

**NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY MAY 25, 2017 AT 7:30 P.M.
(IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE GREEN TEAM MEETING)**

**MINUTES OF THE RP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
APRIL 19, 2017**

Chairman Stephen Quinn called the meeting to order at 7:56 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 published in The Record and sent to the Star Ledger as well as posted on the Village message board. Members present were: Guillermo Lopez-Acosta, Peggy Conversano, Gloria Rivera, Harry Menta, Leslie Olson, Mark Olson, Linda Quinn, and Stephen Quinn. Not Present: James Ruff. Commissioner John Anlian and Jinah Jong (interested citizen) were also present at the meeting.

A motion was made by Steve Quinn and seconded by Leslie Olson, approving the minutes of the March 23, 2017, meeting. All were in favor of the motion.

Approval of Bills:

1) Funds in the amount of \$5,000.00 were encumbered under PO#15462 for Earth Day/Green Fair 2017.

Hearing of Citizens: Jinah Jong was present just to observe what goes on at the EC meetings. She is a new resident in the Village.

Correspondence:

1) Earth Day responses: Yes – Face painter
2) Notice of second round of Parks Department Master Plan hearings scheduled for Tuesday, May 9 7-10 pm at Two Bergen County Plaza; Wednesday, May 10 from 7- 10 pm at McFaul Environmental Center in Wyckoff; Thursday May 11 from 7-10 pm at Bergen Community College at the Meadowlands in Lyndhurst.

Old Business:

Sustainable Jersey Actions – Most actions regarding this were discussed in the GT meeting held prior to the EC meeting tonight.

Bat Houses – Joe D'Angeli was unable to attend tonight's meeting. Steve believes Mark and Joe have plans for installing bat houses at the two gardens. Mark said they are going to make some extra and he and Joe have discussed this. Mark said he spoke to Jim Donohue and the school is still a good spot for the bat house. It turns out the design is a little bit more than the students can handle in shop class.

Future of Nature Preserve – Just recently, Commissioner Anlian had an estimate made for the trail. John Anlian said he met with John Kelly of Boswell Engineering and he has already built two trails. One is up in Franklin Lakes, which John visited. The other is in the Artesian Fields County Park in Elmwood Park and that type of trail is more suitable to the type RP is looking for. It is gravel and crushed stone and they are using materials, which sort of solidify it but are still porous. It will stay in place longer. Most of the trail in Elmwood Park had steel edging. The total cost of the estimate including the steel edging and this special material for the Nature Trail just up into the wood section is a little over \$18,000.00.

John Anlian said he asked Alan O'Grady and a representative from Boswell to look at it and they both said it was a reasonably good estimate. However, the Nature Trail is also the way the DPW uses when it is cleaning out the sewer line that runs parallel with the Nature Trail. That path is also used as access for the DPW to access the sewer line. They may only go in there once a year or once every couple of years but they go in there with very heavy trucks.

The sewer jet is loaded with water because they are cleaning out the sewer line and his concern is if they run over that edging it will distort everything. The Elmwood Park trail in one section does not have edging because the County accesses the park through there and they did not want to distort the edging. RP needs edging as it has a slight downhill to it and we don't want all the gravel to be going downhill. The edging is not even needed on the entire downhill side. It is probably only needed on about a 75 foot section.

John has asked the contractor to give a revised estimate of just using the edging for the 75 feet on the downhill side. He should have that within a few days. If that looks good, he will go ahead and do it. He was thinking maybe it could be done as a capitol project for the town but that would take months and it probably wouldn't be able to be done until the end of the year or maybe next year. This project has been talked about so long he doesn't want to put it off any longer.

He put enough money in the Environmental Commission budget for this year to cover it. The budget will probably be about \$23,000.00 for the EC because he knew we would be doing this project. It will definitely cover Earth Day events and the Nature Trail and maybe even have some money left over for the initial signage. There already is most of the signage for the entrance way already on the way. Mark Olson was thinking that whatever signage is in the Nature Trail, the rain garden and other areas should have the same type of signage so it has the same look and feel.

John Anlian said he was just down at the Nature Trail on Saturday and there are a lot of invasive plants there that have to be dealt with. Last year the EC was down there three or four times and has made a dent in the weeds. Once the trail is set, the EC can then start to plant down there. The next date for the Weed Warriors should be set soon before the rest of the weeds start to take over. Steve will send out a couple of dates for the Weed Warriors.

John Anlian explained that back in January he had gotten a call that RP's grant application would take up about 86% of their funding. They suggested either cutting back the application or withdrawing the application and resubmitting next year when more funding could be awarded to RP. The biggest cost of the future Nature Trail is the boardwalk across the marsh. It is a gigantic cost because special material will be used instead of wood. This material is very expensive.

The trail that Boswell envisions is not just a trail that goes straight across it curves so you get a nice view. It is very long. They designed what they thought would be a nice looking trail. It starts at the north end of Overpeck Avenue then goes out and over and ends out there.

There is at least one resident on north Overpeck Avenue that does not like that people will be entering the Nature Preserve from his block. He is afraid that everyone will park there. John Anlian explained to him that most people who will park down there will park by the high school and go in down there. Steve pointed out that there should probably be an entrance there as well. The downside for some people is that runners and joggers will use this area and this will be part of their circuit. This will be a good thing because the more use the trail gets, the better. Once the pedestrian bridge is built an observation deck will be built overlooking the Nature Preserve.

Mark and Leslie attended the Bergen County Parks' Meeting. They are most interested in trying to connect parks. This was number one on their list. The pedestrian bridge is another reason to want an entrance by the high school. John must get this application in by June. Awards might be made by the end of the year so by next spring the Village could begin building. Boswell will adjust the drawings to include a high school entrance. John said he still has to meet with the Board of Education to discuss things. John will arrange this meeting. Mark said that a lot of the area the high school uses is not actually the high school's property. They use a lot of Village property for their various activities.

Grant – Leslie Olson said that April 7 was the deadline for the latest ANJEC grant application. ANJEC is providing small grants of up to \$1,500.00. The grant will fund environmental commission projects related to open space preservation, management, maintenance, restoration and education. Leslie had to stop this grant due to time. It will be available again in 2018 and she will reapply at that time.

Earth Day – Earth Day is scheduled for May 13, 2017, from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. The banner was sent to be updated. The Spring Bird count will be held in the morning before the start of Earth Day from 7:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Harry Menta will do a write up about Earth Day. A work session will be held on Wednesday, May 3 at 7:30 p.m. to discuss details of Earth Day/Green Fair. It is important that Steve and Linda Quinn, Mark and Leslie Olson, John Anlian and Barbara DeLuca attend this meeting. All members are also invited to attend this meeting as well. Notice of the meeting will be sent and posted on the Village bulletin board.

Harry Menta will take care of publicity for the event. A flyer has been made that will be distributed electronically and by paper in the schools as well as posted on the website. The flyers will be done on green paper. The banner will also read Earth Day/Green Fair. Leslie said Sustainable Jersey has a website and she'll advertise the event there. Harry will also write up the Bird Count done prior to Earth Day/Green Fair.

Mark Olson said that when he talked to Bogota the idea of giving up little basil plants came up. Mark checked with This N That Hardware and they cost \$15.00 per flat. For \$75.00, the EC can give out 100 basil plants. The EC will also have 100 canvas bags to give away.

Eagles – The breeding failed this year. The female Alice has not been around. There is a new female eagle around. Both birds are still in the area.

Shirts – Shirts and hats were ordered for all members. They will be available in time for Earth Day/Green Fair.

Reminder – Master Gardener Robyn Lowenthal will speak to the GT/EC on April 27, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. in the court room.

New Business:

Bergen County Parks Commission Meetings: Notice of second round of Parks Department Master Plan hearings scheduled for three different days and sites:

Tuesday, May 9 7-10 pm at Two Bergen County Plaza

Wednesday, May 10 from 7- 10 pm at McFaul Environmental Center in Wyckoff

Thursday May 11 from 7-10 pm at Bergen Community College at the Meadowlands in Lyndhurst.

It is to discuss usage of the public parks. It is a good idea for anyone inclined to go to one of these to mention the value of nature study over the recreational use of county parks. The utilization of county parks as wildlife areas should be stressed. In our case, unique to RP, is the fairly regular use of the county parks for big musical events, which bombard RP with loud music.

These are three opportunities to voice your concerns. Natural wildlife study and nature walk is almost an afterthought with these park designers. It is important to attend these meetings to point out the other uses of the park. Specifically mention the Overpeck Preserve and all these natural areas that can be seen from the park. It is used for nature studies quite regularly and needs advocates for the natural areas.

There is another location owned by the county by the Fyke Lane Conservancy, on the south side of Degraw Avenue, anything that the county owns down there should be preserved. Tell the county that not every county facility has to be used for making money. The EC strongly urges members to attend these meetings. It is repetition that will get their attention.

Telephone Extension – The GT and EC received a voicemail extension. It is 201-641-4950 ext. 695. Barbara DeLuca will monitor the voicemail.

John Anlian said he attended a talk on rain gardens from Rutgers. To encourage people to create rain gardens on their property would be a great way to help with the runoff. When the storm sewers overflow, they empty directly into the creek. The goal is to combine with the CSO. To cut down on the storm water entering the sewer, would be a big plus for the town. Purpose of rain garden is to absorb, hold or slow down the rain water before it gets into the street. Any homeowner can do this. It is not hard to do.

John Anlian said he will send out the website for everyone to read. The deepest rain garden is only about 9-12" deep. It is just a hole with native plants. Putting a rain garden by McGowan Park would earn the GT 10 points.

Mark said he read about something called Rain Garden Alliance in Pennsylvania. He sent it to ANJEC. They liked it and are going to try to do something with Rutgers. If only 10% of the homeowners did it, it would have a great impact on the rainwater. John Anlian thinks maybe there should be a rain garden table at Earth Day. He might do that table. He thinks a demonstration table would be very helpful at Earth Day. Mark is thinking of having a sign made explaining a rain garden in back of one at McGowan Park.

A motion was made by Steve Quinn and seconded by Mark Olson to adjourn the meeting at 8:44 p.m. All were in favor of the motion.

The next regular meeting will be May 25, 2017, at 7:30 p.m. or immediately following the Green Team meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara DeLuca

REMINDER: WEDNESDAY, MAY 3 @ 7:30 – MEETING TO DISCUSS EARTH DAY/GREEN FAIR