

Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission

Minutes of Monday, June 8, 2020, Meeting (conducted by teleconference)

Attendees:

Members: Richard Leister, Chris Scalera, David Harris, Kim Diamond, Renee Ciesla, Angus Chen, Kinan Tadmori

Guests: Alvaro Medeiros, Helen Kirsch

Meeting called to order at 7:35 PM.

- 1) Minutes of the May 18th meeting will be reviewed at the next meeting.
- 2) Hearing on agenda items only - 3 minutes per resident – none.
- 3) Old Business
 - a. Scout projects: Chris reported that there is interest in some projects and Lower Columbia that should commence this summer.
 - b. Stormwater Ordinance: no progress. Richard? intends to meet and discuss with Tom Solfaro soon.
 - c. Sustainable Jersey (SJ) Actions: Evidence for following actions will be gathered and submitted:
 - Community Education & Outreach action expired however Communications Committee already fulfilled these requirements.
 - Richard applying for full SJ credit for community garden action, since community garden is established, and meets SJ requirements for organic and donating produce to food banks.
 - Community Forestry Management Plan – evidence of this action was received by zoning officer and will be submitted.
 - Green Team action - evidence will include EC meeting minutes
 - Emergency Communications Planning - actions completed and planned. Alvaro will assist with completing checklist and narrative of accomplishments.
 - Community Energy – documentation of usage in municipal buildings. Richard will secure a student to gather this data
 - Tree Planting programs – 1,000 trees program could be included in this action
 - Municipal Communications Strategy – Alvaro will assist in gathering evidence completed by Communications Committee
 - Waste management – develop and conduct 2 collection days per year of unused prescription medications.
 - Recycling and Waste Management/Compliance – Angus to gather evidence and provide to Richard
 - Commercial and Institutional Recycling – Task Force will gather evidence and provide to Richard

- Grass Cut and Leave It – plan will be organized to accomplish this action
 - Reusable Bags Education – Girl Scout project count towards this action.
 - Deadline of June 14 to submit 1st draft of completed and planned actions.
- d. Tree Ordinance: no update
- e. Peppertown Park: no update
- f. Recycling
- Mayor’s Recycling task force: request for bids went out week of May 11th. There is a 60-day bid period. After last meeting, there was concern of some of the terms in the bid in particular the 30-day out clause. Once received, may send out second bid.
- g. Ordinance on Restrictions on Plastic Bags, Plastic Straws, and Polystyrene: Township council agreed the new ordinance would not be enforced while the current Covid-19 situation prevails.
- h. Topics for the township newsletter: articles on Tree Distribution event (Richard) and Composting (Chris) will be submitted.
- i. Municipal Complex and stormwater: no update
- j. Climate Action Plan Survey: no update. Will be taken off the agenda until further notice.
- k. Passaic River Park: Need to obtain funding required for engineering work for the Passaic River Trail. Need to come up with estimate on costs of phase 1. Dan Bernier & Betty Ann Kelly of Union County will be engaged to obtain the estimate. 9/11 trail plan will come at a later time.
- l. 1,000 trees - event took Place on June 6th at CMS. Some of the remaining saplings were given to 4 grade and remainder will be left at Hall’s and patrons will be offered free saplings.
- m. Composting: Union and Bergen County hubs will be conducting a presentation. Invitation link was circulated on the hub. Composting presentation which will include a tour will be postponed after COVID-19 is no longer a threat.
- n. EAB treatment: Bid has been awarded to vendor. Work to begin shortly treating the trees in BH.
- o. Soil at municipal complex and trail behind 9/11 memorial: discussed at May 15th meeting mentioned above. Soil pile is to be tested for contamination. Dan Bernier is evaluating if some of that soil could be used in County property behind Mt Carmel or off Camptown Road. John evaluating trail behind 9/11 memorial, but that likely to proceed without using this soil.
- p. Hub meeting:
- Grant funding cycle is July 1 – June 30 therefore the end of the grant year is coming up. Given the COVID-19 situation, the proposal is to spend the \$1000 grant money as follows: 12-month zoom membership, development of hub logo, purchase of tablecloths with logo to be used in the future
 - Next year funds to be used to support larger events for example, UC Vegan Fest.
 - Battery storage Task force to look at use of battery storage in public buildings and best practices.

- Kim reported they want to have research on harmful effects of plastics when they degrade and impacts of COVID-19 (how transmitted, how long survives on plastic bags and other bags). This will be useful for towns.
- q. Girl Scout T-shirts: Angus posted final pages for Township website and will also post on EC Facebook page. David acting as EC sponsor will find out what to do to wrap this up.
 - r. Community Garden: gathering lessons learned and makes changes for more efficient process in the future. A treasurer has been appointed to deal with all financial processes related to the garden. Application process might be refined for 2021. All gardeners participate in a sub-team such as Bee Pollinator team.
 - s. ANJEC Grant for Lower Columbia - \$1000 grant has been awarded for green infrastructure and helping to manage stormwater runoff.
- 4) New Business:
 - a. Engraving Trex benches – Pat Smith agreed to facilitate with engraving of Trex awarded benches. The cost will be approximately \$30/bench. Pat will transport the benches to and from the engraver. A motion was approved for the EC to cover the cost of the engraving or ordered and received Trex benches. Richard will follow-up with Eugenia to ensure that this is an acceptable way to use the EC budget.
 - 5) Citizens hearing on any environmental issues -3 minutes per resident: None.
 - 6) Plans: Four applications were reviewed.

82 Forest Ave: plan is to add new addition, new covered porch, paver patio. Already over maximum impervious coverage. Not in flood or riparian zone. EC does not recommend approval. If approved, install rain garden and disconnect downspouts from the street

5 Wentworth Dr.: not over allowable impervious coverage. Not in flood or riparian zone. No environment impact. EC recommends disconnect downspouts from the street.

1 Holly Mews: addition is not an environmental issue. EC does not have any general issues with the addition.

47 Cromwell Ct.: Addition of above -ground. Already over maximum impervious coverage. In riparian zone. If approved, install rain garden and disconnect downspouts from the street

Meeting closed at 9:08 PM.

Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 22nd, 2020, at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Renee Ciesla on June 22nd, 2020.