

Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission

Minutes of Monday, January 20, at 7:30 pm Meeting

Attendees: Richard Leister, David Harris, Renee Ciesla, Chris Scalera, Alvaro Medeiros (Guest)

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM.

- 1) Minutes from January 6th 2020 meeting approved; minutes of Dec 2nd 2019 not approved.
- 2) Hearing on agenda items only - 3 minutes per resident - none
- 3) Old Business
 - a. Scout projects – new leadership of Troop 68; Chris has reached out
 - b. Stormwater Ordinance – David has drafted ordinance for minor development, based on SJ model ordinance, and marked this up with comments / points to note from previous discussions. To be provided to Liza & Tom ahead of meeting planned for 1/23/20. Notes on disconnecting downspouts and output from French drains to the street to be added. Lower Makefield Schedule also to be provided.
 - c. Sustainable Jersey
 - i. Request for \$30,000 grant to cover professional services to support solar for municipal complex has been denied
 - ii. Green Team – Nothing to report
 - iii. Mayor’s Wellness Campaign – meeting on Weds 1/22 of Senior Citizens Advisory Board
 - d. Master Plan – meeting of sub-committee of Planning Board to be held 1/22/20. Kevin has communicated that the consultant developing the master plan would like to meet with the EC at a future meeting – Kevin to co-ordinate this.
 - e. Tree Ordinance – nothing to report
 - f. Peppertown Park – nothing to report
 - g. Recycling
 - i. Mayor’s Recycling taskforce – meeting 1/15/20; evaluating bid options; discussion on education
 - ii. Trex bins –passed 10,600 lbs collected; this total is likely lower than the actual amount of thin film plastics collected, as certain organizations have not reported their tallies for approximately 2 months.
 - h. Ordinance re: Restrictions on Plastic Bags, Plastic Straws, and Polystyrene Containers. First reading at the Township Council on Tues 1/21/20. There is currently a negative Facebook campaign concerning this ordinance’s passage. Representatives from Great Swamp Watershed and Northern Jersey Sustainable Municipal Alliance Group expected to attend to support the ordinance’s passage. Version to be presented currently uses a previous definition of “reusable bag” which we had intended to revise; Richard to send updated definition to Alvaro,

for communication to Township attorney in advance of Council meeting. Letter drafted by Kim to Restaurant Depot alerting them of the need to carry compliant packaging materials has been reviewed by EC members, and was approved to be sent.

- i. Joint meeting among environmental commissions (Sustainable Jersey Union County Hub Meeting) – Weds 1/15/20 Hub meeting discussed 2019 accomplishments among the member ECs. New initiatives for 2020 discussed: (a) composting food waste – to be continued, possibly at March Hub meeting in Rahway; and (b) proposal for connected trails / parks not popular. Richard proposed discussion on composting of wood chips and leaves county-wide. There is a \$1000 grant annually to the Hub which was not used in 2019. Kim, in her role as Co-Chair of this group, suggested dividing the 2020 grant funding to help sponsor “unique” events in certain towns and ones in which other towns’ residents and/or businesses are encouraged to participate. Feedback in Basecamp on this proposal has been requested.
 - j. Topics for the township newsletter, with revised month assignments:
 - Chris has drafted & circulated articles on invasive species & native species – these to be submitted in March & April, respectively
 - Renee to draft article for Feb newsletter (end Jan submission) on salt / ice-melt considerations for the environment.
 - David to draft article for May on riparian zones, with link to municipal code.
 - k. Municipal Complex and stormwater – nothing to report.
 - l. Government Energy Aggregation – Township has met with consultant; next step is to introduce ordinance to authorize JCP&L to assess possible benefits (increase in renewable energy, benefits in joining with other towns)
 - m. Climate Action Plan Survey – nothing to report.
 - n. Passaic River Park – nothing to report.
 - o. Chemtrade – no response; Richard has sent follow-up email.
 - p. Budget: Richard has communicated the draft budget by email.
 - q. Goals for 2020 – review draft list of goals in 2019 Annual Report sent out by Richard by email & respond to Richard with any additions / comments.
- 4) New Business:
- a. Earth Day / Arbor Day – could we commission & sell merchandise (eg, water bottles) branded with the EC logo and school logos? Richard to check if a survey could be pushed out to parents to assess interest for this within the schools. Renee to check with MKM and Elementary Schools re their Earth Day plans. Richard to check price for 4,000 reusable shopping bags with logos.
 - b. NJ Clean Communities Grant – Tom Barton to confirm whether the Recreation Department can track/keep records on the Township’s platform regarding who

- participates at specific clean-ups throughout the year, so that a donation can be given to the non-profit of choice of people who have participated in two or more clean-ups annually.
- c. Partnering with Rec Commission for DEP Grant Application re: Lower Columbia Park's Trails – to possibly include permeable paving, signage for plants. Kim to check with Debbie Varnarin regarding DPW's installation of signage for Greenacres.
 - d. NJ Tree Recovery Campaign – could we plant trees where the tennis courts are and in the open ground next to the path adjacent to the tennis courts to the east of GL High School?
 - e. Girl Scouts from Troop 40178 (Julie Piazza, Ava Klinck, and Jasmine Mehta) – to present to EC at February 3rd meeting.
 - f. Community Garden – application form has been approved by Garden Committee, to be circulated soon.

5) Citizens hearing on any environmental issues -3 minutes per resident – none.

6) Plans:

- a. 110 Roosevelt Avenue (Hamilton Ave. Campus) – Stormwater Management Report confirmed the soil has very low permeability; Toll Brothers engineer recommended non-retentive stormwater management measures; EC to recommend use of bioretention system with underdrain.
- b. 389-391 Springfield Ave. – change of use, internal modifications only.
- c. Debbie Place and Mountain Ave (reviewed in 2016) – EC does not recommend approval of this project as proposed since the impervious surface still exceeds what is allowed per the zoning.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 PM.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 3, 2020, at 7:30 pm.