

Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission

Minutes of Monday, July 20, 2020 Meeting (conducted by teleconference)

Attendees:

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

Guests: Alvaro Medeiros, Steve Carrellas, Liza Viana (Business Administrator), Helen Kirsch

Meeting called to order at 7:35 PM.

- 1) Minutes of the June 22nd and July 6th, meeting are approved as amended.
- 2) Hearing on agenda items only - 3 minutes per resident – none.
 - a. Guest Steve Carrellas offers his assistance for any Sustainable NJ action items as well as efforts involving the plastic ban bill.
- 3) Old Business
 - a. Scout projects: Website updated with T-shirt project. Chris advised us we were awarded a grant at Lower Columbia. Kim verified that the project has not been granted funds yet but is in touch with the organizers and will keep the group updated when funds are available.
 - b. Stormwater Ordinance: Per Liza Viana, “Basecamp” has been set up to organize project participants going forward. Liza says grading ordinance is a priority given that it's a smaller ordinance but for the larger, planned stormwater ordinance, the drainage study is going forward to help provide data and guidance. Neglia is the contractor conducting the modern drainage study.
 - c. Sustainable Jersey (SJ) Actions:
 - i. Deadline: SJ hard deadline is approaching (July 31st).
 - ii. Resolutions for the Township Council
 - I. No-Idling Resolution Renewal**
 - Kim suggests identifying idling “hot spots” and modify the resolution to make it easier for citizens to follow
 - Helen points out that the “No Idling for 3 minutes” is a state law.
 - Renewing the No-Idling resolution gains points from SJ
 - Discussion ensued on how to increase local compliance of the NJ No-Idle law.
 - The resolution calls to increase education on the consequences of automobile idling
 - The use of electronic comm mediums might be most effective in educating the public

- II.** Green Grounds & Maintenance Policy: Richard proposes a green grounds and maintenance policy similar to that of the borough of Lincoln Park. The commission educate itself on the Lincoln Park version and make a motion to pursue similar language at the next meeting
- d. Heat Islands: Kinan updated commission on study of “hot spots” that were identified in a study showing temperature variances driven by tree canopy loss and/or increased heat absorbing materials caused by urban sprawl (black top, black roofs, etc) EC would use this data to approach township or businesses to recommend changes that would reduce hot spots. Kim recommends a campaign beginning with an education piece highlighting benefits of green roofing, etc. Richard suggests making this part of the BH Master Plan. Connell center has one building with a “white roof” where we might be able to gain data on related cost savings.
 - I.** Angus proposes motion to submit Heat Island Effect as an SJ action.
Motion passed.
- e. Tree Ordinance: Liza requested an updated ordinance to put on August agenda so that residents making requests to the town have the latest information on tree removal
- f. Peppertown Park: no update.
- g. Recycling:
 - I.** Mayor’s Recycling task force: Recycling vendor bids are due Wednesday by 10am.
- h. Ordinance on Restrictions on Plastic Bags, Plastic Straws, and Polystyrene: no update.
- i. Topics for the township newsletter: articles on Tree Distribution event (Richard) and Composting (Chris) will be submitted.
- j. Municipal Complex and stormwater: Liza recommends local landscapers work with the EC to work on the future landscaping in a cost saving, community focused project
 - I.** Kim suggests Rutgers submit designs that help create low cost features that residents could use for examples for their own property
 - II.** Rain gardens will be a focus effort to promote their utility to residents
- k. Climate Action Plan Survey: no update. Will be taken off the agenda until further notice.
- l. Passaic River Park: No updates.
- m. 1,000 trees - No update.
- n. Composting: No update.
- o. EAB treatment: No update.
- p. Soil at municipal complex and trail behind 9/11 memorial: Soil quality tests from DEP will be reported by John or Liza once completed.
- q. Hub meeting: No new updates.
- r. Girl Scout T-shirts: Angus updates EC that library distribution was updated. Richard suggests putting an article in TapInto.
- s. Community Garden: Chris updates EC that there have been a lot of donations.

- t. Trex Collection & Engraving Trex benches – Four benches have been engraved. Benches engraved for participating businesses report that they are good for their businesses. There is no update on the revival of thin plastics collections until the pandemic is over.
- 4) New Business
- a. ANJEC recommends township environmental commission members support bill A1978 and SA864 which put strict limits on sale and distribution of single use plastics.
 - b. SJ Local Public Information & Engagement Planning Opportunity: Coordinating with Grants committee
 - c. Java's Compost - A compost recycling program for residents. Kim recommends surveying residents to gauge interest. EC would promote it as a modern environmental program. Kim and Angus will speak with Java's Compost and report back to the EC with the results.
- 5) Citizens hearing on any environmental issues -3 minutes per resident: Guest Carrellas brings forth concern about time required of a police officer to not only enforce No-Idling law but to time each motorist. Additionally, No-Idling zones are not well identified. Will reference material on No-Idling be returned to the website since it apparently isn't available.
- 6) Plans: Three applications were reviewed.
- 1. 415 Emerson Lane - applicant is proposing a new driveway (application is a repeat since the required public notice contained an error). The draft recommendations of the Commission were accepted.
 - 2. 107 Cambridge - applicant is proposing a new patio. The draft recommendations of the Commission were accepted.
 - 3. 230 Park Ave - applicant is proposing to add a second story addition. The draft recommendations of the Commission were accepted.

Meeting adjourned at 10:03 PM.

Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 3rd, 2020, at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by John Leo on July 21st, 2020.