

NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2021 AT 7:00 P.M. VIA ZOOM

**MINUTES OF THE RP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
September 14, 2021**

Chairman Steve Quinn called the meeting to order at 7:09 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, Harry Menta, Leslie Olson, Linda Quinn, Steve Quinn, Matt Graves. Excused. Absent: Guillermo Lopez-Acosta, Lisa Rehm, Gloria Rivera.

Hearing of Citizens: Nicole Terrarosa and Gianna Terrarosa were present as guests.

A motion was made by Steve Quinn and seconded by Matt Graves to approve the May 11, 2021, meeting minutes. All were in favor of the motion. (There was no meeting in June/July/August.)

Payment of Bills:

PO 45882 – \$59.15 – Barbara DeLuca – Mailing costs for 3 cartons of crayons to be recycled
PO 45892 – \$87.72 – The Crayon Initiative – Crayon recycling costs for 195 boxes of crayons

Correspondence:

1. Email dated 5/12/21 from Randi Rothmel, ANJEC Re: NJ Conservation Blueprint Mapping Tools
2. Email dated 5/12/21 from Leslie Olson Re: No More Paint Drop Off at the DPW
3. Email dated 5/21/21 from ANJEC Re: Webinar: NJ Conservation Blueprint Mapping Tools
4. Memo from Clerk's Office - Board of Commissioners would like to print a spring newsletter. Deadline is **6/1/21**. You are limited to submit 1 page of information. Submit information via email togrady@ridgefieldpark.org.
5. Email dated 5/24/21 from ANJEC Re: ANJEC News Environmental News Digest 5/20/21
6. Email dated 6/4/21 from Randi Rothmel, ANJEC Re: Advancing Stormwater Management – webinar 6/16/21
7. Email dated 6/4/21 from ANJEC Re: ANJEC News Environmental News Digest 6/4/21
8. Email dated 6/14/21 from PB Re: 95 & 64 Challenger Road – Applications to be heard 7/12/21 for 95 Challenger. Comments for 64 Challenger due by 7/12/20.
9. Email dated 6/17/21 from ANJEC Re: ANJEC News Environmental News Digest 6/16/21
10. Email dated 6/3/21 from ANJEC Re: Advancing Stormwater Management webinar on 6/16/21
11. Email dated 6/4/21 from ANJEC Re: ANJEC Environmental News Digest 6/4/21
12. Email dated 6/6/21 from Tammy Laverty Re: Bergen County Audubon Society Virtual Program on 6/10/21 “The Future Will Belong to the Nature-Smart, presented by Richard Louv”
13. Email dated 6/10/21 from ANJEC Re: Rolling out the New Plastic Pollution Reduction Law on 6/22/21
14. Email dated 6/17/21 from ANJEC Re: ANJEC Environmental News Digest dated 6/16/21
15. Email dated 6/17/21 from ANJEC Re: Recycled Content Bill Moving. Call your Senator!
16. Email dated 6/22/21 from ANJEC Re: Summer 2021 ANJEC Report
17. Email dated 6/25/21 from Berlinda Reinhardt Re: Team Up 2 Clean Up Ridgefield Park – suggesting a cleanup
18. Email dated 6/25/21 from Berlinda Reinhardt Re: Article on NJ Clean Communities Council
19. Email dated 6/30/21 from ANJEC Re: ANJEC Environmental News Digest 6/30/21
20. Email dated 7/8/21 from ANJEC Re: Actions for Environmental Justice in NJ webinar on 7/21/21
21. Email dated 7/8/21 from The Crayon Initiative Re: Acknowledgment of carton producing 55 packs of crayons
22. Email dated 7/10/21 from The Crayon Initiative Re: Acknowledgment of carton producing 120 packs of crayons
23. Email dated 7/10/21 from The Crayon Initiative Re: Acknowledgment of carton producing 20 packs of crayons
24. Email dated 7/14/21 from ANJEC Re: Environmental News Digest dated 7/14/21
25. Email dated 7/22/21 from ANJEC Re: Chemical Recycling: A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing That's Stalking NJ
26. Email dated 7/23/21 from Eliana L. Re: PVSC Newark Gas Plant Resolution
27. Public Notice Letter dated 7/26/21 Re: Hampshire Venture Partners, LLC – 30 Cross Street Freshwater Wetlands Letter of Interpretation, Flood Hazard Area Verification, etc.
28. Email dated 7/29/21 from ANJEC Re: ANJEC News Environmental News Digest 7/28/21
29. Email dated 8/10/21 from ANJEC Re: Environmental Achievement Award Applications Available
30. Email dated 8/11/21 from ANJEC Re: ANJEC 2021 Municipal Leadership Award guidelines/nominations
31. Email dated 8/16/21 from The Crayon Initiative Re: Thank for picking up recycling expenses
31. Email dated 8/18/21 from ANJEC Re: ANJEC News 8/18/21
33. Email dated 8/20/21 from Racquel Brazeb Re: Continental Can Co. 30 Bergen Tpke records request
34. Email dated 8/30/21 from Tara Grunstra Re: Invitation to Participate in Maywood Green Fair on 10/16/21

35. Email from Tara O'Grady Re: Newsletter deadline is 9/1 and EC submitted an article.
36. Email dated 8/30/21 from Joe D'Angeli Re: Bat Walk on 9/12/21 @ 7:00 p.m.
37. Email dated 9/2/21 from ANJEC Re: ANJEC Environmental News Digest 9/1/21
38. Email dated 9/7/21 from ANJEC Re: What's the 411 on the MS4s?
39. Email dated 9/8/21 from Maywood Green Team Re: Green Fair 10/16/21 Invitation – additional info
40. Email dated 9/14/21 from Joe D'Angeli Re: Bat Walk Update

Old Business:

The EC received an email from a resident suggesting a clean-up. The EC will speak with the GT to see if they want to do a clean-up as part of one of the SJ actions. They can use it as an innovative project as long as they do an educational aspect of the clean-up. The EC had originally planned to do a clean-up last year near Earth Day with Shop-Rite but then the covid situation worsened and it had to be cancelled. The EC will schedule a clean-up again in April and ask the GT to partner with them on the clean-up.

Green Business – Leslie Olson said she needs to redo some of the documents since the originator of the documents is no longer a member and Leslie does not have access to the documents anymore. She visited the Brownie Bar. They are having their formal opening this weekend. The owner is very interested in become a green business.

Bat Walk – The bat walk took place on September 12, 2021, with Joe D'Angeli. He said almost 50 people showed up. They had a wonderful night and lots of bats showed up and everybody who attended said they had a wonderful time. He sent some pictures to the EC. Joe also advised Steve Quinn that his lease in Garfield will not be renewed and he is looking for a new home.

New Business:

Nature Preserve Update: The nature preserve has been cleared out and construction started. It is about thirteen acres in size. All of the trail has been cleared. They are now starting to install the trail itself, which is 5 ft. wide. Things are moving along very well. In all likelihood, the trails will be completed by fall. The thing that is taking some time is the production and fabrication of the boardwalk, which spans the marsh across from the wooded area near the high school across the marsh over to the elevated Dept. of Transportation property, which was deeded to the Village for conservation education purposes. It is looking like the contractor will have the boardwalk ready for the fall. If there is a flood episode, they actually ride up on posts and float on the surface if there is high water. There is also a bridge that will be available starting in December. Hopefully, if it is cold enough the marsh will freeze and make it easier for the contractor to work. We are hoping that the boardwalk will be completed by late January/February.

This will still leave work to be done such as the educational signs and exhibits. Steve had previously gotten some responses from folks and there will be 13 graphics panels that will be mounted periodically here and there along the trail and boardwalk. They will deal with all sorts of subjects such as different plants and animals, importance of wetlands, the three distinct biomes, how this affects flora and fauna, etc. Steve can circulate the topics again because he would really love to get feedback on what everyone thinks of those topics. Tammy has sent some good ideas. Steve will write up text for each of those panels and then do illustrations to accompany the text. All of that work will be completed by spring. We are hoping to actually have a kickoff or a grand opening of the trail then. There still, however, will be additional work on the trail, which brings us to the second topic under new business, which will be creation of the RP Nature Association.

Village Street Fair: The street fair will be held on October 30. If any members can join us, it would be appreciated. We need members to man the EC table. One of the focuses of all we have done in the past is collecting names and gathering interest in forming a RP Nature Association. As being a part of the Nature Association, we will have bird walks, and native plants and tree walks – all of that sort of thing. Also, we are hoping to develop a team of folks who care enough about the Nature Preserve to give us a hand with planting and seeding native vegetation, weeding out more aggressive native invasive plants, just maintaining the trail and cleaning up the trail.

Steve said he and Linda were up in the Catskills recently and noticed a number of people wearing these nice vests with pins on them that said trail steward. They were folks that answered questions and directed people on the trail. They also had a little backpack and were picking up litter along the way. This is the kind of group that could assist in a number of different projects in maintaining the nature preserve. If members have any ideas about this RP Nature Association and how to make it a fun group and a useful team, Steve would really appreciate hearing from members. Barbara DeLuca will look into how much t-shirts, hats, vests, pins, etc., would cost for the group.

It would be nice to come up with a group where people felt really invested into the nature preserve. Once it gets to a point where members can all get down there, Steve will set up a tour. The trail is really a very pleasant trail and once you go up on the DOT property, you wouldn't even realize you are in RP. It is quite a remarkable trail. Once the boardwalks are in,

there will definitely be a tour for the EC. The only way it is accessible at this point since the boardwalks are not in place is the area closest to the high school, which is right across the road to the high school by Gianna's pollinator garden. This area is all going to be replanted. It is very exciting. The other area that is open and accessible is at the very north end of north Overpeck Avenue. That is one of the areas where you can originate your hike.

Steve told Matt Graves to take a look at the trails and the boardwalks because they are all ADA accessible. It would be really great to have some of the labels in Braille. Matt said he can contact the National Federation for the Blind in Baltimore. Steve said he was sure we could do things like the different textures and have some signs in Braille. Steve said he would get Matt some topics and get them to him.

Pollinator Garden: Gianna Terrarosa said in August she did a presentation of the garden for a younger girl scout troop. It was a success. They really seemed to enjoy it. She talked about the basics of what pollinators and native plants are and what they can do to help. She introduced them to all the plants in the garden. They seemed to really enjoy it and learned a lot. They will be earning a girl scout badge for it. She also worked with Harry Menta to write an article for the village newsletter about her garden to help spread the word a little more about the pollinator garden and that it is there so people who didn't know, will now learn a little more. Steve said the garden looks beautiful. Matt Graves suggested that they leave a couple of plants and do the outdoor code at the garden.

Bird Safe Glass: Steve said there are three residential units being proposed for Challenger Blvd. It is unclear as to whether they will actually happen but the Planning Board has to review them and then propose improvements or make suggestions on these applications to make these buildings better for people and the environment. The one thing he is concerned about is something we discussed regarding another building earlier last year, is that Challenger Blvd runs in the same direction as Overpeck Park and the Overpeck Creek. During the spring and fall, those are corridors for migrating birds and in his opinion, he thinks that if there are three large multi-storied residential buildings, some of them are quite large, ten or eleven stories, it is his opinion that the EC might want to propose that they utilize bird safe glass. This is a type of glass that has a pattern on it or a certain texture on the glass that discourages birds from seeing the reflection of sky and surrounding environments so they don't strike the glass. It is proven that millions of birds are lost each year in spring and fall due to window strikes. If the EC votes and approves, he would like to draft a letter and write to the Chairman of the PB proposing that the PB whenever approving buildings in that area along the Overpeck Creek corridor, that utilizing bird safe glass is a requirement to that approval. After a discussion, Steve would like to make a motion that the EC writes and sends that letter to the PB.

Tammy Laverty agrees very strongly with this, particularly in that area because it is a prime area for that migration. There are endangered species there like osprey, bald eagle, peregrine falcons, quite regularly are there. Perching birds like song birds do fly through there regularly, at night especially.

Steve Quinn made a motion, that he writes a letter to the PB that the PB makes the use of bird safe glass a requirement for any development in that Overpeck Creek corridor. Leslie Olson said she thinks his motion should be amended to include any building in the Village. She thinks it should specify any multi-use building in the community. Tammy said maybe make it by stories. Steve Quinn said he doesn't know exactly how to stipulate when bird safe glass should be required. Steve said it seemed to be very forward in the Overpeck basin since they are very large buildings but he does appreciate Leslie pointing out that it should be structured to include any building in RP in general. This way you would not make it on a case-by-case basis.

Steve said in NY it is a law that all new development must use bird safe glass. His thought was with the requirement with the Overpeck corridor was to say that developers must meet criteria set by the NY city law. Steve said we could just say Ridgefield Park in general. Leslie said this would be good for the future so when developers come in the groundwork is already laid for them. Steve said he would get a copy of the NY ordinance and attach it to the letter. Steve said he just wants to get something into the PB before these big buildings are approved. One of them, we made a stipulation that they use bird safe glass, and they said yes with no objections at all. Steve said he really thinks all of the buildings need to use bird safe glass. He will reference the NY city law and try to get a copy and attach to the letter for Challenger Blvd and do the letter for just RP in general.

A motion was made by Steve Quinn and seconded by Leslie Olson that the EC will submit a letter to the BOC and PB regarding the EC's proposal that all new development in RP be required to utilize bird safe glass and reference the NY city ordinance requirement. All voted in favor of the motion. Steve will write something up and circulate it. He will also try to get a copy of that NY city ordinance and circulate that as well.

Annual Green Fair – Swap & Shop: It is scheduled for September 25 at Brewster Park, starting at 11:00 a.m. The objective is to initiate some green activity within the community. A Swap & Shop is a great way to do that and provide some education to the residents of the community to please don't throw the clothes away, let's find other uses for them.

The Swap & Shop allows people to bring a certain amount of clothing and then they get credit for that clothing. They can come back an hour or two later after they deposit their wares and then “shop” for something new to them. This is a way people can learn that gently used clothing can be repurposed by other folks and you don’t have to throw it away unless it is badly used and then it can be recycled and created into rags. There will be some other green vendors there as well. There will be a materials reuse table so if anyone has anything they wish to bring that day they can. This is just an extension of what is at the DPW. People can just take something home with them that day. Sonny Yotka used to do a spectacular job with that and found homes for many items.

The event starts at 11:00 a.m. when people start bringing their clothing and accessories to swap. The items are then organized and people come back at 1:00 p.m. to start “shopping”. This goes on until about 3:00 p.m. until after people have swapped their fill. After 3:00, people can take anything they want. Household goods can also be dropped off. No big items or furniture. There will be some food available as well as preprogrammed music. There will even be a try-on booth in a newly painted booth complete with a mural by a resident. Grant School PTA will be collecting bottle caps off of juice boxes, water bottles, anything that is a hard plastic.

Village Street Fair: The EC will have a booth. There will be a table set up with a canopy. It would be great if members could spend some time at the table answering questions. There will be a sign-up sheet for the RP Nature Association to try to raise interest in the nature preserve. A sign-up will be sent to members to sit at the table for a short time on October 30. The fair runs from 10:00 am – 5:00 p.m. It would be great if members could take a two-hour shift.

Tammy Laverty said in the House of Representatives there is a bill called the American Pollinator Act. A vote will be coming up on reintroducing the Saving America’s Pollinators Act to protect bees and other vital pollinators. The legislation establishes a pollinator protection board to monitor the status of native pollinator populations and suspends the use of neonicotinoids and other pesticides harmful to pollinators until experts determine that they are safe to use. Tammy said it is in subcommittee and should be coming up for a vote in a couple of months and is probably something the EC wants to think about talking to our representatives to make sure they vote the right way. It has moved into subcommittee. Tammy will get the information so it can be distributed to members. She will see which of our representatives have signed up and will send the info to the secretary for distribution. Harry Menta said Rep. Sarlo is very approachable. Steve Quinn asked Harry Menta to put it on the website. The EC should encourage people to contact their representatives. It would be a great thing. It might be something the EC can have at their table at the street fair, perhaps make a little display urging people to contact their representatives or at least make them aware of it.

Maywood Green Fair on 10/16/21: Leslie Olson said the EC received an invitation from the Maywood Green Team to host a table at their Green Fair scheduled for October 16. Leslie would like to see if one or two other people could spend sometime and then there could be a combined EC/GT table. A sign-up will be sent to everyone to see if anyone has any time to sit at the table.

Newsletter: Steve said he wrote up something on the nature preserve for the newsletter. Gianna wrote up a nice article on her project that Harry edited and submitted to the newsletter. There were some nice pictures that went with it too. He said next spring would probably be the grand opening for the nature preserve.

Leslie asked for a schedule of publication dates for future newsletters so we would know when is the deadline and when it will be distributed. Commissioner Gerken said as soon as the newsletter is printed, he will immediately post it on the website and it is also sent to people’s homes.

Word on the Street: Outside the library will be an open mic night hosted by the RP Arts Association and Friends of the Library on September 17 starting at 7:00 p.m. There will be performances, readings, music; Joe Kenney will be singing. Local students will also be performing.

The next regular meeting will be October 12, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. via zoom. Steve Quinn advised he would be on vacation for the next meeting and asked Leslie Olson to run the meeting.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Steve Quinn and seconded by Harry Menta adjourning the meeting at 8:14 p.m. All were in favor of this motion.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara DeLuca
 Barbara DeLuca

cc: Commissioner William Gerken

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

Meeting ID: 759 9962 1083 Passcode: 3PsA19