

**NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2020, AT 7:00 P.M.**

**MINUTES OF THE RP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION  
September 24, 2020**

Chairman Steve Quinn called the meeting to order at 7:01 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 bulletin board. Members present were: Tammy Lavery, Guillermo Lopez-Acosta, Linda Quinn, Steve Quinn. Excused: Harry Menta, Gloria Rivera. Absent: Peggy Conversano, Asai Maschang, Carolina Espin, Jin Ah Jong, Joseph D'Angeli. Commissioner William Gerken, the new Commissioner Liaison for the Environmental Commission was present.

**Hearing of Citizens:** None present.

A motion was made by Steve Quinn and seconded by Guillermo Lopez-Acosta to approve the February 27, 2020, meeting minutes. All were in favor of the motion.

**Payment of Bills:** None this month.

**Correspondence:**

- Copy of letter dated 3/10/20 from the BOC to Justin Davis of NJ Transit Re: Skymark Center Property – 3/5/20 letter
- Email to Mayor dated 5/8/20 from NJDEP Re: NJDEP Weekly Update
- Memo from ZB dated 7/14/20 Re: Application from Challenger 60 for 522 residential units with retail on first floor
- Environmental Impact Report Re: 60 Challenger Road – EC comments from Tammy Lavery
- Email from ZB dated 9/3/20 Re: Application from 5 Winant Avenue, Atlantis Management Group for Use Variance to enlarge existing Service Station to include a new retail convenience store
- Letter from Hannah Ferrer dated 9/9/20 Re: Recycling bins in public parks
- Copy of Mayor John Anlian's response dated 9/10/20 to Hannah Ferrer
- Email dated 9/22/20 from Veronica Leone Re: Environmental Commissions, Green Teams & Holding Big Oil Accountable, Tuesday, September 29 from 12:00-12:30pm

**Old Business:**

**RP Nature Preserve/Nature Trail** – Commissioner Gerken provided a copy of the Trust Fund Application, Municipal Endorsing Resolution for this year. The application was submitted on 6/29/20 for additional funding from Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund. It was approved by the BOC and they have not heard back yet. Due to the circumstances of this year, it might be difficult to get further funding this year. There is still funding from two years ago that was extended to 3/31/22.

Mayor Anlian and Steve Quinn are meeting with Boswell Engineers tomorrow afternoon to review the bid package that Boswell has put together. They received approval from the DEP for everything. The bid packet will be sent out to potential contractors. This requires additional funds. The bid may need to be structured to pay for a portion of the project and allow other work to be done once additional funds are available from the county.

Tammy Lavery said that Don Torino of the Audubon Society said he is open to helping with native plants.

**Green Business** – Leslie Olson will provide an update at the next meeting.

**BYOB** – Leslie Olson was working on coordinating when members would actually go door to door to businesses to ask them to hang the sign.

**Skymark Update** – Commissioner Gerken gave an update on this matter. In March of this year, NJ Transit advised the Village that it was in the early stages of investigating the acquisition of the 56-acre property known as the "Skymark" Redevelopment Area. The Village has been actively trying to redevelop this property for decades. NJ Transit plans to take this property and build a 500-bus garage and maintenance facility on this site for its fleet of loud, aging diesel buses.

NJ Transit is a tax-exempt entity. If NJ Transit takes this property away from Village taxpayers, RP will immediately lose approximately \$1.3 million per year in tax revenue. If this property were developed, the Village could expect nearly \$7 million in tax revenue annually. If NJ Transit builds a bus garage, the Village taxpayers get nothing.

After receiving NJ Transit's letter, the BOC immediately objected to the size and location of this project, and also asked to start a dialogue about how a NJ Transit project could be structured to benefit both the Village and NJ Transit. During covid, the BOC did not get anything back from them. The BOC asked NJ Transit for the plans, studies, reports and other documents that they were using to support this takeover but NJ Transit refused to provide these important documents, in violation of State Law.

On 7/17/20, the BOC had a meeting with NJ Transit facilitated by Senator Sarlo in which a public-private partnership that would guarantee the Village received the anticipated tax revenue from the project was discussed. NJ transit responded positively to this idea at the meeting.

After this meeting, NJ transit again ignored the Village and filed a condemnation action to forcibly take approximately 40 acres of the Skymark site. Not only that, NJ Transit agreed to pay UBS – the owner of the property - \$20 million more than the property is actually worth. NJ Transit should be using those funds to support Village taxpayers, not to reward UBS and its team of lobbyists.

Senator Loretta Weinberg and Congressman William Pascrell were sent letters but the Village has gotten no response. The Village has sacrificed enormous portions of its land for the benefit of the State and the BOC feel it is time for other municipalities to share the burden for the State's transit-related needs.

The BOC is sending out a letter to all residents explaining the situation and asking them to write, call and email our State representatives and NJ Transit to tell them to move the site or make it right. The BOC doesn't want to see this go to eminent domain where the Village gets nothing. A large amount of this money (\$6 million annually) was going to help with the CSO situation.

**Adopt-A-Park** – There is no new information on this project.

**Earth Day 2020** – The high tide on May 1, 2021, is 2:00 p.m. Hopefully the covid situation will be better by then and Earth Day can take place. The Hackensack Riverkeeper will be contacted to see if they are available. Steve Quinn will check with the Hudson River Fisherman's Association to see if they are available.

The EC will try to coordinate with the Girl Scouts to have some sort of clean-up event on the same day.

**Community Clean-Up Day** – Due to covid, the 2020 clean-up day could not take place. Shop-Rite will be contacted next year if it is possible to hold a community-wide clean-up day.

#### **New Business:**

- Email dated 9/22/20 from Veronica Leone Re: Environmental Commissions, Green Teams & Holding Big Oil Accountable, Tuesday, September 29 from 12:00-12:30pm. The EC was also invited to view a presentation given by Veronica Leone on global warming. Steve Quinn will reach out to Veronica and invite her to join the EC.

**Birdproof glass** – After reading the application for 60 Challenger Road, Tammy Lavery suggested to Steve Quinn that birdproof glass be used on this project. Steve submitted comments to the Planning Board and backed them up with lots of data that literally millions of birds are killed every year by this glass. The applicant was very agreeable and they will provide birdproof glass. This shows that one person can make a difference.

Based on that, Steve Quinn would like to propose that the EC put together a letter to the BOC that when large apartments or office buildings or buildings (non-specific) are built, that they require those buildings being built use bird protecting glass.

**Noise Ordinance** – Steve Quinn asked all members to review the Noise Ordinance. As Chairman, Steve has gotten feedback on loud noise, contractor noise early in the morning, leaf blowers, loud parties using amplified sound. The Noise Ordinance should be on the website. Members should look at it and have comments for the next meeting on how to proceed.

**Native Plant Society of New Jersey** – Mini-grants for Native Plant Gardens are being offered by the Native Plant Society of NJ. All entries must be e-mailed by 1/1/21. Tammy Lavery will look into this grant. John Anlian is a member and that is one of the requirements.

**Native Tree and Plantings** – A motion was made by Steve Quinn and seconded by Tammy Lavery that the EC draft a letter to the BOC, STC and DPW that whenever possible the town use native trees and native plantings in the parks and shade trees, which usually require less maintenance. All were in favor of the motion.

Steve Quinn will draft the letter and circulate among the EC members before it goes out.

- Letter from Hannah Ferrer dated 9/9/20 Re: Recycling bins in public parks. Mayor Anlian did respond to Hannah and said he would again try recycling bins in the parks. Steve Quinn will write a response to Hannah and invite her to join the EC.

A motion was made by Steve Quinn and seconded by Guillermo Lopez-Acosta that the EC draft a letter to the BOC and the DPW and specifically Commissioner Wanda Portorreal, encouraging the pursuit of recycling bins in public parks. All were in favor of the motion.

**ANJEC'S Annual Environmental Congress** – Steve Quinn asked members to review the sessions offered in the all-virtual format for this year and see if there are any programs they would like to attend. Steve thought the program on green infrastructure looked good.

**Newsletter** – The next deadline is October 14 with delivery scheduled for approximately November 23. Members should think of articles for the next newsletter. Commissioner Gerken said the plan is to shorten the newsletter to four pages and include only the most important news and have it printed and then mailed to all households.

**Website** – Steve Quinn will send a list of items to delete to Harry Menta. Members should look over the website and make suggestions for additions and deletions.

Commissioner William Gerken attended the meeting and advised he is the new Commissioner liaison. He is anxious to help out as much as possible. He also advised that the CSO long term control plan is due 10/1/20. They will have an open public hearing on Tuesday, September 29 at 7:30 p.m.

The Board of Recreation will be starting an introduction to archery program in early October. Look for info on the Village website.

The next regular meeting will be October 22, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Steve Quinn and seconded by Guillermo Lopez-Acosta adjourning the meeting at 7:58 p.m. All were in favor of this motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara DeLuca

cc: Commissioner William Gerken