

Minutes of the Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission

February 18, 2019

Meeting called to order at 7:34pm

Attendees

Members: Richard Leister, Kim Diamond, David Harris, John Leo, Kevin Hall, Angus Chen, Renee Ciesla (via phone)

Guests: Alvaro Medeiros, Charles Santore (Berkeley Heights resident)

Approval of Minutes - Minutes from February 4, 2018 (latest revised version) approved

Old Business

Community Garden

- Rich has set up presentation on square foot gardening, which will occur over the next few days. Plants from Master Gardeners will also be offered. Cost approximately \$1.50 to \$2.50.
- Alvaro said a scout may build the path to the garden.

Environmental Movies

- Kim had a conversation with Marty Miles of VFW. VFW is willing to let us use their facilities, but we have to provide our own equipment and refreshments. Suggestions for projector rental included Taylor Rental (if they have it) or Library. Kim will reach out to Library.
- Possibly combine garbage cleanup on the same day, so aim for March or April.
- Movies are provided by ANJEC and include "Bag It" or another one about contaminated water. There is also a movie on NetFlix called "Plastic Ocean"
- Suggested doing a regular series, maybe monthly, quarterly, or every six weeks.

Scout Projects - Rich owes Kim a list of projects for Community Garden

Stormwater Ordinance

- Rich brought a sample ordinance from ANJEC, which applies to non-major developments. Covers disruption of 250 square feet rather than percentage. Edits shown in red are from previous engineer Robert Bocchino.
- Kevin Hall stated that this sample only references Planning Board, but he feels Zoning Board should be involved. If 250 sq ft is exceeded, a variance is triggered which will send it to Planning Board and then stormwater management plan is needed.
- Kim asked if types of pervious pavers should be included in document. She also suggested looking at ordinances from other townships.
- State level stormwater tax legislation was discussed. Legislation aimed at reducing flooding and controlling dirty runoff. Every town will have stormwater utility to tax runoff. Alvaro will reach out to the League of Municipalities about legislation status.
- Sections 1 (Scope and Purpose) and 2 (Administration) have been discussed. Stopped before Section 3 (Design Standards).

Sustainable Jersey

- Richard stated there was an action for emergency communications. Township Administrator Liza Viana may be able to do that and wanted to know the deadline. The deadline for Sustainable Jersey is usually June. He is working with Liza.
- Kim submitted a Sustainable Jersey grant application for \$2000 for Vegan Fest.

Master Plan - Environmental Commission should look over Master Plan at next meeting. Due date is probably March 15.

Tree Ordinance - Nothing to report

Peppertown Park

- Committee has applied for funding.
- Columbia Middle School has been reserved for Art in the Park in May

Smart Cities - Kim, Liza Viana, and Jeanne Kingsley have completed and submitted application. Prize is worth thousands of dollars. The application provides township access to computer program. Among other competitors for the grant are large cities of the size of Chicago and Los Angeles.

Recycling

● **Mayor's Recycling Task Force**

- Alvaro sent out email about task force changes. Focus is to find solutions to the increased cost of recycling in time to submit bids, so township isn't in the same situation as this year, which was about a 142% increase. Alternatives include forming a consortium with other towns, such as Plainfield's collection program. The group has a limited time span and would have to be renewed at end of the year. Resolution will be voted on during February 19 Town Council.

● **Reducing single-use plastics**

- Kevin stated Board of Education member Chris Riley presented at the BoE executive session regarding working with the township to come up with policies surrounding reducing plastic usage. No specifics were discussed. The board was cautiously optimistic and supportive of the concept and would like Helen Kirsch be the contact for this because she is the liaison to EC. Kevin has put in a call to her.
- Kevin will be meeting with Pat Smith this weekend to get in front of chamber.

● **Restricting Single-Use Plastics meeting on May 16 in Madison NJ**

- David stated meeting was posted on Sustainable Jersey Union County Hub in Basecamp. Morris County townships are considering enacting plastic bans at township level. City of Summit was invited and is choosing to wait and see. Richard is interested in seeing their ordinances.
- One of the concerns of a ban would be driving business away to neighboring towns, but unanimity from multiple townships may protect against that.
- David suggested meeting attendance by members of the Environmental Commission and the Township Council.

● **Trex Thin-Film Plastics Recycling**

- Kim stated Rotary Club has passed 500 lb of collection and would like to stop. No other groups have offers to take over collection. She will reach out to Pat Smith on Friday March 1 about different groups adopting individual bins, offering advertising space.
- There may be a gap period without pickups. Will Environmental Commission members help in picking up from bins and dropoff at Acme (Jules is manager) when Rotary Club stops. Renee is still looking for a someone to take over. John wanted to know if dropoffs can occur at a location in town. David asked if we should look for other groups or wind down the program.
- Total of four benches earned so far, but none have been installed.

● Other Recycling Programs

- Angus' list of suggested recycling programs will be tabled until next meeting.

Community Adopt-A-Project - Nothing to report

Garden Club - Nothing to report

Joint Meeting on Environmental Commissions - Next meetings are in March and May.

Vegan Fest

- Kim spoke with Maura Blau about partnership. She wanted to know if we should pitch it to other towns at next Joint EC Meeting.
- Approach Mayor Angie about this.

Mayor's Wellness Campaign - Deprioritized

National Mayor's Challenge for Water Conservation - Deprioritized

Newsletter - Add post asking if anyone is interested in adopting Trex Bins. Deadline for newsletter inclusion is Friday, February 22.

New Business

Pesticide Use on Sports Fields, School Properties, and Parks (brought up at beginning of meeting after approval of minutes)

- Guest Charles Santori is concerned that vendor TruGreen may be using RoundUp pesticides. Flags are placed after spraying, but fields are used less than 72 hours afterwards. His son got a rash while at Columbia Middle School. He wanted to bring up this issue before pesticide season begins. His wife spoke with Tom Barton.
- Kim and Richard asked if it was RoundUp and Charles didn't know definitively
- Warren township maintains fields without using pesticides. Charles will find out what they are doing.
- Kevin suggested Township Council (Alvaro) speak with Engineering Dept.
- Alvaro will speak to Board of Health at next meeting
- Board of Education controls school properties, so they are out of Township Council jurisdiction, so this could be brought at a BoE meeting. Suggested speaking with Helen Kirsch, who is BoE and EC member.

- Charles offered his phone number of 908-887-6184

Municipal Complex and Green Infrastructure

- Liza is organizing a meeting about this.
- Rich sent around a rough idea about what could be done. He suggested adding rain gardens or swales to main entrance and parking lot
- Alvaro is worried about the tight budget if the developer charges us for change order. Maybe do it after the construction is completed.
- Kim said maybe to reach out to Rutgers to use this as model project. Rich has already reached out to Rutgers about this.

March 17 Passaic River Park Cleanup

- Kim discussed the Adopt A Park Cleanup at Passaic River Park. The meet up location is the parking lot at the north end of Summit Ave near the Wastewater Treatment Facility.
 - The event is sponsored by the Berkeley Heights Innovation and Sustainability Alliance.
 - Sunday March 17, 1pm to 3pm
 - Kim is the contact person for this event. Betty Ann Kelly is the person at the Union County level with whom Kim is coordinating (wants people to bring hedge clippers)
 - All supplies provided
 - All participants need to sign waivers
- County will haul out what we collect.
- Kim mentioned that a representative of Scout Pack 368 had already reached out to her and had expressed interest in this group's participation in this event.

Idling Law Signs

- Alvaro asked about adding information to newsletter.
- Suggestion to put up more signs around town.

Plans

46 Lawrence Drive

- **Findings of Fact** - Applicant wants to add swimming pool.
- **Recommendations** - He needs to retain stormwater on property and disconnect downspout from street.

Meeting adjourned at 9:44pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for March 11, 2019 at 7:30pm

Respectfully submitted by Angus Chen on March 9, 2019