

# Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission

## Minutes of Monday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Meeting

Attendees: Richard Leister, David Harris, Kinan Tadmori, Kim Diamond, Chris Scalera, Kevin Hall, Renee Ciesla, John Leo, Angus Chen (members)  
Tom Foregger, Steve Carrellas, Alvaro Medeiros, Robert Cianciuli, Helen Kirsch (non-members)

Meeting was called to order at 7:33 PM

- 1) Minutes for January 4<sup>th</sup> 2021 and December 14<sup>th</sup> 2020 meetings: approved.
- 2) Special recognition: Kinan Tadmori completing graduate studies at Rutgers, but needs to step down as alternate member of EC. Kinan was thanked by all for her service to the EC. Richard to notify Township of the need to fill Kinan's position.
- 3) Hearing on agenda items only:
  - a. Steve Carrellas reminded the EC of the need to ensure the posted Zoom link is accurate, and to ensure "updates" to posted agendas are correctly noted.
  - b. Steve Carrellas expressed interest in the question of EV charging stations.
- 4) Old Business:
  - a. Scout projects – no updates.
  - b. Community Garden – expect to be fully subscribed this year; new-member meeting in February; still intending to install beehives at the Community Garden this season.
  - c. Stormwater Ordinance – no updates.
  - d. Sustainable Jersey Actions
    - i. Township Assets Action – listing of community assets (organizations, key individuals, facilities, etc) needs to be updated; Kevin volunteered to assist in updating this; to be completed by June.
    - ii. Sustainable Land Use Pledge and Green Grounds – Richard to speak on this at the Jan 19<sup>th</sup> Township Council meeting.
    - iii. SJ Upgrade Retrofit Light Pollution – new action for BH.
    - iv. Expired Actions – need to re-address these as actions expire to ensure our points total does not drop below the current level.
  - e. Tree Ordinance – Richard working on this, assessing draft provided by Township tree official.
  - f. Peppertown Park - \$300,000 pledged for this project.
  - g. Recycling
    - i. Township – notice re change in recycling dates has been posted to Township website.
    - ii. Demolition of old municipal complex buildings: discussion as to whether the demolition debris will be recycled; Alvaro thought this was not the case, per response from Township Administrator. It is expected that if recycling of such materials was required by state law, this would have been included in the contract. Possible that demolition contractor would separate and sell recyclable materials.
    - iii. At the schools – no update.
  - h. Topics for the township newsletter – topics for Feb newsletter to be discussed at next EC meeting.
  - i. Municipal Complex and stormwater (rain gardens) – no update.

- j. Passaic River Park – Richard to follow up with Union County officials in coming weeks.
  - k. Trex collection and Trex benches – pickup locations in this area are not consistently willing to take the quantities of thin-film plastics that Taylor Rental collects/delivers (200-400 lbs at a time); however, this quantity not sufficient to qualify Taylor Rental as a corporate partner (Trex requires ~50,000 lbs/month). Kim assessing other options through Trex. TBD whether local store managers will resume accepting our drop-offs post-Covid.
  - l. Stormwater management education campaign – John circulated draft communications plan for EC members for review and comment.
  - m. Hub Meeting – next meeting is Thurs Feb 11<sup>th</sup>; details to be distributed through the Hub.
  - n. Chemtrade AOI – no update; Richard to follow up with the State.
  - o. Reforestation at GLHS – no update.
  - p. Lower Columbia park – no update.
  - q. Leaf Blower Noise – Richard updated on the Princeton initiative (no ordinance was approved) and on the Maplewood ordinance (legal action resulting in a proposal to change the ordinance). Lois Kraus leading local efforts on this. John asked what is the level of compliance with the Maplewood ordinance?
  - r. Year in Review (Annual Report) – drafted & circulated by Richard for review & comment; “Implement Stormwater Management education program” to be added as 2021 goal; with this change, EC voted to approve this document. Richard to finalize and forward to the Township for publication.
  - s. LED streetlight retrofitting project – no update.
  - t. EV charging – BH considering adopting a version of the Morris Township ordinance on provisions for charging stations for EVs. NJ Senate Bill S-3223 enables municipalities to short-cut the usual approval processes for EV infrastructure. EC agreed that we should increase our focus on provision of EV charging infrastructure; motion proposed & approved that Alvaro should ask the Township Council to include EV infrastructure on the checklist for new planning applications.
  - u. Trail map grant – no update.
- 5) New Business:
- a. Calendar dates: agreed we should not meet on Labor Day; agreed the Monday Sept 6<sup>th</sup> meeting be deferred to Tues Sept 7<sup>th</sup>.
  - b. LED bulb giveaway from NJ Clean Energy Program – focus should be on low-income / elderly households; agreed we should accept 500-1000 bulbs through this program (Renee to coordinate this); Alvaro to reach out to Seniors, and to determine if there is a way to reach out to low-income households through Affordable Housing coordinator; Helen thought the same may be possible through the school district (ie, households qualified for school lunch program); church groups may also be able to identify recipients.
- 6) Citizens hearing on any environmental issues – none.
- 7) Plans:
- a. 495 Springfield Ave – EC letter of recommendation previously reviewed and approved; EC endorsed the previous letter of recommendation unchanged.
  - b. Chemtrade, 235 Snyder – no action needed.
  - c. Berkeley Crossing 88 River Road and 123 Passaic Ave – application has been reviewed previously and recommendation provided; updated draft letter of recommendation, to include at least 50% native shrubs, a suitable fraction of the parking spaces to be EV-ready, and solar panels on the roof; approved by EC.

- d. 110 Circle View Resolution Compliance – developer’s responses to the EC’s comments shared; updated letter of recommendation drafted by Richard; approved by EC.
- e. Bowman Notification re Stratton House – notification of a small change in the development plan; no action needed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

The next Environmental Commission meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by David Harris, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021.