

NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY, January 24, 2019 AT 7:00 P.M.

**MINUTES OF THE RP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
November 29, 2018**

Chairperson 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: Harry Menta, Leslie Olson, Mark Olson, Linda Quinn, Steve Quinn, Guillermo Lopez-Acosta. Excused: Peggy Conversano, Jin Ah Jong, Carolina Espin, Katelyn McGirk and Gloria Rivera. Absent: Asai Maschang, Joseph D'Angeli.

Hearing of Citizens: No one appeared.

A motion was made by Linda Quinn and seconded by Guillermo Lopez-Acosta to approve the October 25, 2018, meeting minutes. All were in favor of the motion.

Approval of Bills: None this month.

Correspondence:

- 1) How to Celebrate America Recycles Day on November 15 from DEP
- 2) Article on Adult Fitness Playgrounds from AARP
- 3) Email dated 11/4/18 from Mercury Stoneworks Re: Hiking Trail Construction Services

- 1) The EC will put this on the September calendar as a reminder for next year so plans can be made.
- 2) This article was given to the GT for Building Healthier Communities and the Board of Recreation.
- 3) This information will be saved to be used when plans are made for the Nature Trail.

Old Business:

RP Nature Preserve – Boswell Engineering should have their proposal for an application for wetlands permit and for trail plan ready for this week. Once we have that plan, we go out to whatever hiking trail company for three bids. If any members are aware of any other company that does this sort of work, please let us know. We will be going out for bids soon. We have 1 ½ years to use those funds.

Nature Trail - Message Board – The board, the two benches and trash receptacles were delivered. They will be stored by the DPW until we get farther along with the trail and boardwalk.

Bird Count – The winter count is scheduled for December 8, 2018. The flyer mentions that the bird count will be cancelled in the event of rain. It will start at 7:00 a.m. at McGowan Park and 9:30 a.m. at Overpeck Park. It is on the newsletter as well as on the message board and website.

Green Business – Katelyn McGirk sent a very nice sample of the website. Leslie Olson has been working hard in town to get businesses to sign up for the Green Business Seal. There are four signed up already and Katelyn McGirk is aware of this as well. There are four businesses that meet the requirements of the Green Business. Leslie has the written information here. She thinks the group can go in and look at it through the Google app. The four need to be reviewed to see if they meet all requirements for a Green Business Seal.

There was discussion on allowing someone to have the authority to give final approval on the awarding of the seal. The person should be familiar with the requirements for both Ridgfield Park and the State of NJ. Katelyn has this knowledge and the EC thinks she would be the proper person to serve in this capacity. This would keep the momentum going so the awarding of seals is done on a timelier basis.

A motion was made by Steve Quinn and seconded by Mark Olson that Katelyn McGirk be appointed as the point person for the Sustainable Green Business Seal final approval. All were in favor of this motion.

Newsletter – (Deadlines – February 15) The next deadline is February 15. Members should give some thought to topics that would be topical to the spring. Articles to be written:

- Harry Menta - Earth Day.
- Katelyn McGirk – Green Business Program
- Mark Olson – Styrofoam initiative
- BYOB

- Solar Panels – Guillermo Lopez-Acosta

Mark Olson said the Bergen Hub is running a Styrofoam initiative and one of the elements is a Styrofoam-free business certificate that they would give the business. The way it is going to work is that whoever it is that we want to send in, the GT/EC would have the authority to decide if the business qualified. If the member does not see any extruded Styrofoam, they will get a certificate on the spot. The GT/EC would then send the name into the Hub. These stickers will be available in January.

BYOB – Tenafly stores have signs in them saying “BYOB”, which means Bring Your Own *Shopping Bag*. The EC thinks that’s a good idea and Katelyn McGirk and Jinah Jong were sent a picture of the sign to see if they could come up with something for the EC. Steve Quinn was unaware of the status of this. Janet Harris wants to help out on implementation of this. She is in charge of collecting the plastic bags for recycling.

Earth Day/Green Fair – It appears that May 11 looks like the best date for Earth Day. High tide is 3:30 p.m. The EC thought that maybe the boat rides could start a little later and run until 4:00 or 5:00 p.m. The Riverkeeper has gotten back and May 11 is good for him. He will bring the boat at 2:00 p.m. and end at 5:00 p.m. The day will run from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Letters were sent to everyone. Steve will review the list of shows to decide which ones to have this year. Responses have come back from: Hackensack Riverkeeper, Mark Rust, Warren Staudinger of Bergen County Mosquito, HRFA – all are available.

Mark Olson said the EC should think about if we want to keep Earth Day and Green Fair together. It is something to think about for the future. Steve thinks it would be a good idea since the focus of the Green Fair is green products and artists, etc., that display their green items. Earth Day is more about shows and rides that celebrate the environment. Steve said it is fine by him if the GT wants to set up a separate day. Mark said he thinks maybe enlarging the clothing swap to a full Green Fair might be a way to go in the future. Steve said he wouldn’t mind if they wanted to try a clothing swap at Earth Day.

New Business:

thecrayoninitiative.org – The Crayon Initiative collects used and unwanted crayons donated from homes, restaurants, schools and homes across the country, melts them down and remanufactures them, reducing environmental waste. The recycled crayons are distributed to art programs at children’s hospitals across the US. The EC thought this was a good thing to get involved in. Barbara DeLuca will look into the details to participate in this activity. The EC felt it was something that might be easy to start educating children about recycling. Steve thought this would be an interesting event to use at the November 15 annual Celebrate America Recycles Day. This will be discussed further at a future meeting.

The EC got a sample of a stainless-steel straw to be used as a handout at Earth Day and other events. Steve explained that the problem with plastic straws is that they break down slowly similar to the single use plastic bags and all plastics in general. One way to bring attention to the plastics pollution issue to RP residents is by having a display and handing out to all who attend Earth Day free stainless-steel straws. The straws can be imprinted “Ridgefield Park Environmental Commission” or whatever the EC decides. They are inexpensive and can be given to all who visit Earth Day. If there are extras, they can also be used at other events.

A motion was made by Steve Quinn and seconded by Harry Menta to purchase the steel straws for Earth Day imprinted “Ridgefield Park Environmental Commission” at a cost up to \$750.00. All were in favor of this motion.

Meeting Dates for 2019 @ 7:00 p.m.

JANUARY 24

FEBRUARY 28

MARCH 28

APRIL 25

MAY 23

JUNE 27

JULY 25 (IF NECESSARY)

AUGUST 22 (IF NECESSARY)

SEPTEMBER 26

OCTOBER 24

NOVEMBER 21 (THIRD THURSDAY)

DECEMBER – NO MEETING

Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman to be held at January 24, 2019 meeting.

Guillermo Lopez-Acosta asked about solar panels and if they would get any points for SustainableJersey. Mark Olson said yes they would get points under SustainableJersey. Guillermo Lopez-Acosta was asked to get more information on solar panels and write something for the newsletter so everyone could learn about them. Guillermo said he would work with Harry Menta on this.

The next regular meeting will be January 24, 2019, at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mark Olson and seconded by Guillermo Lopez-Acosta adjourning the meeting at 7:40 p.m. All were in favor of this motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara DeLuca