraine Beyer (116 Smith Street) - The applicant is proposing to subdivide their property at the corner of Smith & Day Street. Jordan said there is an existing residence with an inground pool which extends to the lot they propose to subdivide. The pool looks like it was filled some time ago because there is vegetation growing in it. Pete said the pool would have to be taken out. Jordan said there is a large tree not shown on the plan that we should ask about. Jordan noted the NJDEP's Geoweb site shows the site as a 'current known extent groundwater contamination' coming from Pitt Street area. Dr. Tempel said the source of that contamination was never determined as far as she knows.
- Starlight Properties (50 Cragwood Road) - This is a revision for the proposed training facility/shooting range. Dr. Tempel said she doesn't have the original plan on hand to make comparisons. She will find our original comment letter. She also said she will re-check their tree plan because there is a large area of trees to be removed.
- Castainca (227 So. Plainfield Ave.) - This is a revision from a proposed subdivision. Dr. Tempel said the proposed residence they want to build would be behind the current home on So. Plainfield Avenue. It won't have a frontage on either So. Plainfield Avenue or Minford Avenue. The driveway will wrap around the property and come out on Minford. The issue is whether there are wetlands. The applicant's engineer stated the wet area on the property is not natural; they are man-made caused by the fact there were no storm sewers on Minford. Therefore, the storm water runs onto the property. Dr. Tempel explained that she looked at an old soil conservation survey from 1987 which is shown on an aerial photo from 1976. You can see a stream running through the parcel, so it is historically wet. SPEC had already reviewed this application and commented; their engineer's comments were in response to ours. So, Dr. Tempel didn't refute his claim, but suggested the applicant be required to obtain a delineation from the NJDEP, and not rely on their engineer's assessment.

D. ERI -

- There was nothing new to report.

E. Clean Communities - Dr. A. Tempel

- Dr. Tempel said the CCAB did not meet this month because we don't know whether we can hold any programs. The NJCCC (New Jersey Clean Communities Council) has not issued any new guidelines since their ambiguous announcement that said not to hold volunteer litter cleanups, but also described the protocols (operating under COVID guidelines) the NJDOT uses. It seems to imply if groups continue their cleanups, they should adhere to those guidelines.
- Dr. Tempel reported the NJCCC does recommend that cleanup participants sign a 'hold harmless' waiver, which we have never implemented. Our Boro attorney also recommends we should. Dr. Tempel said maybe the CCAB can have an email meeting to discuss issues.
- Danielle suggested that if we hold a fall cleanup, each member of SPEC could show up at the various cleanup locations to distribute pizza/drinks because we cannot hold a 'pickup picnic'.
- Adopt-a-Spot - Debra phoned her report in: She and Dr. Tempel signed off on six 'Adopt-a-Spot' contract renewals. Debra will be mailing out the original contracts with a 'thank you'. Received an application from the 'Indonesian Seventh-Day Adventist' church on Park Avenue. Their application

cannot be finalized until they decide the exact spot they want to adopt. We also need to find out who the right contact at Republic Services is to renew their spot on Metuchen Road between Belmont & Harmich Road. Dr. Tempel said the Lions Club did a cleanup across from Home Depot. Debra said we have three renewals for the second quarter of 2020 that will be mailed out. She will continue to reach out to those adopters who have not sent their renewals back.

F. Land Use - Dr. A. Tempel

- Dr. Tempel reported the Boro received from Menlo Engineering, a notice of application to the NJDEP from Colonial Oaks, for a flood hazard authorization; a determination of whether a property is in a flood plain. It is for the Harris Steel property on New Brunswick Avenue & Tyler Place. The wooded portion is largely wetlands. The stream that runs through the property flows into HAW. The property is proposed to be developed into high-density housing/commercial. This has been pending for years. Pete said the proposed plan has been reduced from 750 to less than 500 units because of the wetlands. He said the original plan was for 500+ units, but they were asked to increase the number back when it was originally submitted and approved, in order to handle our COAH requirements. Now they find there is wetlands on the property. Dr. Tempel said Harris Steel has known there is wetlands on their property. She asked Pete what the reduction in units would do to the Boro's COAH requirements. Pete said we will need to talk to the state, as COAH's obligations have changed. Will the state forgive us for the lesser number of affordable units as the original 750 units were already approved. Pete said he learned from the 'Crossroads @ Durham' site, that developers can use the wetland area as part of calculating the number of proposed units, but cannot build on that portion. So, they build up higher. Dr. Tempel suggested the developer be required to widen New Brunswick Avenue with a designated left-turn lane, as suggested by the Boro's Planning Board engineer when we looked at the Bridgepoint application on New Market Avenue. Pete mentioned he wants to push for the NJDEP to have Harris Steel check the soil because they've been storing a lot of steel with oil on it.

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

- OTOSP - Dr. Tempel reported that she and Lisa met on 7/7 to prune sprouts off some of the sweetgum stumps left from the Eagle Scout project that cleared out the invading sweetgums. The sprouting is impressive and we will need to go again. Anyone interested in helping? Danielle volunteered. Danielle, Dr. Tempel and Lisa will coordinate a date.

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

- Dr. Tempel mentioned a battery was replaced in one of the exit signs at the Nature Center and the fire extinguishers were inspected.
- Dr. Tempel said Len Miller was looking for a way to keep deer out of the community pool area while concrete was being poured. Someone at DPW who was familiar with our deer fencing showed it to Len. Dr. Tempel gave him the information of where it was purchased and put Len in touch with Dr. DeVito who had advised Len on constructing the fence. Perhaps if the fence is not permanent, HAW will inherit it to add to the deer exclusion area.

I. Historical Sites Preservation - Mr. L. Randolph

- There was no report.

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

- Danielle noted the increase of PPE litter due to COVID. She suggested we can post a message asking people to properly dispose of their PPE on the Library and Senior Center electronic bulletin boards.

K. Green Team - Mr. T. Walsh

- Already mentioned the resolution adoptions by the Mayor & Council.

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

- Dr. Tempel mentioned the Green Team website disappeared, probably because our consultant, Jill Ryan, didn't forward us the renewal notice. Bob Longo is supposed to talk to Jill Ryan to ask if the content on the page she set up for us still exists and can we set it back up again. Dr. Tempel said we still have our

Facebook page which had a link to the Green Team webpage. Chris Cioffi noticed the link was gone. He set it back up to go to SPEC's web page on the Boro website, which has a Sustainable NJ page.

M. Stormwater Advisory Committee- Mr. T. Walsh

- Dr. Tempel sent out the non-point source pollution NJDEP Tip Cards in the June sewer bill mailing to all residents.

N. Environmental Specialist - Dr. A. Tempel

- There was nothing additional to report.

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

- There was no report.

6. INCOMING / OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE

- A list of correspondences is attached

7. OLD BUSINESS

8. NEW BUSINESS

9. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made, all were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for August 12, 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