

NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2012

MINUTES OF THE RP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION SEPTEMBER 27, 2012

Chairman James Ruff called the meeting to order at 8:10 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 28th day of December, 2011. Members present were: James Ruff, Kevin Avery, Peter Garvey, Harry Menta and Linda Quinn. Commissioner John Anlian also attended the meeting.

The minutes of the June 28, 2012, meeting were approved.

Old Business: Steve Quinn is working on the illustrations for the interpretive signs. Kevin Avery and Harry Menta will assist in the text for the signs

NYRA – Kevin Avery said he wrote to Karen Riede. She said that yes the property is for sale and she does not know how a non-profit can sell donated property. The property is owned by the NYRA.

Scout Nick Gerken was present to give an update on his eagle scout project and the cleaning of the nature preserve. Scout Paul Fasullo was also present. Currently, Casey from the Aspen firm came down and started to do some cleaning on August 20. He has made some progress but then he disturbed a yellow jacket nest and the project had to stop for a bit. Nick tried to get in contact with Casey but he was away until Tuesday.

Nick plans to work this weekend with the scouts. They are making sure they will work away from the hazards and are safe. They should be ready to plant trees in October, probably 6, 7, and 8th. The Aspen firm worked a day at no cost. Commissioner Anlian would suggest they hire the Aspen firm for one paid day. They are clearing an area that is 100 x 175 ft. It might be a good idea to hire Casey to do the next 100 ft. to eliminate the hazards. This would make any future potential project easier. It is the Environmental Commission's duty to manage the nature preserve. It would probably only take about 2-3 days with machinery to clear the area. Two days of Casey's time would probably finish up most of this section of the project.

Nick Gerken presented a list of products that needed to be purchased in the fall. Most of the trees are available in the fall but some are not available. Most of the oaks are available but the price is a little higher in the fall. Fall is not the ideal planting time but they need to be planted in this area. It would be around \$800 for the trees. The trees can be delivered in 1-2 days. The roots from the vines must be completely removed. The total cost of the necessary supplies would be about \$3,000.00 on the higher side or \$1,500.00 on the lower side depending on what is purchased.

The Environmental Commission will check to see what is left in its budget for 2012. Commissioner Anlian does not want to skim on this project. He would rather see it done right rather than just buying the cheapest item. A two-year old tree is about 6-10 inches. Tubes and stakes will be installed to protect against the deer. These trees will be protected for at least three years. Fencing might be something to consider in the future. Nick Gerken will see how the company wants payment handled.

New Business: Gerard Garofalow was present to seek the support of the EC for something he thinks would help invigorate the Main Street business district as well as help the environment. He has looked into encouraging Village residents to use golf carts for trips to Main Street.

In 2006, the State of NJ passed a law on golf carts in a municipality where there are paved roads and can only go at a speed up to 25 mph. The LSV must be electric. Mr. Garofalow has been thinking about how to regenerate downtown. He has approached the police department and they said it was not allowed. He checked into it further and found out LSVs (low speed vehicles) are permitted since 2006. He distributed information on this from the Motor Vehicle Commission.

The golf carts are environmentally friendly. There would be no emissions in the Village. The only problem that he sees is the way the Village is cut up with county roads. The municipality can resolve this by allowing different vehicles to cross the roads. Most carts only go about 20-25 mph. It is easier on senior citizens. It would also be cheaper than having a second vehicle. He would like to pursue this in RP. He is hoping the EC will support this. He has also talked to the Business Association and plans to meet with them in about two weeks. It would be easier to get around RP with a golf cart than a car. There is no carbon emission.

The driver must still have a valid driver's license, register the LSV, carry an insurance identification card for the LSV as a "Special Vehicle. Registration and insurance will be required for an LSV but it will be exempt from regular vehicle inspection. An LSV must display one license plate on the rear of the LSV, which shall specifically identify the vehicle as an LSV. The plate will have the letters "LSV" printed diagonally on the left of the five remaining characters.

A golf cart only takes up half a parking space. Something might have to be done about parking meters. Mr. Garofalow thinks it would need time to catch on. The Village speed limit is 25 mph. There would have to be special areas designated for crossing in areas with a speed limit over 25 mph. Golf carts can range in price from a few thousand dollars up to \$40,000.00 for special, customized carts. Mr. Garofalow feels they are safer than a bicycle or motorcycle.

Kevin Avery says that while they are environmentally better, he wonders if this could be a potential hazard to the golf cart operator. They might not be allowed on Teaneck Road because it is a county road. Railroad Avenue and Teaneck Road could be a problem although probably no one would really want to ride along Railroad Avenue. Teaneck Road would probably only be used to cross over.

Mr. Garofalow says the State of NJ thought enough about this to pass a state law so it must work in some communities. He feels that in a community like Ridgefield Park, this would be an easy way to get around town. He would be going to the Board of Commissioners so they could pass an ordinance and designate the special crossings area.

James Ruff said that from an environmental standpoint, it is a good idea. He will work on a resolution that the EC endorses anything that discourages the use of regular gas cars on local trips within the Village and promotes walking, bicycling including LSV. The EC supports the State of NJ on this law.

Future Activities:

The Commission has scheduled the next tree and nature walk for October 6. Commissioner Anlian will lead the tree walk. Information on the tree walk was available in the last newsletter and flyers will go out in the schools next week.

The next bird count will be scheduled for December 15 from 7:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. The group will meet at 7:00 a.m. at McGowan Park and 9:00 a.m. at the County Pavilion. Harry Menta will include the bird count in the next newsletter as well as send information to the Patriot.

Dock replacement - Jim Ruff said he has been noticing more and more docks that are similar to what Capt. Bill Sheehan suggested for RP. Commission Anlian thinks the EC should give some more specific details to the Board of Commissioners and then maybe it could possibly fit a new dock into the next budget. Jim Ruff will contact Bill Sheehan to see if he has any information on this type of dock.

Kevin Avery said that ANJEC is looking for members. If anyone is interested, send in your CV. Environmental Congress of ANJEC will be held on October 20, 2012.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 25, 2012.

The meeting ended at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara DeLuca