

South Plainfield Environmental Advisory Committee

Official Minutes - May 8, 2024

1. Call to Order

Notice having been filed with the S.P. Observer and TAP into SP, Chairwoman Debra Leporino called the Environmental Advisory Committee meeting to order in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act at 7:30 pm.

Present: Debra Leporino (chairwoman), Tom Walsh, John Ferguson, Genevieve Helbo, Kristina Nieradka, Melanie Mott (council liaison), and Rich Houghton (planning board liaison).

Others: Lisa Roseo (secretary)

Absent:

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the April 10, 2024 regular meeting were reviewed and all were in favor of approval. Tom mentioned his *excused absence* was not noted in April's minutes as it usually is.

Debra said she revised the agenda.

John McConville said he submitted his application to be appointed as a member of this committee.

3. Invitation for Public Comment

Paul Zawacki and John McConville were in attendance.

4. Budget - TBD

- We are still waiting to hear from Glenn Cullen.

5. Committee and Liaison Reports

A. Chairwoman's Report - Ms. D. Leporino

- Debra reminded everyone that our committee is made up of both Boro employees and volunteers. There is not much difference between the two – Boro employees get paid and cannot vote, volunteers do not get paid but have a vote. There is a lot of talent on this committee. Debra is excited about the committee and would like to see everyone working as a team. All feedback and suggestions should be brought back to the committee. If anyone wants to add an item to the agenda, please email Debra and Lisa with any item to be added to the agenda by the last day of the month before the next meeting. Debra asked Melanie if there is to be no separate meetings outside the committee meeting. Melanie said it is ok to have separate discussions. Members agreed. Rich said it shouldn't matter because the committee does not make policies. Also agreed that the meeting agenda/minutes should be sent out to members two weeks prior to the next meeting.

B. Council Liaison - Ms. M. Mott

- Melanie reported the Green Team needs to renew. Previously the GT was listed as a 'committee' which was incorrect because committees are not created via resolution. Therefore, an ordinance was created which is in its second reading. The EAC does establish the Green Team which shall consist of the

following members: The Mayor or designee; Boro Administrator; Council Liaison; School Board Member appointed by the BOE; up to two EAC members to be appointed by the Chair. The ordinance has not been passed yet, but the current GT roster is covered under that language.

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

- Rich said there is nothing new to report as there has not been a meeting.

D. Clean Communities - Ms. K. Nieradka / Ms. D. Leporino

- Spring Cleanup – Kristina reported we had about 300 volunteers. The DPW picked up the bags which weighed a total of 2 tons.
- Adopt-a-Spot - Debra offered the last list she received from Alice. Melanie said we need the current list/contracts. Debra apologized for leaving the info at home. Debra is supposed to be meeting with Anne Daly Friday to go over the program. Debra will bring the 1st quarter agreements for review , signatures and full execution.

E. Forestry - TBD

- There was no report.

F. Highland Avenue Woods - Mr. T. Walsh

- Tom was not able to reach out to Dorothy Miele this month.

G. Historical Sites Preservation - Mr. T. Walsh

- There was no report.

H. Pollution - Mr. J. Ferguson

- EPA on PFAS - John reported there was a final determination on the seven PFAS's they want to add to protect our drinking water. It was officially passed by the EPA on 4/14. However, it is not official until it appears on the Federal Registry. Once it is published, it takes 60 days to take effect. It will have a major impact on water companies to ensure the numbers are down.
- As discussed last month, talks will continue on overall pollution, especially from plastic water bottles. Segregated recycling pickups are successful in South Orange where companies are seeing more profit by not having to sort at the facility – cleaner products too. Paul suggested however there will be more truck trips.

I. Green Team - Mr. T. Walsh

- Tom said the GT met last month to review action items for Sustainable NJ Bronze Certification. The team is making progress. Tom uploaded the emergency management info which was time consuming. Action items are reviewed by Sustainable NJ and their comments are given back in July with any recommendations if further info is needed. The next GT meeting is on 5/30.
- We hosted another 'National Drug Take-Back' on 4/27. Received 40 lbs. from 22 vehicles.
- Tom will be attending the next Peter J. Barnes Dismal Swamp Preservation meeting. Paul said he noticed they are creating more walking trails. He asked if there are other projects that can be done by Eagle Scouts. Tom said he will inquire.
- Tom thanked Kristina for the "great job" she did organizing her first Spring Volunteer Litter Cleanup. Members concurred.

J. Public Information & Technology - Ms. K. Nieradka

- There was nothing new to report.

K. Stormwater Advisory Committee - Mr. J. Ferguson

- John attended a NJDEP information session on 'sea-level rise'. John is having trouble with some of the flood predictions being publicized. Of course, we do have to worry about the effects of a warming planet, which historically is cyclical. The upcoming hurricane season will be in La Nina which has less wind shear. The Gulf & Atlantic will be warmer than last year as well as air temps. The NJDEP is planning for more rainstorms.
- John noticed that public perception in town seems to indicate that people think SP floods constantly. John feels it is time to sit down and seriously discuss stormwater management with a plan in mind. With that, we need to keep in mind that storms are more frequent/heavier, the water table is higher, more building = more impervious surface and our stormwater pipes are not designed to accommodate that much stormwater. Towns cannot afford the legal battle to stop developments etc. Rich said we should consider rezoning as a good option. John said ideally, we should have a county-wide 'stormwater group' that everyone would pay into. This would allow more funds to be available for individual priority projects. However, not every town is in favor of that.
- Tom reported that he noticed the tarp that was covering the salt pile at the Oak Park Commons was once again off. He emailed Kristina and Rich Wolff. Rich indicated he can't do anything but have them recover it. Tom noted there is a nearby storm sewer where the rain takes the salt to. This has been a continuous issue with them. Kristina reached out to the County; Kim Hu said she would send an inspector. Kristina will follow up. Tom asked if we have an ordinance or standards for storing salt. John McConville looked it up and referenced #403-3 in Article I. John F. mentioned that we are tied into two watersheds.

L. Education - Mr. J. Ferguson

- John explained that this subcommittee's goal is to try and get more people in the community involved and informed to help educate others and hopefully promote/accomplish our undertakings.
- John will be asking Tom Flynn to suggest 3 or 4 topics he might like to speak about. The Boro Council will decide which of the topics to go with. The presentation will be set up for the Fall.

M. Outreach - Mrs. G. Helbo / Ms. D. Leporino

- Debra explained that since Melanie brought to our attention that the Mayor & Council would like to see our committee do more public outreach, this committee was created.
- Genevieve had a meeting with the OLC/organizers for the St. Anthony Festival to ask if our committee could set up a table. Debra said we can promote the Adopt-a-Spot program and display handouts. We could share the table with the Green Team. Debra will email committee members with more info. Do we have any volunteers?
- At our next meeting we can discuss participating at Christmas in July and National Night Out.

6. Incoming / Outgoing Correspondence

7. Old Business

8. New Business

9. Next Meeting - Wed., June 12, 2024 in the Boro Hall Conference Room

10. Comments for the Good of the Order

11. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made, all were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned @ 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa Roseo
Environmental Advisory Committee Secretary

Acronyms

ANJEC	-Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions
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
FEMA	-Federal Emergency Management Agency
FOW	-Friends of the Woods
GBFCP	-Green Brook Flood Control Project
HAW	-Highland Avenue Woods
KCS	-Known Contaminated Sites
LOI	-Letter of Interpretation
MCDSWM	-Middlesex County Division of Solid Waste Management
MCOEM	-Middlesex County Office of Emergency Management
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
SPCCA	-South Plainfield Clean Communities Association
SPEAC	-South Plainfield Environmental Advisory Committee
USACE	-United States Army Corp of Engineers