

Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission

Minutes of Monday, August 17th, 2020 Meeting

Meeting called to order at 7:31 PM via teleconference

Attendees:

Members: Richard Leister, Angus Chen, Kim Diamond, Kevin Hall, David Harris, John Leo, Chris Scalera, Kinan Tadmori.

Guests: Alvaro Medeiros.

- 1) Minutes of the July 20th and August 3rd meetings were not approved.
- 2) Hearing on agenda items only - 3 minutes per resident: None.
- 3) Old Business
 - a. Scout projects: Troop 68 scout working on Community Garden project does not yet have timeline for that project. 6 other scouts from Troop 68 looking for projects. Unclear which scout / from which troop working on Columbia Park project – Chris to check.
 - b. Stormwater Ordinance: No update.
 - c. Sustainable Jersey Actions: Feedback expected by end Aug / early Sept.
 - d. Tree Ordinance: No progress.
 - e. Peppertown Park: No update
 - f. Recycling
 - i. Mayor’s Recycling task force: Township to review recycling bid at Aug 18th Council Meeting.
 - g. Ordinance on Restrictions on Plastic Bags, Plastic Straws, and Polystyrene: No update.
 - h. Topics for the township newsletter: Deadline now Sept 5th. David had volunteered to draft article on riparian ordinance; David and Kevin will collaborate on this. Article on anti-idling campaign proposed: past efforts on this have proven difficult. Objective would be primarily to raise awareness; difficult to enforce without Police Department buy-in. Could we ask school Principals to (a) include no-idling request in information sent to parents with dropoff/pickup information, and (b) can they ask teachers to include this in their lessons during the first few weeks of the school year. Richard to follow up with the Principals on this.
 - i. Municipal Complex and stormwater: Richard received a response from Michele Bakas from Rutgers Water Resources, which identified 3-4 different locations for possible rain garden to S or E of Municipal Complex. Construction of this would not begin before March 2021. Possibility that the “islands” in the parking lot E of the complex may be needed for installation of solar array, if that happens. Alvaro to determine if we could get a preliminary assessment of the feasibility of any of these options from the project engineers.
 - j. Passaic River Park: No update,
 - k. 1,000 trees: EC has received a commendation from Alec McCartney, NJ DEP, on our tree seedling distribution. Richard proposed this achievement be submitted to ANJEC for recognition; motion proposed and approved.
 - l. Soil at municipal complex and trail behind 9/11 memorial: No update.
 - m. Girl Scout T-shirt project: Distribution of the T-shirt bags occurred at the BH Public Library the week of Aug 3rd. Julie Piazza reported that Barbara Rybolt is going to write an article about the project for TAPinto Berkeley Heights. They also requested the website be updated to say that the remaining bags are available for free outside the Library. Angus has updated the website accordingly.

- n. Community Garden: Garden Committee proposed to expand size of garden. Richard noted that the current size and placement of the garden was based on sun exposure. Next step would be for Garden Committee to draft proposal for extension, to be presented to Environmental Commission, Township and State of NJ. Funding for additional fence and other materials would need to be obtained.
 - o. Trex collection and engraving Trex benches: No update on collection program. Engraving of first 8 benches expected to be completed this week; EC's bench is located at upper tennis court at Columbia Park.
- 4) New Business:
- a. Stormwater management communication campaign: Liza circulated draft of public education / outreach program, seeking input from EC. Opportunities include signage for green infrastructure (in place at CMS and GL rain gardens), municipal stormwater infrastructure (eg, detention basins), community communications, school presentations (Rutgers has this expertise & materials), educational projects, litter clean-up campaigns, rain barrel workshop, rain garden workshop. Not clear if documentation from past initiatives (eg, rain garden workshop) can be submitted. Communications Committee can distribute content that EC develops. Angus interested in creating a rain barrel resource. Action: EC to review this document and come to next EC meeting with additional actions we can support.
 - b. FEMA Grant Funding Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities: Objective is to reduce stormwater runoff using nature-based solutions. Program information distributed to EC members. Municipalities can apply for funding for related projects; deadline 29th Jan 2021. 2 webinars on this scheduled for later in August.
 - c. ANJEC Environmental Commissioners' Handbook: Updated handbook issued by ANJEC. Richard noted the requirement for EC meetings to be publicized. Richard to follow up with Township administrator, who should ask the Township attorney for formal guidance to confirm our practices are in conformance with state law in regard to the Sunshine Law.
 - d. September Hub Meeting: No agenda topics currently scheduled.
 - e. Next meeting is scheduled for Monday Aug 31st, 2020. Discussed cancelling this meeting but agreed we should keep this meeting on the calendar. John suggested we focus that meeting on actions related to the stormwater management communication campaign.
 - f. Kinan proposed a motion to submit the completed heat island assessment to the township planner. Motion approved.
- 5) Citizens hearing on any environmental issues -3 minutes per resident: None.
- 6) Plans: 528 Springfield Avenue
- EC has reviewed this plan previously; plan has been revised to eliminate residential component. Richard shared the results of the National Stormwater Calculator for the property. These calculations show that with addition of modest green infrastructure (rain garden and permeable pavers) rainfall infiltration increases by 6%. EC agreed this analysis should be submitted to the Planning Board in support of our previous recommendations, with the addition of explanations of the worksheet.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 31st, 2020, at 7:30 PM

Meeting adjourned at 9:31 PM.

Respectfully submitted by David Harris, August 17th 2020