

Minutes of the Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission

August 3, 2020

Conference call meeting called to order at 7:34pm

Attendees

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

Guests: Alvaro Medeiros, Helen Kirsch

Approval of Minutes

- Minutes from July 6, 2020 were approved
- Approval of minutes from July 20, 2020 postponed until next meeting

Hearing on agenda items only - 3 minutes per resident - None

OLD BUSINESS

Scout Projects

- Chris reported a scout from Troop 68 is still planning a project to build a compost pile and other tasks at the community garden.
- Scout project at Lower Columbia has begun. Kim stated that pictures of progression will need to be submitted and asked for a timeline. Chris will follow-up with the scout responsible for this project.

Stormwater Ordinance

- Richard will ensure David will continue to stay involved.

Sustainable Jersey Actions - Status Report

- Richard submitted actions for a potential 440 points to aim for Silver status. 350 points required for silver certification.
- It is expected that SJ will come back with feedback that not all actions have been completed
- There is only Bronze and Silver status

Tree Ordinance

- Liza Viana encouraged the Environmental Commission to get ordinance in place as soon as possible. Richard will follow-up with Tom Bocko to revise the draft ordinance.

Peppertown Park - Nothing to report

Recycling

➤ **Mayor's Recycling Task Force**

- 1 bid was received from Giordano which was reasonable.
- The task force is not planning on going out for another bid round.
- The next meeting on August 12 will discuss next steps for recycling bid and future of task force
- Richard stated that Whole Foods is now collecting #5 plastics

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

Nothing to report

Topics for the Township Newsletter

- Articles need to be submitted by August 15.
- David will submit an article on “riparian zone”
- Richard suggested submitting an article on “Anti-idling”

Municipal Complex and Stormwater

- Richard emailed Michele Bakacs from Rutgers Water Resources about planning for a rain garden or green infrastructure at the municipal complex.
- Richard requested drawing that shows the grading plan for the municipal complex which would show where the stormwater would be flowing and help to plan for green infrastructure.
- Possibly planting to begin in March 2021

Passaic River Park - Nothing to report.

1000 Trees

- Richard will submit the final report

Soil at municipal complex and trail behind 9/11 Memorial - Nothing to report.

Girl Scout T-Shirts

- 450 t-shirts bags were made. Girl scout have started to distribute and will complete by the continue to distribute on Wednesday August 5 and Friday August 7, 2020 at 12PM.
- Richard create a post on the Facebook page. Angus will link on other appropriate sites

Community Garden

- 15 lbs of produce was donated in July
- There are plans to place a beehive in/near the Community garden

- Kim recommended gardeners to sign a waiver or release stating that they are entering the garden at their own risk in case of bee allergies so that the Environmental Commission is not held liable in any way.
- Richard suggested placing a sign stating that there is a beehive on the premises and gardeners would enter at their own risk.

Trex Collection and Engraving Trex Benches

- Kim stated that to date 6 out of 8 benches that were initially requisitioned have been engraved.
- 16 or possibly 17 total benches are available for engraving, since more organizations have now ordered or received their benches.
- Motion to vote for engraving up to 9 additional benches and paid by the Environmental Commission budget. There were no objections.

Plastics bill in State Assembly A1978

- If approved, bill will not go into effect for another 3.5 years
- There was discussion to decide whether as per ANJEC request the commission and the town council should contact the Assembly to recommend that they pass this bill.
- Kim stated that in her opinion the Environmental Commission should not ask town council to weigh in on a matter of state policy.
- Alvaro stated that Environmental Commission would need to provide rationale for asking town council to support this bill and why when our own ordinance will be effective at the end of this year. David, Kim and Angus agreed.
- Kim also stated that the businesses should be in support of this bill as well.
- This bill conflicts with our own ordinance in some ways.
- After discussion, there was a motion that the Environmental Commission should not lobby in favor of this Plastics bill A1978 or S864 currently being considered by the State Assembly

SJ Local Public Information & Engagement Planning Opportunity

- Richard sent to Grant and Communication committees for consideration. Deadline for this application is on August 9, 2020.

Java's Compost discussion

- Angus & Kim reported with meeting with Java's compost. Java Compost would pick-up household compost. There would be a fee to residents (*\$12.50/week or & \$17/every other week + \$25 one-time set-up fee*). In spring, all participants will receive (1) 5-gallon composted material back.

- There was discussion about potentially using DPW as a composting site.
- Compost stored in 5-gallon bucket would be picked up from residents via truck on a weekly or bi-weekly basis.
- Average number of households requested for pick up 100-150 households.
- It was suggested that the Community garden be used as a town-wide compost collection site. Chris and Renee agreed that this would not a viable option and not supported by gardeners.
- All agreed that we should pass on this opportunity.

NEW BUSINESS

President's Environmental Youth Awards

- Kim has received certificates from EPA for all children involved in cleanups in 2018. Kim asked on feedback about how these should be distributed. EC members will help with distribution of certificates.
- Alvaro asked that Kim draft a proclamation that will be read by the mayor during a future meeting.
- Alvaro asked Kim if any cleanups this year. Community Pass was planned to be utilized for volunteers to register for cleanups at various locations in Town. That would be used to ensure enough supplies are ordered for the cleanup. Once a replacement has been identified for Tom Barton, the planning of cleanups with recommence.

Stormwater management PR campaign –

- Results of drainage study with be shared at August 18, 2020 Council meeting
- Liza shared guidelines. All should review and will be discussed in detail at the next meeting.

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

PLANS

146 Chaucer Drive

Findings of Fact

- Renovations allow for remaining under maximum impervious coverage footprint of the present building.

- The site does not appear to be in a flood plain, a riparian zone or a wetland.
- Recharge value appears to be 0 inches per year.
- Slope of 0 to 3 percent.
- Coverage for structures increases from 13.76% to proposed 14.58%, which is below the maximum allowed (15%).
- Accessory items decrease from 9.95% to 9.8%, which is below the maximum 10%. It is not clear from the drawings exactly where this decrease is coming from.
- Total impervious coverage increases from 23.7% to 24.38%, which is below the maximum of 25%.
- DEP has adopted groundbreaking green-infrastructure rules to reduce pollution and flooding from stormwater runoff
- Application does include General Construction and Design & Grounds and Landscaping Considerations.

Recommendation

- In light of the new DEP green infrastructure rules and recharge value, retain stormwater runoff on the property with green infrastructure. Connect any downspouts or sump pumps to rain gardens or vegetative swales. Information on rain gardens can be found at http://water.rutgers.edu/Rain_Gardens/RGWebsite/rinfo.html.

Motion was approved to accept recommendations for 146 Chaucer Drive

14 Pine Grove Road

Findings of Fact

- The applicant proposes to construct a 15' x 30' above-ground pool.
- The site does not appear to be in a flood plain, a riparian zone or a wetland.
- Recharge value appears to be between 6 and 12 inches per year.
- Slope of 8 to 15 percent.
- Existing and proposed impervious coverages (10.77%) for structures are below the maximum allowed (15%).
- Accessory items increase from 8.94% to 12.24%, which exceeds the maximum 10%.
- total lot coverage increases from 19.71% to 23.01%, which is below the maximum of 25%
- DEP has adopted groundbreaking green-infrastructure rules to reduce pollution and flooding from stormwater runoff
- Application does include General Construction and Design & Grounds and Landscaping Considerations.
- No indication of whether trees will be removed.

Recommendation

- Homeowner should apply for permit if trees are to be removed.
- In light of the new DEP green infrastructure rules and recharge value, retain stormwater runoff on the property with green infrastructure. Connect any downspouts or sump pumps to rain gardens or vegetative swales. Information on rain gardens can be found at http://water.rutgers.edu/Rain_Gardens/RGWebsite/rinfo.html.

Motion was approved to accept recommendations for 14 Pine Grove Road

64 Rutgers Avenue

Findings of Fact

- The applicant proposes to construct a 20' x 16' deck.
- The site does not appear to be in a flood plain, a riparian zone or a wetland.
- Recharge value appears to be between 6 and 12 inches per year.
- Slope of 0 to 3 percent.
- Existing and proposed impervious coverages for structures exceeds the maximum allowed by 0.55%
- Accessory items (8.9%) and total lot coverage (24.53%) are below the maximum allowed.
- DEP has adopted groundbreaking green-infrastructure rules to reduce pollution and flooding from stormwater runoff
- Application does include General Construction and Design & Grounds and Landscaping Considerations.
- No indication of whether trees will be removed.

Recommendation

- Homeowner should apply for permit if trees are to be removed.
- In light of the new DEP green infrastructure rules and recharge value, retain stormwater runoff on the property with green infrastructure. Disconnect any downspouts or sump pumps from the street and connect them to rain gardens or vegetative swales. Information on rain gardens can be found at http://water.rutgers.edu/Rain_Gardens/RGWebsite/rginfo.html.

Motion was approved to accept recommendations for 64 Rutgers Avenue

Motion to adjourn - 9:32pm

Next meeting scheduled for August 17, 2020 at 7:30 PM

Respectfully submitted by Renee Ciesla on August 16, 2020