

**NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY, MAY 26, 2016 AT 7:30 P.M.**

**MINUTES OF THE RP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION  
April 28, 2016**

Harry Menta called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m., it having been duly noted that this meeting is being held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq., notice of which was sent to The Record and the Newark Star Ledger on the 31st day of December, 2015. Members present were: Harry Menta, Mark Olson, Leslie Olson and Stephen Quinn. Guillermo Lopez-Acosta was also present as an observer with a possible interest in joining the EC.

The minutes of the February 25, 2016, meeting were approved. There are no minutes for March as there was not a quorum.

**Correspondence received:** invitation from the Shade Tree Commission to Arbor Day 2016 to be held on April 30, 2016

**Old Business:**

**Interpretive Signs –** Steve Quinn had the instructions for installing the signs sent to the DPW. Steve Quinn said he could be available when the signs are installed. It was suggested that if it is possible to install the signs by May 7, 2016, they could be dedicated at the Earth Day Celebration.

**Bird Count -** The spring bird count will be held prior to the start of the Earth Day Celebration on May 7. Steve Quinn said he will be able to lead the bird count. Participants can meet at 7:00 a.m. at McGowan Park or at 8:30 a.m. at the Overpeck Park Amphitheatre.

**New Business:**

Mark and Leslie Olson were welcomed as regular members to the Environmental Commission. Steve and Linda Quinn were also welcomed back as regular members. Guillermo Lopez-Acosta explained that he has been a resident of Ridgefield Park for 15 years and is currently the Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church. He has interest in the environment and some background as well. He is very much interested in becoming part of the EC.

**Earth Day 2016 –** The Earth Day Celebration is scheduled for May 7, 2016, from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. The bird count will be held prior to the Earth Day Celebration. Invitations have been sent out and vouchers have already been submitted. All checks for the vendors of the shows, as well as Troop 3 for the food, have gone out. Members should meet at 9:00 a.m. to set up for Earth Day.

The show schedule is as follows:

- 10:30 a.m. Mad Science – interactive show
- 11:30 a.m. Wallaby Tales – Eyes of the Wild – Live Animal Show
- 1:30 p.m. Tenaflly Nature Center – Rapp'n with Raptors Show
- 2:30 p.m. Snakes-n-Scales – Live Presentation of River/Ocean Animals

In order to generate interest in the shows and Earth Day, the EC has offered an ice cream party to the class with the most attendance at each school. If a class is lucky enough to win twice, they will receive an ice cream and pizza party. Since it is impossible for some of the smaller classes to win with even 100% attendance, the EC has informed the schools it will have no problem providing ice cream for these classes as well since there are only a few of them. The EC will need to keep a sign-in sheet for each show to determine the winners. Steve Quinn has provided his cell number as an emergency number for the vendors to contact on Earth Day.

Mark Rust will provide continuous music. The Hackensack Riverkeeper will be here from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Thereafter, they will be taking their boat to a Green/Earth Day event in Secaucus. Positive responses were received from: Troop 3, face painter, elementary schools will host a table featuring third grade ecosystems, DPW, Sergio Radossi will provide fishing as the NJ Outdoor Alliance, Audubon Society, library and Flat Rock Brook Nature Preserve. The remaining invitees have not responded or replied they were not available.

Gerard Garofalow responded that he would be willing to bring his LSV to the event but he is not sure if there is a way this vehicle could get past the railroad tracks and on Industrial Avenue to be at the event. He will try another route from Bergen Turnpike to see if it is possible for his LSV to get to Earth Day.

Flyers were distributed in the schools. Supt. Eric Koenig advised that he will have all elementary school principals email a copy of the flyer to all students' homes as well. Supt. Koenig advised he will have the event schedule and party notice advertised in the schools and promoted in the classes. The schools were happy to participate and he thanks the EC for supplying ice cream parties, which he was sure the students would be excited about. Harry Menta has sent out notices to the papers, etc., to publicize Earth Day. The Banners are up on Main Street and Earth Day is on the Community Message Board.

The library said they were very much interested in participating this year. The new Director, Omar Khan, asked what materials were acceptable so he could discuss it with his staff. An email will be sent to him advising they may want to have some books, etc. that are oriented towards Earth Day, the Environment, Conservation, field books, etc. - to encourage attendees to stop in at the Library to take a look at what the Library has to offer on that subject and on so many other topics.

**Nature Preserve** - The nature preserve needs a lot of work and also needs to be discussed with Commissioner Anlian and the full membership at a future meeting. Mark Olson had previously advised that he is willing to make a bench for the nature preserve.

**Sustainable Jersey program** - The link for the program is [www.sustainablejersey.com](http://www.sustainablejersey.com).

In order to participate, RP must, by resolution, appoint a Green Team. All members of the EC should be on the Green Team. John Anlian explained that it is basically a program to encourage municipalities to take action that is good for conservation and the environment. Ridgefield Park already has a lot of the things they require. They just need to be documented for certification.

The Village needs to do a resolution and appoint members of the Green Team. It will then be easier to divide up the necessary requirements so that RP can get credit for many of the activities that it already does. There are projects such as the eradication of the knotweed, the nature preserve, eagle protection, public education, Earth Day, school projects, animal shows, having an EC, having a Shade Tree Commission, recycling, promote electric vehicles, etc., that just need to be documented so that proper credit can be given to RP so it earns the necessary 150 points. The goal is to be able to submit the application for 2016. The deadline is the middle of June.

A copy of the 2015 Sustainable Jersey Master Action Tracking Spreadsheet was given to the members and Commissioner Anlian to familiarize themselves with possible submissions. Deadline is June 2016. Commissioner Anlian and the members reviewed a list of projects that could possibly be submitted by the EC for certification. He will go through the projects in more detail and determine what projects can be submitted by RP. After a quick look through possible submissions, the EC came up with 185 points if all were accepted. John Anlian will organize the list a bit better. He will ask the DPW to take charge of the activities it provides that meets the requirements. He will check with the STC on the activities conducted by its organization that can be submitted. The EC will send a follow-up letter after John Anlian has the opportunity to speak to them.

Some things might require an ordinance change. The Police Dept. will need to certify activities done under their guidance. There appears to be about 18 items that RP can qualify for.

The deadline is June and the EC really needs to delegate duties if the initial deadline is going to be met. The first thing that needs to be done is the Mayor and Board of Commissioners need to appoint a Green

Team. Now that the EC is fully staffed with new members, there is a much greater possibility this goal can be met.

**Bat Walk** – An email will be sent to Joe DeAngeli at The Wild Life to see if he wants to schedule a bat walk. It had been discussed in the past but never set up.

**Recycling Receptacles** - Leslie and Mark Olson think the lack of recycling containers on Main Street sends the wrong message about the Village's interest in recycling and the environment. Leslie provided a picture of a small receptacle attached to the trash receptacle in Rutherford. The EC will contact Commissioner Anlian to see if it can proceed with having these installed in RP. Leslie would also like to see the planters redone since the unusual late, cold weather apparently killed the new plantings. Leslie said she is willing to take action on the planters.

**Fourth of July Parade** – The members would like to see some sort of representation in the July 4<sup>th</sup> parade by the EC. It could be a small float or even perhaps ask Gerard Garofalow if his LSV could be used for the parade and members walked with it.

**School Partnership** – Mark Olson will contact the high school to see about trying to get the schools more involved with the EC. He will try to contact the civics teacher, Michael Savino, to see if he might want to work with the EC.

**Chairman** – Now that the roster of members is full again on the EC, a new Chairman needs to be selected. It would also be a good idea to have a Vice-Chairman who would be able to run the meeting in the absence of the Chairman. There are still some openings for alternate members. The EC will host a table at Earth Day looking for interested people.

The meeting ended at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara DeLuca