

South Plainfield Environmental Commission

Official Minutes - June 8, 2022

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 7:37 pm.

Present: Dorothy Miele, Tom Walsh, John Ferguson, Debra Leporino, and Brian Bythell (planning board liaison)

Alternate members present:

Associate members present: Larry Randolph and Lisa Roseo (secretary)

Others: Dr. A. Tempel (environmental specialist)

Absent: Adam Butrico (e), Jonathan Walezak (e) and Pete Smith

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the May 11, 2022 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 (FY2022 = \$1,000 temporary budget) Since the last meeting we spent \$0. YTD spent = \$472.36. Balance = \$527.64
- Clean Communities - The 2021 grant = \$48,287.91. Spent since May 11 = \$1,668.17 on: \$1,668.17 on wages for litter patrol & sign enforcement. Total spent = \$45,944.50. Balance = \$5,564.41. Dr. Tempel said we received a \$485 bill from Pinto Bros. for monthly litter can maintenance which included a \$10 fuel surcharge. It was not encumbered this month due to a legal question about exceeding the contracted price. Dr. Tempel asked Glenn Cullen if she can pay the extra \$10 per month without having the Mayor & Council adopt a resolution to increase the amount allocated to the contract. Glenn will speak with Paul Rizzo. The 2022 grant was announced = \$49,621.17. The check was received, but it has not been included in the 2022 budget yet. The Boro is legally required to hold two public hearings for a modification that large. They will then do a Chapter 125 transfer after permission from the State.
- Signs Trust Fund – Spent \$0. The balance = \$595.12.
- Harris Steel Trust Fund – Since the last report we spent \$0. Deposits = \$0. Current balance is \$35,981.00.

5. Committee and Liaison Reports

A. Council Liaison - Mr. P. Smith

- Dorothy reported the Mayor & Council held the first reading for the ordinance to change the date on the Borough seal; it passed. Dorothy said Pete Smith and the Boro followed through.

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

- Brian said the Planning Board has only held one meeting in the last two months. He had nothing new to report.

C. Site Plan Review - Mr. A. Butrico

- TFJ South Plainfield (Park Ave. & township line) – This is an amended application for the self-storage facility. The changes do not appear of an environmental nature. Dr. Tempel will look through further.
- Rahki Foods (2301 Park Ave.) (former Rite Aid) – Applicant proposes office, storage and retail. The existing building will be divided into three sections. The retail appears to be food service as they are keeping the drive-thru. The cover page to the application actually refers to a different restaurant entirely. Some of the detailed plans provided are generic/out-of-date. There are no proposed changes to the parking lot. SPEC will ask for specifics on the nature of the retail and storage. We will give to Adam for further review.
- South Plainfield Realty Development (4801 Stelton Rd.)(Middlesex Mall) – Application is for renovation and enlargement of existing building for a new Shop Rite – 102,000 sq. ft. Dr. Tempel noted their recycling plan is also a PowerPoint presentation directed at their employees for training. They recycle an amazing variety of solid waste products. Reviewed their landscaping plan which SPEC thinks is sparse and not diverse enough. Would like to see less emphasis on additional parking spaces and more attention to the landscaping. Will question if the proposed lighting has a controlled spread. Will request Anti-Idling signs for the delivery trucks. Adam will also be reviewing this application.

D. ERI - Ms. D. Leporino

- Debra met with Rich Wolff. He said there has been no decision by the Boro on cloud-based software that we will be officially switching to. But all indications are that we will be utilizing Mitchell, Humphries & Company's modules for building and zoning in the future. John Abbruzzese, code enforcement, may also be using it. There is an environmental health aspect to the software, but Rich is not familiar with its use. He sent the link which we will need to look at and see if we can use it for mapping. He is hoping the Boro upgrades to this software as it will be much easier to track issues throughout the Boro.

E. Clean Communities - Dr. A. Tempel

- Litter Cleanup – Dr. Tempel wrote a press release about cleanup day and sent it to The Observer. TAPinto published its own article.
- Set the next CCAB meeting for 7/20 @ 7:00.
- Bag Up NJ – Kevin removed the lawn signs on 5/28. Dr. Tempel received a report from the Middlesex County Department of Environmental Health. They did commercial inspections for plastic bag ban compliance; Target passed.
- Adopt-a-Spot – Keystone Community finally got their Certificate of Liability Insurance and came in to get cleanup supplies for their Front Street spot.
- Kevin Kober submitted a letter of resignation on 5/17, effective 6/4. He removed 43 lawn signs and 12 utility pole signs during May. Dr. Tempel advertised the position and received a few inquiries, but no commitments. We may need to split his current duties into two separate positions.

F. Land Use - Dr. A. Tempel

- Dr. Tempel said we received a notice of application by Bridge Acquisitions to NJDEP for a LOI for 1 Cragwood Road. This is the proposed warehouse plan we reviewed. Dorothy mentioned the Historical Society received a letter from Richard Grubb & Associates. They are investigating this parcel to see if

there is any archaeological importance. Larry explained that the State has declared South Plainfield to be an area of heightened archaeological sensitivity since the findings at the Cornell-Dublier site. This means that when a developer proposes a build, and it triggers a 106 review (meaning a federal agency involved determines that it has a type of undertaking that has the potential to affect historic properties), the developer is less likely to receive a waiver from the State Historic Preservation Office. Freshwater Wetlands Permits are issued by the USACE; they cannot issue if it will impact a historic site.

- Dr. Tempel also mentioned receiving a notice of application for an extension of a blanket Freshwater Wetlands General Permit to allow PSE&G to conduct maintenance activities on its regional electric and gas systems.

G. Forestry - Mr. A. Butrico

- Dorothy said the Salem Oak saplings are doing well as are the Bayberries Dr. Tempel potted which will be planted in HAW.
- The residents at 117 Fairmount Avenue who asked a year ago for replacements of two trees removed by DPW have asked again. Dr. Tempel will take another look at their property.
- Dr. Tempel reported that the trees that we were going to plant around Boro Hall cannot be placed as they would block the police security cameras.
- The free Dogwood from Columbia Bank has not materialized.

H. Highland Avenue Woods / Public Education - Mrs. D. Miele

- There was nothing new to report.

I. Historical Sites Preservation - Mr. L. Randolph

- Larry spent a day with Eugene Bosch, Cornell-Dublier project archaeologist, who provided him with some information. Mr. Bosch said the lower end of the Cedar Brook from its mouth with the Bound Brook to the lower end of Spring Lake is now to be included in the stream cleanup plan. The Bound Brook stream cleanup is currently not scheduled to start because the EPA and USACE are working out 'jurisdictional issues'. Also, the EPA has opened a new operational unit (OU) which is located to the east of Metuchen Road along Kentile Road. They have probably located a source of groundwater contamination not associated with Cornell-Dublier. They made note of the old Lehigh Valley coal storage facility; coal is a notorious source of groundwater pollution.

J. Pollution - Mr. A. Butrico

- John mentioned the US Air Force is stopping use of all the 'fighting foams'. He said if the US Department of Defense is putting a stop to it, the PFAS's must be very detrimental.
- Dr. Tempel said that Tom Walsh reported a pile of uncovered road salt behind Aldi, washing into a storm sewer in the rain. Rich Wolff contacted the property manager who said the salt would be removed by the next day.
- Cornell-Dublier – Dr. Tempel reported C-D has entered into a consent decree with the EPA for \$4 million for the Woodbrook Road Dump Site remediation. This includes over \$300,000 to NJDEP for expenses already incurred. The decree must be approved by the Court.

K. Green Team - Mr. T. Walsh

- Tom said the next meeting is 6/16. We submitted our initial actions to Sustainable NJ on 5/22. The first revisions are due 8/28. We will be discussing a plan of action for the list put together by Bob Longo.

- The High School Environmental Club made their 'Animals in the Community' presentation to the Mayor & Council on 5/16. Tom said they did a good job.

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

- Dr. Tempel reported that in May, SPEC's Facebook page carried 7 posts: reached 5,913 people, 880 engagements, 194 reactions, 47 comments and 18 shares.
- Dr. Tempel mentioned that Soltera has been acquired by Interstate Waste Services which will hopefully improve our curbside recycling service.

M. Stormwater Advisory Committee - Mr. J. Ferguson / Mr. T. Walsh

- John handed out information on the 'Resilient NJ' project and on the NJDEP stormwater management rules. He noted an overview on the handouts.
- GBFCP – There was news about the federal appropriation. The 125,000,000 includes the 25% local match as a loan. But all the money is available right away and it can be paid back over 30 years.

N. Environmental Specialist - Dr. A. Tempel

- There was nothing additional to report.

O. Chairwoman's Report - Mrs. D. Miele

- There was nothing new to report.

6. Incoming / Outgoing Correspondence

- A list of correspondence is attached.

7. Old Business

- Dr. Tempel suggested SPEC may want to revisit the deer control issue. The Boro could do outreach to neighboring towns to collaborate on a deer control program. Every year the problem gets worse.

8. New Business

9. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made, all were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for July 13, 2022 @ 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
CCA	-Clean Communities 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
SPCCA	-South Plainfield Clean Communities Association
SPEC	-South Plainfield Environmental Commission
USACE	-United States Army Corp of Engineers