

Environmental Commission Board Meeting – April 12<sup>th</sup> 2022

Call to Order by Chair

Open Public Meeting Notice read by Commission Lawyer

Pledge of Legion and Moment of Silence led by Chairwoman Seemuller

Roll Call taken by Commission lawyer – See the table on page 2

Adoption of Minutes – February 8<sup>th</sup> 2022 and March 8<sup>th</sup> 2022 were adopted; see vote on page 4

- Commission Lawyer discussed minutes are meant to be brief overviews not verbatim record. If an error has been recorded any board member can ask for a change to the minutes for clarification.

Environmental Commission bylaws discussed and vote approved the adoption of bylaws with minor changes that would not have any effect on overall context of bylaws; see vote on page 5.

There were no Public Hearings

Open Discussion:

1. Tree City USA – Gina Cohl gave an overview of the requirements to become a Tree City USA member. To receive recognition, a community must meet 4 core standards for its public trees.
  - a. Form a Tree Board or List responsible Department (ei. Public Works) – having a tree board is optional if there is a department responsible for trees.
  - b. Establish a Tree Care Ordinance – Tree City USA has an example ordinance for either having a tree board or not having a tree board.
  - c. Maintain a community Forestry Program w/annual budget of at least \$2/capita. Mount Laurel probably already has this in the budget under Public Works. Toni Sapio indicated that leaf and brush collection can also qualify for this line item. She had worked with other towns to apply for membership.
  - d. Proclaim & Observe Arbor Day – helps create pride for our city’s entire urban forestry program.
  - e. Application is free. Deadline was Feb 15<sup>th</sup> 2022. This gives us 2022 to fill out application and meet the requirements for 2023 application.
  - f. List of surrounding towns that are members – Haddonfield (28 yrs), Maple Shade (2 yrs), Medford (42 yrs), and Moorestown (31 yrs)
  - g. Board voted to present this idea to township manager and town council. Becoming a member allows us to apply for Arbor Day Foundation grants to beautify our town and parks. See voting on page 5.
2. Trees at Elbo Walking Park
  - a. Gina Cohl inquired if the township had plans to develop the landscaping at Elbo Walking Park as it is avoid of mature trees and landscaping.
  - b. Councilwoman Karen Cohen had mentioned that she attends the Open Space Meeting and was unaware of any projects for Elbo Walking Park and would inquire.

- c. Gina Cohl asked why no one from the EC was part of these Open Space meetings as our bylaws indicated one of the EC's responsibility is to advise on Open Space. This subject will be discussed with Township manager for clarification.
    - d. EC lawyer recommended Chairwoman make our requests for all open space projects to council and township manager.
  3. Pollinator Meadow rehab/extension at Community Gardens (Blue Hill Farms)
    - a. Gina Cohl requested permission to rehab and extend the pollinator meadow at the community gardens.
    - b. EC lawyer recommended Chairwoman make our requests for all open space projects to council and township manager.
  4. Trees and native hedge row at Community gardens (Blue Hill Farms)
    - a. Gina Cohl requested permission to look for grants or other funding to plant trees and a native hedge row to replace the line of trees removed at the community gardens.
    - b. Gina Cohl had spoken to Jerry Mascia head of Public Works and he had indicated that there were no plans currently to replace the trees but we could make suggestions.
    - c. EC lawyer recommended Chairwoman make our requests for all open space projects to council and township manager.
  5. Bag Bill Outreach
    - a. Gina Cohl inquired what outreach has been done to inform both businesses and residents.
    - b. William Giegerich indicated that NJ Business Action Center has been running a campaign for a year.
    - c. The township has been posting about the upcoming ban on Social Media and has run advertisement in the township newsletter.
    - d. The Green Team put a display concerning the upcoming ban at the library and has provided the librarians with reusable bags (500 bags in total) to hand out to residents.
    - e. Township has ordered more reusable bags but unsure of arrival date. Gina Cohl asked about attending township events and Rancocas Woods events to help give out bags and educate the public about the upcoming ban. This will be discussed with township manager. William Giegerich suggested the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary block party on May 15<sup>th</sup> to handout bags.
    - f. Sandra Carleton requested we form a sub-committee regarding outreach and education on the plastic ban. A sub-committee can be formed of no more than three EC members.
    - g. Board voted to form sub-committee. See table on page 5.
    - h. Sandra Carleton and Gina Cohl volunteered to form the sub-committee.
    - i. William Giegerich indicated township could print out flyers for volunteers to do door to door outreach. Sandra Carleton will coordinate with William on which flyers to print from the BagUpNJ website. <https://www.bagupnj.com/>
  6. ANJEC Introduction
    - a. Councilwoman Karen Cohen introduced Cheryl Reardon and Randi Rothmel from ANJEC. They provide the EC board with an overview of what ANJEC is and how they can help advise us.
    - b. ANJEC holds educational events for Environmental Commissions. These are virtual right now and can be viewed on their YouTube channel.

- c. ANJEC has an Environmental Commission Handbook which can be downloaded from their website. <https://anjec.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/EnvCommissionersHandbook-2017.pdf>
- d. ANJEC Members can use any training materials provided by ANJEC.
- e. Cheryl Reardon can be reached at [creardon@anjec.org](mailto:creardon@anjec.org) and cell is 609-313-5517
- f. Randi Rothmel can be reached at [rrothmel@anjec.org](mailto:rrothmel@anjec.org) and cell is 609-694-5780
- g. Randi Rothmel had indicated that our EC could also be a joint Tree Board (touching on our Tree City USA discussion above).
- h. She also mentioned The Urban & Community Forestry Program (NJUCF) that is run by the NJDEP. NJUCF does help and encourage those in the program to get grant funding - \$3K to first develop the 5 year Community Management Plan (updated every 5 years) and then up to \$50K she believes for urban tree restoration.  
- <https://www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/forest/urbanandcommunity/index.html>
- i. ANJEC will be holding their virtual Earth Day on April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Meeting Adjourned – motion by Gina Cohl and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Chris Hughes. All were in Favor.

Next Meeting is Tuesday May 10<sup>th</sup> 2022 at 7pm.

Environmental Commission Board Voting

		Attendance	Absent
Chairwoman	Marinna Seemuller	x	
Citizen	Sandra Carleton	x	
Citizen	Gina Cohl	x	
Citizen	Bhupindar Singh	x	
Citizen – Planning Board Rep	Ramesh Venkatakrishnan	x	
Citizen Alt 1	Christopher Hughes	x	
Citizen Alt 2	Mandy Skalski		x
Councilmember	Karen Cohen	x	
Township Rep	William Giegerich	x	
Professional	Toni Sapio	X	
Lawyer	Richard Briigliodoro	x	

Vote on Adopting Minutes from February 8, 2022 Meeting

		Attendance	Motion	AYE	NAY	Abstained	Absent
Chairwoman	Marinna Seemuller	x		x			
Citizen	Sandra Carleton						X <sup>1</sup>
Citizen	Gina Cohl	x	1st	x			
Citizen	Bhupindar Singh	x		x			
Citizen – Planning Board Rep	Ramesh Venkatakrishnan	x		x			
Citizen Alt 1	Christopher Hughes	x	2nd			x	
Citizen Alt 2	Mandy Skalski						x

Sandra Carleton was absent for this vote

Vote on Adopting Minutes from March 8, 2022 Meeting

		Attendance	Motion	AYE	NAY	Abstained	Absent
Chairwoman	Marinna Seemuller	x		x			
Citizen	Sandra Carleton						X <sup>1</sup>
Citizen	Gina Cohl	x	1st	x			
Citizen	Bhupindar Singh	x		x			
Citizen – Planning Board Rep	Ramesh Venkatakrishnan	x		x			
Citizen Alt 1	Christopher Hughes	x	2nd			x	
Citizen Alt 2	Mandy Skalski						x

Sandra Carleton was absent for this vote

Vote on adopting the EC Bylaws

		Attendance	Motion	AYE	NAY	Abstained	Absent
Chairwoman	Marinna Seemuller	x		x			
Citizen	Sandra Carleton						X <sup>1</sup>
Citizen	Gina Cohl	x	1st	x			
Citizen	Bhupindar Singh	x		x			
Citizen – Planning Board Rep	Ramesh Venkatakrisnan	x	2nd	x			
Citizen Alt 1	Christopher Hughes	x		x			
Citizen Alt 2	Mandy Skalski						x

Sandra Carleton was absent for this vote

Vote on requesting permission to apply for Tree City USA

		Attendance	Motion	AYE	NAY	Abstained	Absent
Chairwoman	Marinna Seemuller	x		x			
Citizen	Sandra Carleton	x		x			
Citizen	Gina Cohl	x	1st	x			
Citizen	Bhupindar Singh	x		x			
Citizen – Planning Board Rep	Ramesh Venkatakrisnan	x		x			
Citizen Alt 1	Christopher Hughes	x	2nd	x			
Citizen Alt 2	Mandy Skalski						x

Vote on setting up sub-committee for Plastic Ban Outreach

		Attendance	Motion	AYE	NAY	Abstained	Absent
Chairwoman	Marinna Seemuller	x		x			
Citizen	Sandra Carleton	x	1st	x			
Citizen	Gina Cohl	x	2nd	x			
Citizen	Bhupindar Singh	x		x			
Citizen – Planning Board Rep	Ramesh Venkatakrisnan	x		x			
Citizen Alt 1	Christopher Hughes	x		x			
Citizen Alt 2	Mandy Skalski						x