

Minutes of the Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission

July 6, 2020

Conference call meeting called to order at 7:34pm

Attendees

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

Guests: Alvaro Medeiros

Approval of Minutes

- Minutes from June 8 and June 22, 2020 approvals postponed until next meeting
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Hearing on agenda items only - 3 minutes per resident - None

OLD BUSINESS

Scout Projects

- Chris reported a scout from Troop 68 is planning a project to build a compost pile and other tasks at the community garden.

Stormwater Ordinance - Nothing to report

Sustainable Jersey Actions - Status Report

- Rich showed our status on the Sustainable Jersey website and explained the difference between completed and approved actions. Our current count is 345 points, which is five points shy of the 350 points required for silver certification. If we are able to add more actions to aim for silver, we should have more than 350 just in case some aren't approved.
- The Diversity on Boards & Commissions action for the Diversity & Equity category was discussed. Alvaro will look into this.
- The Heat Island Assessment action for the Emergency Management and Resiliency category was discussed. Rich said Kinan felt it was simple to complete and is working on it.
- The Energy Efficiency for Municipal Facilities action for the Municipal Energy Initiatives category was discussed as possible.
- The Energy Tracking and Management action for the Municipal Energy Initiatives category was discussed. There are hurdles regarding the meters that were changed a few years ago and Rich needs to reassociate them with the buildings tracked before.
- The Public Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure action in the Transportation Initiatives category was discussed. It is planned, but the requirements cannot be met for the deadline of the current cycle.

- The Green Building Policy/Resolution action for the Green Design category has been added.
- The New Construction action for the Green Design Municipal Buildings category was discussed. Rich will look into this because the new municipal building will be LEED compliant, but not LEED certified.
- The Upgrade/Retrofit-Light Pollution action for the Green Design Municipal Buildings category was discussed. Rich needs to look into it.
- The Anti-Idling Education & Enforcement Program action for the Health & Wellness category was discussed. Alvaro mentioned needing to move forward with the resolution and Liza Viana needs to send a letter to township employees. Rich is marking it as complete. The resolution is repeated from 2017. Renee stated that schools will reiterate the policy in the beginning of the school year.
- The Build Healthier Communities for the Health & Wellness category was discussed.
- The Innovative Community Project 1 action in the Innovation Projects category was discussed. The Trex program does not qualify because it should be under recycling.
- The Innovative Community Project 2 action in the Innovation Projects category was discussed. It pertains to Emerald Ash Borer treatment and we hope it is accepted.
- The Innovative Community Project 3 action in the Innovation Projects category was discussed. It pertains to alleviating flooding concerns by unblocking streams flowing into the Passaic River.
- The Sustainable Land Use Pledge action for the Land Use & Transportation category was discussed.
- The Adopt A Complete Streets Policy action for the Land Use & Transportation category was discussed along with its relation to the master plan.
- The Enhanced Stormwater Management Control Ordinance action for the Land Use & Transportation category was discussed. It was stated that it hasn't happened yet.
- The Buy Local Campaign and Support Local Businesses actions for the Buy Local Programs category were discussed.
- The Water Conservation Ordinance action for Natural Resources category was discussed. Rich will look into it.
- The Green Grounds & Maintenance Policy action for the Grounds & Maintenance category was discussed.
- The Municipal Community Strategy and Improve Public Engagement in Municipal Government actions for the Public Information & Engagement category were discussed. Gail Nelson is working on them.
- The Improve Public Engagement in Planning and Zoning action for the Public Information & Engagement category was discussed. Kevin will reach out to Keenan Hughes.
- The Digitizing Public Information action for the Access to Public Information category was discussed. Alvaro will help with this if needed.
- The Prescription Drug Safety and Disposal action for the Waste Management category was discussed. Gail Nelson is working on this.
- The Recycling and Waste Reduction Management and Compliance action for the Waste management category was discussed. Angus mentioned he is waiting on certain details.
- The Grass Cut It and Leave It Program action for the Waste Management category was discussed. We had one mention in a newsletter about lawn fertilization, which should count. We will be adding it to the July newsletter.

Tree Ordinance - Nothing to report

Peppertown Park - Nothing to report

Recycling

- **Mayor's Recycling Task Force**

- During the June 24 meeting, the Sustainable Jersey actions and possible second round recycling bid were discussed
- The next meeting on July 15 will continue to discuss these topics

Ordinance on Restrictions on Plastic Bags, Plastic Straws, and Polystyrene Containers

- The ordinance will go into effect December 1, 2020, but will not be enforced at that time.

Topics for the Township Newsletter

- Articles need to be submitted by July 15.
- Chris worked on combining the invasive and native species articles.
- The Grass Cut it and Leave It article will be written and submitted to support the Sustainable Jersey action.
- Chris will write the composting article. David sent around an ordinance about compost heaps. Rich recommended revisit and revise this ordinance, as well as reviewing other township ordinances regarding composting. Angus spoke about creating a video on building a compost bin. Kim suggested that if the video is created, it could be shared with the Union County hub.

Municipal Complex and Stormwater - Nothing to report

Passaic River Park

- Nothing to report from David.
- John was unable to attend, but shared with Angus areas that need to be built up, which was relayed to the commission.

1000 Trees

- Angus has created the map to plot all the residents who received trees.
- Renee mentioned some residents had their trees eaten by animals, so she directed them to Hall's Garden Center.

Emerald Ash Borer Treatment

- Vendor will finish this week

Soil at municipal complex and trail behind 9/11 Memorial

- Alvaro stated that the township is waiting for pile of soil to be finished before commencing testing

Hub Meeting

- Kim mentioned waiting on approval of the logo design.
- The hub is looking for summer activities suggestions, now that they have a Zoom account.

Girl Scout T-Shirts

- Angus posted the requested updates to the EC subpage.
- Rich recommended helping with a press release once distribution details are finalized.
- David will follow up with them about sustainability.

Community Garden

- Angus asked if plot holders would like to share pictures of their plots. Rich said it would be good to highlight the garden with the community. Renee mentioned there is a small Facebook group that could benefit from greater exposure. Renee and Chris will ask the members if there is willingness.

ANJEC Grant for Lower Columbia

- Rich said the check arrived and has to ask Carolyn George what she is planning to do. Kim spoke with Carolyn George about milestones. She offered to help Carolyn if needed.

Trex Collection and Engraving Trex Benches

- Kim stated the program is still suspended because ACME in New Providence, our “collection partner,” is not collecting until the pandemic is over. She asked Trex’s corporate headquarters about delivering to the aggregator directly. Trex responded that such delivery was not an option.
- The engraver has been retained. Nine of the fourteen earned benches have arrived. For the two EC benches, how do we want our name to be formatted?
- Motion to vote for the preferred engraving format of the EC name as either “Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission” or “BH Environmental Commission.” It was agreed that both benches should be engraved the same way. The majority voted for the longer version with words “Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission” fully spelled out.
- Kim stated that an engraved sample can be seen at Smith Chiropractic. The EC benches are supposed to be the darker benches with light letter engraving.

NEW BUSINESS

Environmental Justice bill

- Rich mentioned an email from ANJEC asking for the township council for a resolution supporting NJ Legislative bills S-232 and A-2212 requiring the DEP to evaluate environmental and public health impacts of certain facilities on overburdened communities when reviewing certain permit applications. It was noted that the bill does not apply to Berkeley Heights at this time, so it was asked if our township has standing on taking a position on this. Rich asked to see if the EC is in support of this. Motion made to reject

supporting ANJEC's recommendation to forward this proposed resolution to the governing body for its consideration. The majority proposes to reject.

Tree Survey

- The tree survey training held last week over Zoom had about a dozen attendees. Rich asked if any of the attendees wanted to join teams to conduct the survey. Kevin and Renee want to be part of one of the tree teams, preferably evenings. This may count toward Sustainable Jersey actions.

Citizens hearing on any environmental issues - 3 minutes per resident - None

PLANS

528 Springfield Ave

Findings of Fact

- The applicant is proposing to remove the present building and construct a three-story building on the footprint of the present building.
- The site is apparently not in a floodway, wetlands or riparian zone.
- Slope is 0 to 3 %.
- Recharge is zero inches per year.
- Existing building coverage is 27.2%, and maximum proposed building coverage is 27.2%
- Maximum proposed other coverage is 61.4% where 35% is allowed and 55.4% exists.
- Maximum proposed combined coverage is 88.6% where 85% is allowed and 82.6% exists.
- Application includes General Construction, Design, Grounds and Landscaping Considerations
- One drawing shows trees, but these are not indicated in the landscaping plan.
- Most of the shrubs in the landscaping plan are not native.
- Stormwater management is not included in the application.

Recommendation

- Applicant should consider installation of solar panels on roofs facing south.
- At least half of the shrubs in the landscaping plan shall be native plants.
- Include a stormwater management plan to be approved by the township engineer.
- The applicant should be required to have the parking area sloped toward the landscaped area to capture runoff from the parking area by using plants that are suitable for a bioswale or rain garden.

Motion to adjourn - 9:20pm

Next meeting scheduled for July 20

Respectfully submitted by Angus Chen on July 21, 2020