

South Plainfield Environmental Commission

Official Minutes - September 8, 2021

1. Call to Order

Notice having been filed with the Courier News and S.P. Observer, Vice Chairman John Ferguson called the Environmental Commission meeting to order in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act at 7:32 pm. This meeting took place at the Highland Avenue Woods Nature Center.

Present: John Ferguson, Tom Walsh, Debra Leporino, Adam Butrico, Pete Smith (council liaison) and Rich Houghton (planning board liaison).

Alternate members present: Jordan Mandel

Associate members present: Jonathan Walezak and Lisa Roseo (secretary)

Others: Dr. A. Tempel (environmental specialist)

Absent: Dorothy Miele (e)

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the August 11, 2021 meeting were reviewed and the following correction was made: under Land Use, 3rd sentence, 'The federal budget has \$35,000,000. After the number was corrected, 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 (FY2021 = \$2,225) Since the last meeting we spent \$0. YTD spent = \$875.82. Balance = \$1,349.18
- Clean Communities - (2020 grant \$45,370) We received the 2021 grant = \$48,287.91. Spent since August 11 = \$2,457.00 on: \$950 (2 x \$475, Sept. & Oct.) on litter can maintenance; \$1,060 on litter removal/sign enforcement salary & wages; and \$447 for safety vests for litter cleanup. YTD spent = \$25,413. Balance = \$81,606.
- 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

- Pete reported that the Boro Council passed the supporting 'anti-idling' resolution as submitted.
- Due to the recent storm, the Labor Day festivities were rescheduled to 9/25. A scheduling conflict for the 'Paper Shredding' event was corrected by relocating it to Kennedy School.

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

- Rich said the 'Colonial Oaks' plan on New Brunswick Avenue will be on the agenda at the end of the month. Due to the presence of wetlands, the plan has been revised.

C. Site Plan Review - Mr. A. Butrico / Mr. J. Mandel

- No applications were received for review this month.

D. ERI - Ms. D. Leporino

- Debra compared the 2019 tax list to the updated list. There hasn't been a lot of land sold in the past year

- or so. Debra will meet with Dr. Tempel to move forward on the next step.

E. Clean Communities - Dr. A. Tempel

- Dr. Tempel said the Fall Cleanup has been publicized. Debra mentioned none of the press releases have gone out yet. She spoke with Darlene Pinto, TAP Into, who she told to hold off for one day because SPEC was going to discuss the possibility of changing the date due to storm cleanup. Debra also wasn't aware that we could upload press releases ourselves. SPEC agreed to keep the 9/18 date.
- The CBA wants to do a membership mailing. Debra suggested getting an updated list of businesses from the Fire Dept. and do a mass mailing, depending on cost. Dr. Tempel thinks a lot of businesses in the Boro are owned by out-of-towners; there are thousands of businesses in town. Debra will compare the updated list that the Green Team has with the CCAB list before moving forward.

F. Land Use - Dr. A. Tempel

- Wetlands: proposed subdivision on So. Plainfield Avenue where we insisted that they should get an LOI from the DEP: they did apply for the LOI and the area in question is now shown as isolated wetlands. They will probably get a permit to fill. If it goes through, we lose a lot of big old trees.

G. Forestry - Mr. A. Butrico / Mr. J. Schmidt

- Dr. Tempel reported that Middlesex County is included in the Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) quarantine zone. Dr. Tempel shared a TAPinto article to the SPEC Facebook page. There is a link to a check list of household items that can't be moved out of the area unless you check them for SLF and certify on a physical check list the items are clean.
- Lisa asked Dr. Tempel if we are still reporting SLF siting's. She said yes. www.badbug.nj.gov

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

- There was no report.

I. Historical Sites Preservation - Mr. L. Randolph

- There was nothing to report.

J. Pollution - Mr. A. Butrico / Ms. D. Hurst

- Adam asked if the Boro has combined sewer/storm sewers. John said no. Dr. Tempel said our sewer system is so old, it leaks. When the water table rises, it leaks in and surcharges, so all the mixed sewage and stormwater bubble up to the surface.

K. Green Team - Mr. T. Walsh

- Tom said the next meeting is 9/23. We have until 12:59 pm this Friday to answer/revise our actions for Sustainable Bronze Certification. Tom said he revised the Fleet Inventory narrative today with help from Dr. Tempel. Dr. Tempel recognized the efforts of those who helped with the process – Bob Longo, Tom, Danielle, Debra, Jonathan etc. They have been tremendous working on it and Bob Longo has kept us on track impressively.

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

- Dr. Tempel reported in August, SPEC's Facebook page carried 9 posts: reached 21,164. The GT Facebook page had 2 posts, reaching 80 people.

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

- John said the southern part of our County got hammered by Tropical Storm Henri. The State could not get a federal disaster declaration because our County was the only one severely affected. John

explained we have a threshold: we have to hit \$2.9 million of infrastructure damage, counting individual homes. Or the State must declare if they have at least \$18 million in damages. However, in Tropical Storm Ida, Middlesex County covered the State's threshold. FEMA is on site; go onto the FEMA website to put in claims. Residents might qualify for 75% coverage, less what homeowner's insurance would cover. If your sump pump failed, you can apply as a 'water emergency'.

- The NFIP (National Flood Insurance Program) is pushing the NJDEP to have better stormwater management in high hazard areas. Every town that has high hazard flood areas need to address them. NJDEP has a model ordinance that towns can use; 36 pages. Towns must identify what is considered high hazard, provide data, and explain how to protect the area.
- thDr. Tempel got a call from a NY Times reporter. She is writing an article on the flooding and wants to focus on South Plainfield. She asked about SPEC's role in helping the town avoid floods. Dr. Tempel provided some information. John might be speaking to her also to share his knowledge.
- John mentioned the NJDEP has money for mitigation projects. They will push for dredging projects because they now realize the water has to go someplace.

N. Environmental Specialist - Dr. A. Tempel

- There was nothing additional to report.

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

- There was no report.

6. Incoming / Outgoing Correspondence

- A list of correspondence was provided.

7. Old Business

- Dr. Tempel said we have the resolution accepting Danielle's resignation. At last night's Council meeting, Pete praised Danielle's dedication/work on SPEC and the Green Team.

8. New Business

- There was nothing new to report.

9. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made, all were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for October 13, 2021 @ 7:30 p.m. in the Highland Avenue Woods Nature Center – 115 Sylvania Place.

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