

Minutes of the Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission

April 18, 2022

In-person and Zoom meeting called to order at 7:34p.m.

ATTENDEES

Members: Angus Chen, David Harris, Eduardo Veyan, Kimberly Diamond, Nirit Rotenberg, Renee Ciesla, Richard Leister

Guests: Natalie Chin, Serena Yee, Steve Carrellas

Approval of Minutes

- Minutes from April 4 were approved, motion made by Angus, seconded by Kim
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Hearing on agenda items only - 3 minutes per resident

- Steve Carrellas noted that the agenda for this meeting was not posted. Serena Yee asked what the Passaic River Park and GLHS agenda items were, which was answered by Richard
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NEW BUSINESS

Climate Change Resolution

- The resolution was discussed and it was agreed that it will not be supported by the EC because it is more symbolic rather than taking concrete action.

Trail Funding (Nature Conservancy)

- Richard suggested seeking funding from the Nature Conservancy or Open Space from Union County. He will provide David with a contact name. It was suggested that Union County is a better path forward since it is county property.
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PLANS - None

OLD BUSINESS

ANJEC's Virtual Earth Day Celebration -

- The EC will not be participating

Hikma Volunteer Day -

- Berkeley Heights will not be participating.

Solar Project Siting - NJ Board of Public Utilities Stakeholder Meeting

- There was a discussion about the language of Docket Number QO21101186. David made a motion to accept the comments to the NJ Board of Public Utilities as amended. Angus seconded, and motion approved.

Scout Projects

- **Eagle Scout Project at Community Garden**
 - Richard reported that Vibhav stopped by to have a document signed. Vibhav now needs to firm up the bids and begin fundraising.
- **Other Proposed Projects**
 - Richard asked if the EC members had seen the projects list sent by John Leo, and whether there was anything to add to determine what projects scouts can do.

Community Garden

- Renee reported that the team is trying to secure funding for the proposed children's garden. Today the proposal was sent to Connell with a strong endorsement from Connell's SVP of Finance. Applied for a grant for a picnic table to the Berkeley Heights Education Foundation Already submitted for a grant from Whole Foods and hope to receive an answer by the end of summer or September.

Stormwater Ordinance and MS4 Education - Nothing to report

Adopt-a-Drain

- Kim thanks Bobbie Peer for posting the TapInto article about the Top 50 Drain Name Winners, and Steve Carrellas for being in the fun picture. Kim shared the article on the Sustainable Jersey and EC Facebook page. She asked Angus to post it on the Berkeley Heights Adopt-a-Drain website. She mentioned that other towns are interested in hosting their own programs, as someone attended top drain names winners event and receiving a message from someone in Montclair. She also shared the article with the national Adopt-a-Drain program.

Sustainable Jersey Actions

- **Expired Actions**
 - Richard will help Nirit connect commissioners with individual actions. David was working on Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI) action, and is waiting on information from the Passaic River Coalition. David asked if there is a Word version of the ERI, and Richard will see if that exists.
- **Sustainable Jersey Grant for Rain Gardens** - Nothing to report

Tree Ordinance and Trees Wanted

- **Tree Ordinance**
 - Rich reported that he is waiting for the township council to review it, but they are working on the township budget.
- **Trees Wanted**

- Richard reported that approximately 40 trees will be planted the week of May 20 in the right of way. There will be another planting in the fall. The County splits funding with the township.

- **Saplings**

- Richard is picking up saplings this Thursday. Angus asked who among those attending tonight will be volunteering for Saturday's giveaway, and it will be Richard, Renee and about 8 students who are seeking confirmation hours. Tables will be borrowed from Renee and Angus. Natalie asked about using pails to keep seedlings wet during distribution. Rich doesn't yet know how many saplings will be given. Sydney Birbower will be providing 200 saplings. Set up will begin at 10a.m. and distribution will occur between 11a.m. and 2p.m. Rich is not sure if we will get bags this year, we will separate saplings between 10am and 11am, Natalie asked Serena about making labels for each saplings, but the GL students may not have time to put that together. We will wait until we find out the species and numbers. Rich said to ask Liza Viana or Barbara Russo about posting on the township LED board. So far 32 people have signed up. Angus will post on Facebook page.

Peppertown Park - Nothing to report

Recycling - Nothing to report

Topics for the Township Newsletter

- Richard will create articles on mosquitoes and fertilizing. The fertilizer article will count towards stormwater management.
- **Stormwater Management Education Campaign** - Nothing to report

Passaic River Park and GLHS

- Richard reported he repeat a request to have a meeting with the GLHS school administrator regarding reforestation.

Projects with Watershed Ambassador

- The current Watershed Ambassador term expires in May. She will notify the EC of the results when she completes the water assessment of Berkeley Heights. David wanted to follow up with her about an invasive program, but hasn't had the bandwidth.

L'Oreal

- Rich reported that the L'Oreal volunteer day will still occur in June. He stated that the trail was flooded the last time he visited. He stated that John Leo also plans to volunteer that day.

Chemtrade

- Renee noted that Chemtrade's site name is now Vertellus. Angus noted that Chemtrade's business was acquired by Vertellus. Richard said they should assume obligations of old company, and will reach out to the company manager.
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Citizens hearing on any environmental issues - 3 minutes per resident -

- Eduardo spoke about pesticide application on public land. Richard will make a note about Lawn Doctor.
 - David asked Angus to post about the Watchung Reservation cleanup on the EC Facebook page.
 - The Grant Committee wrote an application for a grant on the trees on the right of way to NJ American Water, which was submitted by Liza Viana.
 - Serena asked about the upcoming plastic bag ban, as students aren't aware. Kim mentioned the shutdown of EC sponsorship of the Trex program. Businesses are advertising about the upcoming ban. Kim said people should drop off thin-film plastics at Stop&Shop, Shoprite, Home Depot. Angus reported the places to drop off these plastics is on the EC webpage. Rich reported one business was looking for guidance on paper bags, and said that he directed inquiries to the township. Kim recommended the EC send inquiries about the plastic bag ban to the township.
 - Kim said EC doesn't have representation on the township council, so none of our activities or efforts are reported. She proposed that a township council member should serve on our commission, which might take a resolution. Rich will speak with the mayor, since EC positions are appointed by the mayor and there are no open positions.
 - Steve suggested that because the plastic bag ban is a state statute, businesses should ask their legal representative.
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Motion to adjourn - 8:42pm, motion made by David and seconded by Angus

Next meeting is scheduled for May 2 at 7:30p.m.

Minutes submitted by Angus Chen.