

NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2020, AT 7:00 P.M. – LOWER LEVEL OF CIVIC CENTER

**MINUTES OF THE RP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
October 22, 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 Laverty, Guillermo Lopez-Acosta, Linda Quinn, Steve Quinn. Excused: Harry Menta, Leslie Olson, Gloria Rivera. Absent: Peggy Conversano, Asai Maschang, Carolina Espin, Jin Ah Jong, Joseph D'Angeli.

Hearing of Citizens: None present.

A motion was made by Tammy Laverty and seconded by Guillermo Lopez-Acosta to approve the September 24, 2020, meeting minutes. All were in favor of the motion.

Payment of Bills: None this month.

Correspondence:

- Thank you from the family of Phil McEntee for the sympathy flowers
- Memo advising of October 14 newsletter deadline
- Memo dated 10/6/20 from Village Clerk Re: Vendors should provide Certificate of Liability when doing work
- Email dated 10/21/20 from Lisa Vandenberg of the Hackensack Riverkeeper advising they are available for May 1, 2021, Earth Day Celebration

Old Business:

RP Nature Preserve/Nature Trail – Steve Quinn said the bid goes out on October 23 for work to be done in the Nature Preserve and opened on November 17, 2020. The work to be performed under this contract includes the creation of a 2,574 L.F. nature trail through municipal owned land. The proposed trail will transect a densely vegetated area adjacent to a wetland system and tributary of the Overpeck Creek.

Principal items of work in the project include: 800 yd² 3 A" crushed stone path; 500 yd² crushed stone ADA compliant path; 2 floating bridges; 575 L.F. floating deck; 25 yd² observation deck; Reconstruct 200 yd² of existing trail; 200 yd² gravel path along existing trail.

Alternate Bid: 175 yd² parking area, 75 yd² sidewalk area with curb-cut.

The work contemplated under this Contract shall be completed by May 31, 2021. The bid will be awarded in about a month so that work can occur over the winter when the ground is hard.

Commissioner Gerken advised of the availability of funds for this year in the nature preserve bid package. It includes 15 interpretative nature trail signs which would highlight the ecosystems or plants or animals – identify them. He has funds in our budget which could be used to get a start on these signs. They would include both the text and art. Steve Quin would be happy to render art but would not be able to complete all 15 by the new year. Steve proposed six signs.

Any ideas for subjects for six of those panels and any ideas for art to cover those themes would be welcomed. Some thoughts at the meeting were: 1) importance of wetlands 2) plant phragmites origin and how it is important to the ecosystem 3) succession of wetlands to forest 4) butterfly gardens – panel on monarchs 5) islands of nature – postage stamp of bio-diversity 6) microbiology 7) circle of life, food chain, insects.

Tammy Laverty said that Don Torino of the Audubon Society said the EC can request funds from the Bergen County Audubon Society for the project...native plants, educational signage, etc.

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 – The Skymark developers have abandoned their plans for developing the property. NJ Transit plans to condemn a portion of the property for a 500-diesel bus garage and maintenance facility on this site for its fleet of loud, aging diesel buses.

Board of Commissioners are very concerned because NJ Transit is a tax-exempt entity so it will not generate any taxes for the Village. It is not a done deal yet but it seems to be moving in that direction. It is going to be tough to stop it.

The EC is still concerned about the eagles. Skymark had drew up a proposal for a bald eagle preserve, which included about 5 acres protected by wetlands act plus additional up to 11 acres. Fish & Wildlife approved this and allowed Skymark to move forward. It now has become apparent that that zone is not transferable. The EC and Bergen Audubon Society, who fought to protect the eagle nest in the past will have to step up to protect the eagle nest again.

Adopt-A-Park – There is no new information on this project. Nothing can be done until an organization adopts a resolution for this. The EC was going to suggest using native plants in the parks whenever possible. This will fall under the Green Team. Janet Malool said they would like to get a list of suggested plants for different areas, incorporating a lot of native plants but not entirely natives so if someone wants to plant a non-native they can still participate.

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 said they are available. Steve Quinn will check with the Hudson River Fisherman's Association to see if they are also available.

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

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. The EC will be writing something up for the next newsletter as an environmental issue in the village. Steve will circulate it amongst the members for input before it goes out. He will address things like being considerate neighbors, leaf blowers, etc.

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 Laverty is looking into this grant. John Anlian is a member and that is one of the requirements. Steve had a girl scout write to him who is working on her gold award. She would like to do a garden at the high school. She will contact Tammy Laverty as well.

New Business:

Native Tree and Plantings – Steve Quinn would like to see a letter come from the EC to the BOC, STC and DPW that they should consider using native species whenever possible. Steve said he will write to the BOC and STC encouraging them, whenever possible, to use native trees and plantings in parks and on Village streets.

A motion was made by Steve Quinn and seconded by Linda Quinn 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.

Birdproof glass – Steve Quinn will work on a letter from the EC 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. 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

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

Steve Quinn said he will write the letter and also invite Hannah Ferrer to attend a meeting. Tammy Laverty said she would like to ask why the high school kids don't use recycling bins more often or reusable water bottles.

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

The next regular meeting will be November 19, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. in the **Civic Center (one week early due to holiday)**.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Steve Quinn and seconded by Linda Quinn adjourning the meeting at 7:37 p.m. All were in favor of this motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara DeLuca

cc: Commissioner William Gerken