

NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2018 AT 7:00 P.M.

**MINUTES OF THE RP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
September 27, 2018**

Vice- Chairperson Leslie Olson called the meeting to order at 7:04 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: Peggy Conversano, Leslie Olson, Mark Olson, Guillermo Lopez-Acosta, Carolina Espin, Katelyn McGirk. Excused: Harry Menta, Linda Quinn, Steve Quinn, Gloria Rivera. Absent: Jinah Jong, Asai Maschang, Joseph D'Angeli.

Hearing of Citizens: Fred Donaruma was present to discuss a proposed new power plant.

A motion was made by Peggy Conversano and seconded by Guillermo Lopez-Acosta to approve the July 26, 2018, meeting minutes. All were in favor of the motion. There was no meeting in August.

Approval of Bills: None at this time.

Correspondence: 1) Freshwater Wetlands Notice for Block 24.04, Lot 1 & Block 24.05, Lot 1, Ridgefield Park
2) Notification Letter Waterfront Development Individual Permit for 53 Bergen Tpke.

There was a short discussion on the project planned for 53 Bergen Tpke. The proposal that will be before the Zoning Board in November calls for a 45-unit apartment with 29 one-bedroom apartments and 6 two-bedroom apartments. The EC decided that a letter should be sent advising of the EC's position against building this apartment and that they are in favor of the Village acquiring the property for parkland. Everyone present at the meeting agreed with this position. Leslie Olson and Steve Quinn will get together to write a letter.

Old Business:

RP Nature Preserve – The Village recently received great news from the Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund that it is being awarded a \$200,000 grant towards the project to build a nature trail, boardwalk, and other amenities in the Nature Preserve located north of the High School. County Executive James Tedesco will be making the presentation of the grant on Monday, October 1st at the lawn area north of the High School - which is the southern boundary of the nature preserve. Since these improvements will make the nature preserve more accessible to students in our school system, the Board of Education and Supt. Mark Hayes were also invited to attend the event. The ceremony will take place on October 1st at 6:30 p.m.

Commissioner Anlian asked that all members make every effort to attend this event. It is important that the County sees the support from all on this award. Harry Menta will be unable to attend but asked that someone from the EC take pictures for him to put on the website. Katelyn McGirk said she would take pictures of the event.

Nature Trail - Message Board – The board was delivered. The two benches and trash receptacle were ordered but the EC does not know if they were delivered yet.

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.

Green Business – Katelyn McGirk said they were able to give out two of the seals to Green Businesses, Gina the Baker and Art Mora. There is a third business, Consolidated Packing, that still needs the seal. Katelyn said that at the Street Fair she had the opportunity to speak to a new business on Main Street, Palma's Kitchen. They will qualify for the seal. Once they are open, she will have them fill out the form and give them their seal. Katelyn said she will take a new picture of Gina the Baker getting her seal and send it to Harry Menta to put on the website. There are several other businesses on Main Street that she will contact about qualifying for a Green Business Seal

Street Fair – This event was very successful. The EC and GT had great placement. There was lots of traffic at the tables. They were able to get lots of people to sign for the Styrofoam ban. The EC and GT definitely need to do these kinds of public events. It is great exposure. Janet Malool is actually down at Grant School right now at their ice cream social distributing info. She will talk about the Community Garden, Art Association, etc.

Newsletter – (Deadlines – October 19) The next deadline is October 19. Leslie Olson told members to give some thought to some things the EC wants to call attention to. The delivery date for the next newsletter will be December.

Articles to be included are: bird watch scheduled for December 8; Open Space Trust Fund Grant for the nature preserve; Green Business Seal (Katelyn will write this).

Earth Day/Green Fair – It appears that May 11 looks like the best date so far. 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 EC is waiting to hear back from the Riverkeeper, Bill Sheehan, to see if he is available on that date. Caitlan Doran and Hugh Carola have both advised they are unavailable on that date. Mark Olson said he should see Bill Sheehan on October 9 and will try to speak to him if the EC has not received a reply by then.

Bat Walk – Joe D’Angeli said that the walk only had a few people show but there weren’t too many people at the pool either. There was a wonderful turn out as far as flying mammals. Joe said he now remembers why to never books a show on that weekend again. Everybody is away it’s like the last hurrah of the summer. Joe said they still had fun and he posted some video of the fantastic number of bats that were out that night, even better than last year. He said it would post it on the Green Team website for everybody. Joe said that he thinks next year the walk will raise money for the municipal pool.

Joe said he will plan ahead next year because it was a great idea and now that he has seen the place, he knows a little better about what we would have to do to make it a real great event.

Fishing Derby – Since no members were able to commit to the event, the fishing derby was cancelled for the fall.

Styrofoam Collection – The collection is scheduled for October 20, 2018, from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the DPW. Sonny Yotka from the DPW is already saving it. No food containers or Styrofoam peanuts are allowed. Extruded polystyrene will not be collected, only expanded.

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 wanted to come up with something for the EC.

New Business:

Fred Donaruma was present to discuss the proposed Meadowlands Power Plant in North Bergen. Mr. Donaruma is very much against this project. He said it will more than double the air pollutants already caused from PSE&G. It has no benefit to this area and will only benefit NY. He spoke to someone in Weehawken and they asked him to bring it to the attention of RP.

His other major concern is the pipe to be installed up Little Ferry through NY. It will basically be in our backyard. The Lac-Megantic rail disaster from 10 years ago caused 47 people to be killed and 30 buildings destroyed and 37 more that had to be destroyed. There is no benefit to us.

Mr. Donaruma feels RP needs to generate interest in this and join with Bogota. This is very dangerous. In his opinion, this project is for someone to make a lot of money and put danger in our community.

Leslie Olson explained the Riverkeeper has a website and members have already viewed the website and signed petitions. Mr. Donaruma wants to make sure the EC knew what was going on and the town has no reason to accept this. He said the EC could have a petition. Mr. Donaruma thinks that it would be very effective. He has done that before. He said he would man a table. He then said he would like people to go door-to-door. Leslie Olson said when Chairman Steve Quinn comes back, she will speak to him about this.

Mr. Donaruma agreed to spearhead the effort. Katelyn McGirk said she would help out. When it comes time to do door-to-door, the EC will get some help. Eric Koenig said he could get some students involved. There is a newly formed activist club.

Mr. Donaruma also mentioned that two times since he has lived in RP, there has been an odor from pollution. He figured out it came from the candle factory that had a spill. He questioned if anyone ever checks about what goes on there. Mark Olson explained that the EC cannot answer about what the town does because he does not know. Mr. Donaruma said this has happened twice. Mark Olson said one company had a spill 50 years ago and the DEP still monitors the situation.

The next regular meeting will be October 25, 2018, at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Peggy Conversano and seconded by Guillermo Lopez-Acosta adjourning the meeting at 7:56 p.m. All were in favor of this motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara DeLuca