

Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission

Minutes of Monday, April 7, 2020 Meeting (conducted by teleconference)

Attendees

Members: Angus Chen, Chris Scalera, David Harris, John Leo, Kim Diamond, Kevin Hall, Renee Ciesla, Richard Leister

Guests: Alvaro Medeiros

Meeting called to order at 7:34 PM

- 1) Minutes from March 9th and March 23rd were approved.
- 2) Hearing on agenda items only - 3 minutes per resident – no items raised
- 3) Old Business
 - a. Scout projects – No new developments per Chris.
 - b. Stormwater Ordinance – meeting was cancelled. Richard will follow-up with Liza to determine when the meeting will be rescheduled.
 - c. Sustainable Jersey
 - i. Green Team members – List of members with contact information to be reviewed and completed by all. Kevin is next on the list to complete and should pass on to next member.
 - ii. Mayor’s Wellness Campaign – Richard & Alvaro to coordinate offline to complete actions. Alvaro to set-up meeting with Richard.
 - iii. Richard will send Sustainable Jersey spreadsheet for EC members to review and contribute.
 - d. Tree Ordinance – Tom Bocko has revised the ordinance. Richard reviewed and provided comments and suggested that the revised ordinance be reviewed by a certified arborist. This would be paid for by the tree fund. This is a major revision. The EC will also be given the opportunity to review the more final version of the ordinance.
 - e. Peppertown Park – no new updates. Previously scheduled meeting will be rescheduled for next week
 - f. Recycling
 - i. Mayor’s Recycling Task Force – Alvaro spoke with Joe Graziano. Waiting for response on status of bid. Joe is concerned that because of the inability to have a public meeting we are unable to bid on recycling. Joe is working on finalizing the bid. The bid will include 2 options (cost with and without bins). There is still time to obtain bids and move into contract for 2021. Partnering with BOE is currently on hold. Angus reached to Superintendent

Varley to find out about plans for Earth Day and is awaiting a response

- ii. Trex bins and pick-ups – Acme is no longer accepting any thin film plastics as long as the coronavirus is going on. An announcement that collections are on hold has been posted on webpage, on digital sign and on Facebook. Benches that have been earned have been ordered from Trex. We have earned 14 but have only received 8 to date.
 - g. Ordinance on Restrictions on Plastic Bags, Plastic Straws, and Polystyrene – Ordinance passed. There is no new news. State of NJ could be passing ordinance on plastic bags soon. Given the coronavirus, there may be backlash in the use of reusable bags, since these are perceived to have risk of transmitting Coronavirus.
 - h. Topics for the township newsletter –Angus reached out regarding topics for future. The focus right now is on health and well being due to coronavirus. Pam will notify Angus when other topics will be accepted.
 - i. Municipal Complex and stormwater – no update
 - j. Government Energy Aggregation – currently on hold
 - k. Climate Action Plan Survey – currently on hold
 - l. Passaic River Park – John will reach out to Union County Parks Commission since there is extra soil available to potentially create a new trail. Maps to trails in BH were sent out as part of newsletter. David will forward to the EC. John to determine where new trail can be built after a solid rain and will review maps to determine town versus county property. Kevin and Renee offered to help with walking potential trails.
 - m. Partnering with Rec Commission for DEP Grant Application re: Lower Columbia Park's Trails – currently on hold
 - n. NJ Clean Communities Grant – on hold until clean-ups can be planned
 - o. 1,000 trees – currently on hold
 - p. Composting – Richard sent article to EC regarding what one municipality did with composting.
- 4) New Business:
- a. Community Garden – open for planting now; water to be turned on around beginning of May. A schedule has been created so that only one person/family per hour will be given access to the Community Garden. Plants will be available through Ground Works Elizabeth
 - b.
- 5) Citizens hearing on any environmental issues -3 minutes per resident – no items raised.
- 6) Plans:
- a. Revised plans for 135 Industrial Road – landscaping plans include planting trees on wet areas; Richard to provide recommendation to alternates to those trees. In general, the selection of trees is acceptable. There will be planting along eastern and western side of property. EC previously recommended retention basin and

they opted with detention basin. This is generally a high recharge area. EC also previously recommended green roof, solar panels and relocation of steps and door on southwest corner all of which were not accepted. EC to recommend reconsidering bioretention basin.

Meeting adjourned at 8:17 PM

Respectfully submitted by Renee Ciesla on April 19th, 2020.