

NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2022 AT 7:00 P.M.

**MINUTES OF THE RP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
January 11, 2022 VIA ZOOM**

Chairman Steve Quinn called the meeting to order at 7:05 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 Laverty, Linda Quinn, Steve Quinn, Lisa Rehm, Matt Graves, Nicole Terrarosa. Excused: None. Absent: Guillermo Lopez-Acosta, Harry Menta, Leslie Olson, Gloria Rivera.

Hearing of Citizens: None present.

A motion was made by Matt Graves and seconded by Steve Quinn to approve the November 9, 2021, meeting minutes. All were in favor of the motion.

Payment of Bills:

PO#47289 - \$1,530.92 – Ernst Seed Order #689629 – Seeds for nature preserve

Correspondence:

- Email dated 11/15/21 from Tyler Tierney of Hackensack Riverkeeper advising they are available for 5/21/22
- Email dated 12/6/21 from Deborah Fagnan of RP library Re: Collaborating on bee program
- Emails responding to Bird Count scheduled on 1/8/22
- Email dated 1/8/22 from Commissioner Olson Re: Straws by Request Only

Steve Quinn asked the members in attendance if there were any items they wanted to discuss or put on the agenda. Lisa Rehm said there has been discussion on Facebook where the plastic bag drop-offs are located. There are several locations in the town but people can also bring them directly to the recycling center at the DPW and deposit them in that collection container. There is a flyer on the Village website that has all the locations noted. People can look on the Green Team page at: https://www.ridgefieldpark.org/sites/g/files/vyhlif1121/f/uploads/bag_recycling_1.pdf. Locations are: This N' That Hardware, 21 Mt. Vernon Street (outside on the side of the building) • Ridgefield Park Public Library, 107 Cedar Street (at the front desk area) • First Presbyterian Church, 227 Euclid Avenue (inside the Co-Op and one inside the church) • Ridgefield Park DPW, 24 Industrial Avenue • Lincoln School (712 Lincoln Avenue) • Ridgefield Park High School (One Ozzie Nelson Drive) The e-commerce mailers must have the labels removed. The EC will have it put on Facebook since people are asking where to drop off their bags. Matt Graves said he did some research and black plastic bags are recyclable.

Commissioner Olson had sent over a document that another town has been working on to remind people that straws are by request only. The members thought it would be a good idea if a letter came from the EC to remind businesses that they should ask before they provide single use plastic straws or bags or polystyrene foam. This could easily come as a reminder from the EC and could be hand delivered or mailed. It is also good for businesses to know that organizations like the EC and GT are concerned and do support limiting plastic bags and straws. Nicole Terrarosa said she could deliver to businesses.

Tammy Laverty said members should somehow congratulate or thank businesses for willingly going with the law. Members wondered if the sticker that Leslie Olson gives to Green Businesses would be appropriate to reward those businesses that complied with the law. Perhaps a version of the sticker or a sign could be given to those businesses. Lisa Rehm said she has some laminated BYOB signs leftover if Nicole wanted to bring them when she visited stores.

A motion was made by Steve Quinn and seconded by Linda Quinn that the EC utilize the letter from Commissioner Olson as a template to distribute on EC letterhead advising businesses of the new single use straws and plastic bags legislation and urging them to follow those guidelines. Maybe in that letter, the EC can come up with a congratulations or expression of thanks for their doing so. All were in favor the motion. The letter will also be sent to the Rotary Club to distribute to their members.

Steve Quinn will modify the letter. Nicole Terrarosa has volunteered to hand deliver the letters when completed. The EC will ask Leslie Olson if the Green Business sticker would be appropriate to compliment people who do abide by this new legislation as a thank you.

Old Business:

Nature Preserve: Elements of the boardwalk have been delivered last week. The contractor in charge of installing them is now basically at work putting them together. By the end of January, the boardwalk, bridges and benches will be completed. A major portion will be done by the end of January. The EC found the soil was hard and compacted when it planted the seeds. Steve Quinn went back into the contract for the Nature Preserve and did notice the work had not been done on the beds. The contractor will now rototill the beds and add the 5" of soil. The seeds will be rototilled in. The next planting should be easier to do.

Steve currently is working on the educational panels, doing illustrations and writing up text. He would like to have EC members review and give them a read. Steve will ask for help when he is ready.

Green Business: Leslie Olson will be asked if she has any details to share on Green Business.

Earth Day 2022: Tides are good on May 21, 2022, to hold Earth Day. The Hackensack Riverkeeper advised they are available on that date. HRFA has not responded back yet. Invitations will be sent to everyone to see who is able to participate. Steve Quinn will reach out to Dan and Sergio if the EC does not get a response soon. Steve asked Nicole if Giana would like to include her project on monarch butterflies in the events of the day. Deborah Fagnan will be asked if she would like to include her bee project as part of Earth Day.

Neonicotinoids: Tammy Lavery advised that the legislation on neonicotinoids has passed. NJ legislation Assembly bill 2070 or, Senate bill 1016 would curb neonic pesticide use in NJ in order to protect pollinators, birds, agriculture, and the environment. Gov. Murphy will be signing them when he signs the other bills.

Bird Count: Tammy Lavery was present with Linda and Steve Quinn and four participants joined them. It was a very frigid, cold morning. Although the rare and more unusual birds we sighted stole the show, 6 Bald Eagles - a NJ Endangered Species, American Pipit - a rare winter visitor that nests on the arctic tundra, Ring-necked Duck - a very good bird for the Hackensack River region) the real significance of the results of the count is the high numbers of fish-eating birds and aquatic birds we found - like 485 Common Mergansers, 440 Double-crested Cormorants, 53 Ring-billed Gulls and 5 Great Blue Herons!!!! These numbers of fish-eating aquatic birds found on the Overpeck Creek and the Hackensack River are a clear indication that the water quality in those water bodies is improving and can support an abundant fish population to feed such a large number of these birds! These birds are a clear signal that the Overpeck Creek and Hackensack River water quality is getting better and is less polluted than in the past!! There are photos on the new Village Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/VillageofRPNJ> and the Bogota Blog.

Village Clean-Up Day: Nicole Terrarosa will contact the girl scouts and Green Team to see about scheduling a clean-up day. The scouts are meeting on Thursday and she will bring it up then. The EC will contact ShopRite about supplies for the day. It would be nice if the scouts could show what they did at the Earth Day Celebration on May 21.

New Business:

Deborah Fagnan from the library invited the EC and GT to partner with them on a program about bees. They have received a small honorarium and 2,000 seed packets. They will provide a tabletop seed packet display where people from town can stop by and get a free packet of seeds to grow wildflowers in their yard. In addition, Deborah Fagnan will host two programs where she would provide educational programs. She would like the EC and GT to come talk to the community to highlight the crucial role bees play in our lives or even maybe talk about the new Nature Center. Steve emailed Deborah Fagnan she could count on the EC and that the EC would be very pleased and enthusiastic to help in any way it can. This could be incorporated into Earth Day as well.

Leaf Blowers: Steve Quinn circulated the following link to members.

https://www.nj.com/news/2021/12/hate-those-gas-powered-leaf-blowers-nj-may-be-targeting-them.html?utm_content=nj_facebook_njcom&utm_source=facebook&utm_campaign=njcom_sf&utm_medium=social&fbclid=IwAR0iJCShFh9_qVKMMd9nzX1ZCc1SL5_NgLSO7surT8oLHuPNHDyn22aLBHc

There is new legislation being proposed that would limit leaf blowing. Members should read this article to access the information. Tammy Lavery said she will read over the legislation and see what needs to be done.

*Note from Tammy Lavery after meeting:

The Leaf Blower bill S4273 was just introduced in December 2021 in the 2019th Legislature. I believe it will have to be reintroduced for the 2020th Legislature that was just sworn in this week. I put an alert on the old bill # S4273. I'll let you

know if there is any movement on it in the new session. The bill is for banning the sale & then the use of all gas-powered blowers 2 & 4 strokes. I'm guessing there will be a lot of push back from landscapers, etc., so the bill will probably take a lot of time to make its way through the Senate & Assembly. But I think it is way too early in the process for the EC to take any effective action.

Steve Quinn would like to ask the EC for approval to make some purchase related to the Nature Preserve. The first request is to buy a quiet leaf blower to use in the Nature Preserve. There will be a need for a very small little garden shed where we could keep certain items under lock and key and available to nature preserve stewards – clippers, loppers, battery powered blower to clear the trail. It should always be clear so the DPW is aware of where the trail is. The cost will probably be about \$200.00 to get one with two battery packs. It will be helpful to be able to allow a person to quickly walk the trail and clear the trail periodically. It can't be raked because it is gravel and fine stone.

A motion was made by Steve Quinn and seconded by Matt Graves to allocate approximately \$200.00 in funds for the purchase of a low sound and noise impact, rechargeable leaf blower. All were in favor of the motion.

Steve Quinn thinks it would be useful to monitor wildlife in the different areas of the trail by purchasing three cameras that get attached to trees, etc. They would be motion activated. The EC would get a sense of what sort of wildlife is there. They would also be good for security. They would also provide a clear track of deer, coyote, fox, raccoon on cameras. The photos could be used in exhibits in the kiosk or could use the images from the trail cameras in exhibits. Tammy said maybe they could be a citizen science project in the future. The cameras are also important for security. Photos are sent immediately.

A motion was made by Steve Quinn and seconded by Matt Graves to allocate funds in the amount of approximately \$600.00 for the purchase of three tree cameras. All were in favor of the motion. A tag will be placed on the cameras advising they are property of the EC.

Matt Graves asked if there should be binoculars on stands at the Nature Preserve like in other parks. Steve said he would look into it but didn't think this was the right area for their use.

Steve would like to purchase labels 15w x 18d – talk about things such as importance of wetlands, definition of wetlands, aquatic life in marsh, common birds, etc. – would be great to have a number of labels that would be attached to trees or in the ground that identify a number of trees and shrubs. Don Torino could provide some sources for this.* *Note after meeting, <https://gemplers.com/collections/plant-markers-landscaping> is his source for labels.

A motion was made by Steve Quinn and seconded by Nicole Terrarosa to allocate \$200 for written id signs and labels for plants and trees in the Nature Preserve. All were in favor of the motion.

Matt Graves will get some prices for 30 Braille labels for plants and trees. The EC will develop a plan for Braille labels for the next meeting.

Elections: Since Leslie Olson is not present and the EC does not know her intentions as to holding a position next year, elections will be held at the February meeting.

A motion was made by Steve Quinn and seconded by Lisa Rehm to carry the elections to the next meeting in February. All were in favor of the motion.

Matt Graves said that maybe the EC should put something in the newsletter about people putting nails in trees for signs. Steve said he would speak to Flo Muller, the Chair for the Shade Tree Commission as this would fall under her commission.

The EC will ask Tara O'Grady if there is a schedule for newsletter distribution for 2022.

Meeting dates for 2022 were set. **ALL MEETINGS TO BE HELD AT 7:00 P.M. PREVAILING TIME ON THE LOWER LEVEL OF THE CIVIC CENTER, 159 MAIN STREET, THE SECOND TUESDAY OF THE MONTH, UNLESS POSTED OTHERWISE**

**JANUARY 11
FEBRUARY 8
MARCH 8
APRIL 12**

**MAY 10
JUNE 14
JULY 14 - IF NECESSARY
AUGUST 9 - IF NECESSARY**

**SEPTEMBER 13
OCTOBER 11
NOVEMBER 8
DECEMBER – NO MEETING**

The next regular meeting will be February 8, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Steve Quinn and seconded by Lisa Rehm adjourning the meeting at 8:10 p.m. All were in favor of this motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara DeLuca

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cc: Commissioner William Gerken

Info for zoom meetings: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/75999621083?pwd=UIRpRXYxTU5tYUZCY0RSV0hab1J2QT09>

Meeting ID: 759 9962 1083 Passcode: 3PsA19