

South Plainfield Environmental Commission

Official Minutes - June 10, 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 8:10 pm. This meeting took place in a virtual setting.

Present: Debra Leporino, John Ferguson, Adam Butrico, Pete Smith (council liaison) and Brian Bythell (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, Danielle Hurst, and Nicole Esposito

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the March 11, 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) Since the last meeting we spent \$0. YTD spent = \$475. Balance = \$25.
- Clean Communities - (2019 grant \$50,329.53) Spent since May 13 = \$5,983 on: \$834.25 on sign enforcement and litter removal salary & wages; \$475 for litter can maintenance; \$325 for postal meter reimbursement. Spent YTD = \$31,477 since 8/15/19. The balance = \$18,852. NJDEP announced the 2020 Grants, but the municipal amounts are not posted 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

- Sustainable NJ - Pete said the Mayor & Council are working on resolutions for everything except the proposed solar plans because that has to go through the Zoning Board.
- Pete noted there has been an increase in litter, particularly in Putnam Park. The Boro is trying to get extra garbage cans into the parks. Councilwoman Mott went into Putnam and did a cleanup as well as Councilman Bengivenga. Dr. Tempel had Jay and Ricky, Recycling Program litter crew, do another cleanup. They also performed a litter survey of how many new garbage cans are needed in order to get quotes. The litter can maintenance contract with Pinto Bros. will have to be modified. Dr. Tempel said Kevin Kober will clean up Putnam Park on Tuesdays, as part of his sign enforcement & storm drain circuit; he agreed for the time being. Jay and Ricky will clean on Thursdays. Pete said he will be working with Dr. Tempel, town leaders and DPW on this issue.
- Longwood Estates - Pete reported the Boro filed with the County for open space funds for this parcel. Dorothy wrote a beautiful letter outlining proposed plans for the property. An email was sent to Mr. Reid apprising him of the situation. TapInto wrote an article about the Boro's proposed plan.

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

- Brian said there was no meeting last night. The board hasn't met since March, therefore, there is nothing new to report.

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

- Deer Out - (330 Shevchenko Ave.) - Jordan and Adam looked at the site. Jordan reported the applicant proposes an addition to an existing warehouse. This is a mixed-use property. There will be a 20% increase in impervious surface and an increase in waste generation. They state all their activities will occur within the building and have no effect on water pollution. There is no storm water management plan provided. No trees are shown to be removed. They plan on adding 3 Norway Spruce and 9 Junipers. The site is located on a KCS. Dr. Tempel said that is an ongoing issue from a former business at the current Home Depot site that leached. Jordan suggested we should make note of that in case there is any soil disturbance. Lisa Googled 'Deer Out'; the company sells deer and animal repellants. SPEC will ask for information on chemicals and storage/safety plans. Dr. Tempel said she will review their recycling plan. Dr. Tempel asked if there are nearby residences. Jordan read that the applicant is requesting a variance on the buffer requirements.
- Durham Realty - Carco Autoworld - (212 Durham Ave.) - Applicant proposes to add more parking for storage of used cars that will eventually be for sale on the existing lot. Jordan said they already demolished a structure and clear-cut the lot of trees. Pete asked if they filed for a tree removal permit. Jordan said not that he is aware of. Adam agreed. Pete will inquire if our Zoning Officer will issue a summons; we have a process in place for tree removal. Adam said they provided a professional landscape plan. The majority of planting will be along Durham Avenue which will include: autumn blaze red maple, wintergreen boxwood, juniper, skip laurel, pink drift rose, magic carpet spirea, feather reed grass and green giant arborvitae. Jordan asked Dr. Tempel if she's aware whether they applied for a tree permit. Dr. Tempel said no, not until they receive site plan approval. Pete said there are still remnants of the downed trees. If we can get photos, we may be able to proceed with a summons. Adam will also save a 'screen-shot' of a satellite & street view image of the property. There is a denoted wetlands on site that they propose to fill; they have filed their permit with the NJDEP.
- Jordan said there is one other site plan on Dr. Tempel's desk that he and Adam didn't get to. Dr. Tempel said PSE&G submitted a 'lay down' site plan. PSE&G has a new project pending, so they need a variance to continue using the site as temporary storage. SPEC has no issues.

D. ERI -

- There was nothing new to report.

E. Clean Communities - Dr. A. Tempel

- Dr. Tempel said there will be a CCAB meeting soon. Will need to discuss whether it is feasible to have an in-person fall litter cleanup.
- CBA - Debra and Dr. Tempel ordered CBA decals and intend to do the membership mailing in August where we can remind members of the fall cleanup, if able.
- Ordered 9,200 NJDEP Non-point Source Pollution 'tip cards' for the June Tax Bill mailing. It will be paid for by the Clean Communities Grant.
- Debra's report -

I hope this email finds everyone and their families safe and well! To update you on the status of our Adopt-A-Spots for the first quarter of 2020, I have reached out to each adoptee and they all would like to continue with their Adopt-A-Spot locations. The adopters feel that as the COVID-19 regulations are modified, they will re-start with cleaning their spots. I have also been updating contact information for all of our adopters. We are still in the process of fully-executing the first quarter renewals and there are three for the second quarter of 2020. A renewal letter and agreement will be mailed to the three adopters by the end of May. Now that Governor Murphy has allowed NJ state and county parks to re-open, and as long as NJ residents abide by the social distancing guidelines set forth, the parks should continue to

stay open. We are hoping that some of the adopters will re-start their clean ups in the near future, however, Alice and I are leaving it up to the adoptee as to when they would like to start clean up of their spots. Some of the adopters are keeping their spots clean as we speak.

- As you know, we have established an email address for the Clean Business Association and it is now up and running. The email address is spcba@southplainfieldnj.com and both Alice and I have been adding it to all correspondence. The new email address will also be mentioned in all of the correspondence to the adoptees and we would like to be as “paperless” as possible by using the email address for all communications, notifications and agreement renewals, basically any correspondence and communications back and forth.

F. Land Use - Dr. A. Tempel

- Longwood Estates - Dr. Tempel also reported that SPEC (Dorothy), as requested by the Mayor & Council, drafted a letter to be included in applying for open space funding. That letter was sent to Middlesex County Recreation by Mayor Anesh along with the request to purchase the property. We do not know the status. Dr. Tempel said she spoke with Scott Reid about preserving his property. He is not opposed but wants his asking price within a short time frame. He was a little unhappy the governing body had not officially contacted him. Dr. Tempel had informed Pete of that information. Pete said Glenn Cullen subsequently sent Mr. Reid an email informing him of the Boro’s plan along with Pete’s contact info. Mr. Reid hasn’t responded yet. Pete mentioned there are ‘No Trespassing’ signs on his property, so there was no way to approach him personally.

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

- Tree Sapling Distribution - Adam reported that he, Kathleen Benton & family and Dr. Tempel distributed 40 sapling bundles and over 120 red oak saplings that Adam had started from seed last fall. They included planting instructions. Dr. Tempel said we were able to complete the paperwork for the State: over 50 participants signed in, a survey was completed with photos attached.

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

- Dr. Tempel mentioned there are quite a few downed trees along some trails. Adam said he will try and get in there to remove them.
- Dr. Tempel said she found some individual specimens of wildflowers she has not seen in years in the deer exclusion area - one being Mayapple.

I. Historical Sites Preservation - Mr. L. Randolph

- There was nothing to report.

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

- Adam mentioned he read a few articles about the increased PPE littering seen on local sidewalks and streets. Dr. Tempel said it will be an issue for volunteer litter cleanups. Do we ask people to pick it up? Debra said we should discuss this at the next CCAB meeting.

K. Green Team - Mr. T. Walsh

- Dr. Tempel said the Green Team had a couple virtual meetings. We are waiting on the Mayor & Council to adopt several resolutions for Sustainable NJ. Pete said they are making progress.

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

- Dr. Tempel reported SPEC’s Facebook page carried 6 posts plus one event in May. Reached 2,552 and engaged 90 people, plus 6 shares. We continue to raise our profile.
- Glenn Cullen has asked departments to provide a list of all social media platforms they use. He asked for access in case it becomes necessary. Chris Cioffi made him an administrator of our Facebook page and Bob Longo did the same for the Green Team page.

M. Stormwater Advisory Committee- Mr. T. Walsh

- There was nothing additional to report.

N. Environmental Specialist - Dr. A. Tempel

- Green Brook Flood Control Project - Dr. Tempel said she and John Ferguson virtually attended the 6/3 meeting.
- Dr. Tempel mentioned that at the last WRA meeting, members were discussing the Bridgepoint application on New Market Avenue that we commented on. The application has to get approval from the County to add their wastewater to the county sewage treatment plant; have to be included in the sewer service area. The County planning staff reviewed the wetlands application and concluded there will be no negative impact from building the warehouse.

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

- There was no report.

6. INCOMING / OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE

- A list of correspondences is attached

7. OLD BUSINESS

- John reported the Middlesex County OEM started working on the multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. They had their initial meeting with Rutgers personnel. A Steering Committee was set up. The updated plan will address all natural hazards, especially due to climate change/sea level rise. They will design mitigation projects to address those hazards.
- Dr. Tempel said at some point we need to get out to the OTOSP to lop off any resprouting sweet gum sprouts. Lisa said she will get together with Dr. Tempel.

8. NEW BUSINESS

9. ADJOURNMENT

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