

# South Plainfield Environmental Commission

## Official Minutes - February 8, 2023

### 1. Call to Order

Notice having been filed with the S.P. Observer and TapInto SP, Chairwoman Dorothy Miele called the Environmental Commission meeting to order in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act at 7:35 pm.

**Present:** Dorothy Miele (chairwoman) Tom Walsh, John Ferguson, Debra Leporino, Adam Butrico, Melanie Mott (council liaison) and Brian Bythell (planning board liaison).

**Alternate members present:**

**Associate members present:** Kathleen Benton and Lisa Roseo (secretary)

**Others:**

**Absent:** Genevieve Helbo (e) and Dr. A. Tempel (e)

### 2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the January 11, 2023 reorganization and regular meeting were reviewed and all were in favor of approval.

### 3. Invitation for Public Comment

There were no members of the public present.

### 4. Budget - Dr. A. Tempel

- O&E (FY2023 temporary budget = \$1,000) Since the last meeting we spent \$505 on: \$505 for ANJEC dues. YTD spent = \$505. Balance = \$495. Glenn Cullen sent our budget prep worksheets.
- Clean Communities – 2022 grant (\$49,621.17) – Spent since the 1/11 meeting = \$2,400 on: \$1,533 on salaries for litter removal/enforcement; \$570 on litter can maintenance; \$297 for grabber tools. Total spent = \$39,483 from the 2022 grant. Balance = \$10,138.
- Signs Trust Fund – Spent \$0. The balance = \$640.12.
- Harris Steel Trust Fund – Since the last report we spent \$0. Deposits = \$0. Current balance is \$35,433.00.

### 5. Committee and Liaison Reports

#### A. Council Liaison - Ms. M. Mott

- Melanie Mott said there is nothing new yet to report on.

#### B. Planning Board Liaison - Mr. R. Houghton / Mr. B. Bythell

- Brian reported the application for Popeye's Restaurant at Oak Park Commons has been approved with a drive-up. Brian said there was a lot of discussion about parking and traffic flow. Adam asked if the groundwater contamination was discussed. Brian said it was not.

#### C. Site Plan Review / Land Use- Mr. A. Butrico / Dr. A. Tempel

- Northeast Developers (1400 Hamilton Blvd.) – applicant proposes mixed use office/residential in R-10 zone. The existing single-family home will be demolished and replaced with a two-story building containing two 2<sup>nd</sup> floor residences and 1<sup>st</sup> floor office space. They will be removing 3 trees and replanting 60 (mostly evergreen shrubs). Adam suggested asking for recycling plan details and well restriction; there is underlying groundwater contamination.

#### D. ERI - Ms. D. Leporino

- Debra said at the recent BAG meeting, she asked Councilman White if he knew the status of the new software program we've been discussing. He said they are working on updating the tax maps; there is an upcoming assessment. Melanie said there is an abundance of tax appeals in the Boro. The assessment may lower some peoples' taxes. Professionals are looking at the possibility of rezoning certain areas. Debra noted the current tax maps from 2009 have been updated manually.

#### E. Clean Communities - Dr. A. Tempel

- Adopt-a-Spot – Debra reported two renewals in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter – SP Business Association for the Lakeview Overpass and The First Baptist Church for Hamilton Blvd./Front St. There were two agreements sent out for the last quarter of 2022 that have not been returned. Debra asked SPEC's thoughts on how long she should wait before informing them their agreement has expired/defaulted. A thirty-day extension seems appropriate.
- CBA - Debra noted a correction to her report from last month. She said Kathleen Benton's students actually visited 46 businesses, not 85 as previously reported.
- Debra said the CCAB met last week. No one identified any problems within the program. Discussed the Spring Litter Cleanup which will be April 29. Also talked about trying to enlist more people for the CCAB; currently have five members: Dorothy, Alice, Debra, Kathleen and Genevieve. At the meeting, Dr. Tempel reported that two schools had Clean Communities assembly programs this year. Discussed whether to pursue the 'BagUp NJ' campaign again. Dorothy said she suggested we compile a list of locations where residents who have an excess number of reusable bags can drop them off. We can create a flyer to have available for distribution at our events. Debra asked John Ferguson, as part of Stormwater Education, if the County can co-sponsor an education program. John said he has a colleague who would be happy to host a talk.

#### F. Forestry - Mr. A. Butrico

- Tree Seedling Distribution Program – Adam said we will be distributing approximately 300 seedlings on 4/15. The seniors will be separating the seedlings.

#### G. Highland Avenue Woods / Public Education - Mrs. D. Miele

- Dorothy reported that on 5/6, Walter Stochel as head of the Edison/Metuchen Historical Society, is bringing a group to HAW for a walk and visit to our Nature Center and Historical Society.
- Dorothy said there was a problem last weekend at the Nature Center on the 'Open House' day. There was no water, and they could not figure out why; there were no visible leaks. Temperatures had been frigid, but there was never a problem in the past as both sides of the center are kept warm enough to prevent pipes from bursting. However, someone shut off the heat on the Nature Center side, but it was the Historical Society side that froze. The issue became who do we call in case of an emergency situation on the weekend. Dr. Tempel was not available. Dorothy phoned the Watch Commander at the Police Department who did not pick up the phone. Then she reluctantly called Emergency Dispatch and proceeded to get the runaround while trying to explain that the property is a Boro owned building. Melanie believes the call should probably go to Glenn Cullen who would contact Len Miller. Dorothy said subsequently Dr. Tempel found out to contact Glenn Cullen. It turned out the water pipes were frozen because by Sunday's warmup, there was water. Chief Parker was made aware of the situation in order to inform his staff.

#### H. Historical Sites Preservation - Mr. L. Randolph

- Colonial Oaks – Dorothy gave an update on the artifacts uncovered at the site. Glenn Cullen did contact the archaeologist at Richard Grubb Associates who volunteered to speak to Dorothy. Their correspondence to Glenn stated that as long as the Boro can demonstrate that we can meet Federal Curatorial Standards, the artifacts would be turned over to our commission. They received the radiocarbon date info on a pit they identified as 770 AD. Another location had raw materials dated approximately 3000 years earlier. Dorothy will be speaking to them further. She would like to see the artifacts displayed at the Library in a secure case. She said this might wind up being a joint project between the Boro, Library & Historical Society (with assistance from Larry Randolph and Dr. Veit). Dorothy needs to find out what the material is and ask the Library Director if they would like to be the recipients to display.

#### I. Pollution - Mr. A. Butrico

- Cornell-Dubilier – SPEC is looking forward to the EPA press conference.
- John said the County Emergency Response plan he reported on last month is complete. He passed around some information: a list of chemical companies in Middlesex County and a list of areas that would need evacuating.

#### J. Green Team - Mr. T. Walsh

- Tom said the GT will be meeting on 2/23. Each member is working on the next action items. Tom explained our Bronze Certification is good for 3 years. There are a lot of actions we need to do, plus some actions' criteria have changed to make it more difficult to obtain the points. Instead of trying to crunch hard for the next recertification award in November, the team will work on action items over the course of 1 – 2 years. Some action items will be good for up to 3 years, some have expired, and some new actions are difficult to obtain. It is a work in progress.

#### K. Public Information & Technology - Dr. A. Tempel / Mr. C. Cioffi

- Dr. Tempel's report: in January, SPEC's Facebook page carried 2 posts: reached 969 people with 39 engagements.

#### L. Stormwater Advisory Committee - Mr. J. Ferguson

- GBFCC – Virtual meeting on 2/1. John reported that the question of whether New Jersey must provide a 25% match to the Federal allocation to the project was settled. NJ does not; the USACE and Federal government are covering the cost. They started discussing reevaluation for the Upper Basin. John spoke about some of the possibilities under consideration. There will be a public meeting portion.
- FEMA is looking to encourage preparedness for a 500 year flood (under flood protection). They want residents to understand what their 'base elevation' is for their particular area; and to add a 'freeboard' e.g. – an additional amount of height above 'Base Flood Elevation' where a structure's lowest floor must be elevated or floodproofed.
- New Jersey is working on their official 'Guide for Implementing the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard'. Once it is available, John (OEM), will review.

#### M. Environmental Specialist - Dr. A. Tempel

- There was nothing additional to report.

## N. Chairwoman's Report - Mrs. D. Miele

- There was nothing to report.

### 6. Incoming / Outgoing Correspondence

- A list of correspondence was provided.

### 7. Old Business

### 8. New Business

#### Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made, all were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for March 8, 2023 @ 7:30 p.m. in the Borough Hall Conference Room.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Lisa Roseo  
Environmental Commission Secretary

#### Acronyms

ANJEC	-Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions
BOA	-Board of Adjustment
CBA	-Clean Business Association
CCAB	-Clean Communities Advisory Board
DOT	-Department of Transportation
DPW	-Department of Public Works
EIS	-Environmental Impact Study
EPA	-Environmental Protection Agency
EWA	-Edison Wetlands Association
FEMA	-Federal Emergency Management Agency
FOW	-Friends of the Woods
GBFCP	-Green Brook Flood Control Project

HAW	-Highland Avenue Woods
KCS	-Known Contaminated Sites
LEEDS	-Lead in Energy and Environmental Design
LOI	-Letter of Interpretation
MCDSWM	-Middlesex County Division of Solid Waste Management
MCOEM	-Middlesex County Office of Emergency Management
MCUFAC	-Middlesex County Urban Forestry Advisory Committee
NJCF	-New Jersey Conservation Foundation
NJDEP	-New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
NOV	-Notice of Violation
OTOSP	-Oak Tree Open Space Parcel
PRP'S	-Potentially Responsible Parties
ROSI	-Recreation and Open Space Inventory
ROW	-Right of Way
SPBA	-South Plainfield Business Association
SPEC	-South Plainfield Environmental Commission
USACE	-United States Army Corp of Engineers