

Minutes of the Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission

April 8, 2019

Meeting called to order at 7:30 PM

Attendees

Members: Richard Leister, Kim Diamond, Renee Ciesla, David Harris, John Leo, Angus Chen, Kinan Tadmori

Guests: Alvaro Medeiros, Girl Scout Troop 40254

Approval of Minutes – Minutes from March 25, 2019 approved

Presentation from Girl Scout Troop 40254

- Looking to eliminate plastic straw use in Berkeley Heights as part of Silver Award
- Letter campaign to businesses + education to elementary schools
- Looking to sell straws (bamboo, metal, reusable plastic)
- Could include article about initiative in BH Newsletter
- Petition considered as well
- Angus will be liaison going forward

Old Business

Community Garden

- Richard received PO from finance officer for lumber, forwarded it to vendor and asked for estimated delivery date
- If delivered in time, will start building this Saturday 4/13
- Once Sustainable Jersey grant is spent for lumber and beds built it can be closed so that we can qualify for other SJ grants; this open grant prevents us from receiving any other Sustainable Jersey grant for which we have applied
- Once beds are built, will need to get soil delivered to fill beds – will try to have it delivered as close as possible to where the beds will be
- Richard applying for grant for supplies to build wheelchair accessible raised beds

Environmental Movies - Nothing to report

Scout Projects

- Presentation by girl scouts on eliminating plastic straws in BH (see notes above)
- Angus and Alvaro will continue to communicate with scouts

Stormwater Ordinance

- Might be able to review ordinance on Google document or Microsoft Live but want to make sure we can see the markup of the changes and who is making them. Angus to confirm availability of software.
- Sustainable Jersey action requires ordinance
- Will review document that John will send out that provides homeowners with guidelines of how they can manage stormwater using natural solutions

Sustainable Jersey - Richard sent an email asking for people to accept membership on the Green Team, still waiting for some replies. After receiving replies, he will submit it to the township council to pass a resolution to appoint the Green Team. The list of members then has to be sent to Sustainable Jersey. The stormwater ordinance is one of the actions for Sustainable Jersey certification.

- Mayor's Wellness campaign will be a SJ action
- Emergency Communications action would need to be done by end of May (Liza working on this)
- Everyone should look at Sustainable Jersey website for actions that are approved/ones that we could apply for

Master Plan - Richard and John attended meeting on Friday 3/29 with new planner, Mayor Devanney, Jeanne Kingsley, there will be further meetings. Mayor mentioned addressing paper streets, could potentially turn them into parks or open space. Should also evaluate other open space areas, and passive and active recreation areas. Another issue: can we plant trees as many in forested areas have fallen down? Issue is that small saplings are vulnerable to deer, would require enclosing a forested area .

Tree Ordinance - Nothing to report

Peppertown Park - Richard will put out a notice for volunteers to help weed Peppertown Park, and will ask the township to cut down grasses. L'Oreal volunteer day - Richard will ask if they could help with weeding then as well. Kim will update us if meeting is held this week.

Smart Cities - Nothing to report

Recycling

- **Mayor's Recycling Task Force**
 - Presentation from Giordano and Union County at the March 27 meeting - mentioned the cost of recycling and resale (ex: cardboard has the most valuable, glass is not profitable)
 - Asked Giordano/County where recyclables ultimately end up - not clear where our recyclables end up (sent to countries in Asia).
 - Could potentially lower cost of recycling if we switch to carts (once Giordano's trucks are ready), automated process (water contamination of paper is major issue).
 - Task Force also inquired about what cost would be to include garbage and recycling in one contract

- Richard asked if there is a Sustainable Jersey action item for recycling – Angus will look through and see if there are any resources to take advantage of
- **Resolution on Plastic Bags** – Kim was looped into joint effort with Chatham Township, Chatham Borough, Madison, Berkeley Heights, Roselle Park, and Summit called the Northern NJ Sustainable Municipal Alliance, an initiative trying to get several things passed simultaneously. Want to emulate Jersey City ordinance for plastic bags, as well as plastic straw ban. Meeting being held on May 16th Madison Community House – 7 PM for further brainstorming session – environmental commissions, town councils, and mayors are invited to attend.
- **Trex Thin Film Plastics Recycling**
 - Environmental Commission has passed threshold to receive another bench from Trex. Bench has been ordered, Kim spoke to recreation department: both benches should be installed at lower Columbia Park (after playground equipment has been replaced).
 - Kim attended meeting with Berkeley Heights Business and Civic Group, two groups came forward to ask for Trex Bins.
 - Remax representative has adopted Trex Bin at the Library.
 - YMCA bin will be taken on by Historical Society of Berkeley Heights in mid-May
 - Little Flower Church will be getting two of their own bins, and Wharton Music school is getting their own bin as well.
 - Each entity that does collection is working towards their own bench
 - 4500 pounds total have been collected to date
 - Kim is going to write an article for TAPinto advertising available Trex bins

Clean-Ups

- Clean-up held Sunday April 7th, approximately 20 people attended, collected 91 pounds of litter (~2/3 recyclables, 1/3 trash)
- Will set up other clean-ups towards the end of April/beginning of May (lower Columbia and near Snyder fields)

Vegan Fest

- Insurance broker (Mayer Brown) for township interested in providing funding for Vegan Fest
- Dr. Patrick Smith also potentially interested in providing grant funding
- Kim opposed suggestion that Vegan Fest be considered as part of the Mayor's Wellness Campaign,. Kim explained that Vegan Fest existed last year under the prior administration, before the Mayor's Wellness Campaign existed. She stated that while an aspect of Vegan Fest is to promote wellness through healthy eating and exercise, Vegan Fest was – and still remains – an event independent from the Mayor's Wellness Campaign.
- Kim emphasized that Vegan Fest should not become political or used in any way for political means.

Community Adopt-A-Project – Kim suggested that we should have an online location to house this type of program (possibly once website has fully migrated). Could post several projects online, and residents can fill out a form to volunteer for a project for a duration.

Action: invite Communications Committee to a meeting to see what is feasible for the website (Richard will follow up on this).

Joint Meeting on Environmental Commissions

- Upcoming Meeting: Berkeley Heights needs to pick a meeting date and location to host in May
- **Action:** Richard will ask for a meeting room for about 40 people
- Angus reached out to Tom McAndrew about engineered bioslurry, he is exploring possibility of implementing that process in Berkeley Heights

Mayor's Wellness Campaign

- Richard, Alvaro, and Renee will meet to discuss the action and move forward
- Alvaro will discuss at the next Board of Health meeting on April 25.
- The healthcare provider for township employees is willing to join the campaign.

Topics for the Township Newsletter

- Richard wants to include “volcanoes” being placed around trees of soil/mulch, will write short notice on that, as well as emerald ash borer, and Arbor Dy
- David is drafting article on fertilizer/runoff issues

Municipal Complex and Stormwater

- Township has concern about cost for any change order for green infrastructure
- At next meeting Richard will ask if township would approve green infrastructure for the municipal complex if there is no added cost to original landscaping plan, and if there is cost the BHEC would provide funding.

Pesticides in Fields

- Alvaro reached out to Charles Santore
- Previous discussion: Vendor stated that herbicide treatment will be done during spring break, notice will be put out that it will be done, and flags will be placed after treatment is done, which will then be removed by the town.

New Business

Stormwater Utility Law

- New law allows townships to charge for stormwater runoff
- Some states already have this in place

Arbor Day

- EC donating saplings to the elementary schools (Woodruff, Hughes, Mountain Park) – Richard picks them up from state and delivers them to schools, and will attend Woodruff presentation.

Community Forestry Management Plan Webinar on Grants

- Township is developing a grants committee, to be available to help for grant applications
- New portal for applying for grants for CFMP – Richard shared webinar for portal and grant application

Environmental Commission Website

- Angus spoke with Pam Yoss (Communications Committee). Deadline for April newsletter is April 25th (last Thursday of the month), should be published shortly after
- Angus and Richard will be contacts for the website
- Angus will look into getting a logo for the Environmental Commission, but will need to inquire if there is any objection from the township to having a logo.
- Richard mentioned that keeping the domain name bh-ec.org for 1 more year would cost \$15, and recommends that we do so. Angus asked if it was included in the budget.

Plans

90 Kilarney Drive

- **Findings of Fact:** Existing impervious coverage is 18.8%, looking to increase to 20.8% total proposed impervious coverage, which is under the maximum coverage. Application was denied due to setback. New patio/deck proposed.
- **Recommendations:** Manage stormwater on property, either by disconnecting downspouts from the back of the house and/or street if currently connected to the street, and building a rain garden or other green infrastructure.

39 Lenape Lane

- **Findings of fact:** 3-8% slope, not located in a wetland. Impervious coverage increasing to 19.9%. Proposing new addition and new patio.
- **Recommendations:** Disconnect downspouts to the street if currently connected, install a rain garden or other green infrastructure

Meeting adjourned at 10:33 PM

Next meeting is scheduled for April 22, 2019 at 7:30 PM

Respectfully submitted by Kinan Tadmori on April 9, 2019