

NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY, MARCH 22, 2018 AT 7:30 P.M.

**VILLAGE OF RIDGEFIELD PARK
MINUTES OF THE GREEN TEAM
February 22, 2018**

Chairman Mark Olson called the meeting to order at 7:52 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: Carolina Espin, Janet Malool, Harry Menta, Leslie Olson, Mark Olson, Katelyn McGirk, Asai Maschang, Barbara Wilke. Not Present: Absent - Eric Koenig, Chelsea Almanza, Gina Constanza, Danielle Fede, Diane Mancini, Joseph D'Angeli. Excused – Linda Quinn, Jin Ah Jong, Peggy Conversano, Tim Holloway, Guillermo Lopez-Acosta, Gloria Rivera, Florence Muller. Ex Officio Members absent. Christopher Hurtado has resigned from the Green Team.

A motion was made by Harry Menta and seconded by Carolina Espin approving the minutes of the January 25, 2018, meeting. All were in favor of the motion.

Approval of bills: Some bills will be coming in for some signs that Janet Malool had made for the garden.

Hearing of Citizens: None at this time.

Correspondence: 1) letter dated January 24, 2018, advising that CSXT will submit an application to NJDEP for a development plan involving the emergency repair of failing bridge supports for a railroad bridge spanning Overpeck Creek
2) Appointments and Oaths of Office that need to be signed and returned to Clerk's Office
3) Notice from Zoning Board that an application was submitted to convert garages at 9-11 Lincoln Avenue to convert 33 residential units with underground parking. Hearing was held on February 20 and will be continued at the March meeting.

Reports:

Sustainable Jersey: Nothing really happened this last month.

Financial: 2017 funds were encumbered under PO #32446 to Art Mora \$6,413.48 for sculpture for sculpture garden in McGowan Park. This amount is about half of what will be needed for the project. Mark Olson said the GT may have to ask the Creative Team to take over the deposit until the project is further along.

Creative Team: The CT has five finalists for the project. The CT will have a process to get some public input.

Community Garden: Janet Malool reported on the Community Garden. With spring approaching, they are getting ready for their second year. Applications are out. They have advertised on the website, the Community Message Board as well as the RP Mom's page. All 21 Fellowship plots are taken. There are still plots available at McGowan. They are still waiting for word on when water will be available at McGowan. Location markers are present but the DPW said they were not asked by the Village to do anything. She doesn't know when there will be a definitive answer on when they will have water like McGowan Park. That water is scheduled to be turned on in April.

They are hoping for a sculpture for McGowan by the end of spring but they are learning it is a time-consuming task. Currently there are five artists that have been asked to show them their vision. The garden meetings are scheduled for the year. They are posted on Facebook and reminders will be sent out on all meetings. The committee leader meeting is February 26 at 7:00 p.m. They have a meeting scheduled for March 7 at 7:00 p.m. with all the gardeners. Several work dates have been set and will be discussed with the gardeners to see who can help out.

Public beds, which have the trellis backs, will be painted so that they appear totally different from the others. Their plan as of now is to have public picking on scheduled nights at McGowan. Obviously, they will not start until there are vegetables for picking. This will be something the residents can look forward to. They will have picking dates at Fellowship as well. Several gardeners will be present at picking dates. More details to follow.

The gardener who is not being allowed to return is still in her plot. She had been asked to vacate as of February 1. They are in receipt of a letter that she intends to appeal that decision. However, she has not been at any of the Commissioner meetings to discuss this. This will be discussed separately.

The garden rules are in the process of being updated again. They have reviewed other community gardens, both nationally and locally, and there are specific consequences for unacceptable behavior. Final copy to be ready soon.

Rain Garden: Nothing happening right now but we may have to replace a few plants.

Old Business:

Budget: Probably won't be in place until March.

Sustainable Jersey:

Committee: All members were given a copy of the letter to the Board of Commissioners requesting an arts surcharge on new construction for public arts as well as create a Creative Arts District. There is a business standard for those who want to have arts in their building. Mark gave a basic explanation for how it would work. 1% for support of Public Art would be on new construction and renovation of commercial and industrial space/projects. The 1% would be used to purchase and maintain Public Art. It is a gamechanger. If it were to happen, RP would change dramatically over the next 50 years. Mark thinks it is really what people want for the Village. It could become like a SoHo. Giselle Holiday of the Creative Arts Team is ready to go on this.

Next week is the first meeting of the Bergen County Sustainable Jersey Hub. It will be held on Thursday, March 1 at 7:00 p.m. Every municipality has been asked to send two people. Some towns selected three because it's hard to always have two available. Mark Olson pushed hard to have it here because he felt it would help us. Mark will be one of RP's representatives. He needs another volunteer. If one of the GT is the Co-Chair, it will help us a lot. Meetings are rotated to every town involved. There is a survey they asked Mark to fill out but he wanted to have other members also look at it first to give a little input. Discussion was held on several of the responses for the questions.

The GT listed three goals for 2018 as 1% for art, achieve Silver Certification and establish a Creative Arts District. The GT would like to collaborate with other towns on an Art Crawl and a Farmer's Market. The types of events the GT would like to see the Bergen Hub host are an exchange of projects that have been done by other towns, examples – bike paths, community garden, electric charging stations. The GT would rather see the Hub help towns get bronze, silver, etc. It would rather help out towns with little things than select a grandiose project. Maybe it would be a good idea to make all meetings include a presentation from the hosting town's GT. Perhaps meeting presentations could be held quarterly that all Green Teams attend. If some meetings were actually a presentation, such as how to write a grant, that would be helpful to all towns. Janet said it might be very helpful to read how a town accomplished a task that another town might be having difficulty completing.

Mark Olson said it would be a good idea to have some more hands arrive at 6:15-6:30 p.m. to help direct people that are arriving at the meeting.

Mark let the members know that next meeting, we need to get moving since 105 points have expired. Some need to be renewed and new documentation provided. Some new tasks are needed to achieve Silver Certification. Mark handed out a sheet listing some tasks that could be done for Silver Certification. Some of these tasks are really just providing the documentation. Mark highlighted the tasks that are ones that the GT are targeting. It does not mean that these tasks will definitely be done; it is just a suggestion. Members should look these over and then email Mark once you decided which task(s) you want to take over.

Creative Team: The next concert is scheduled for April 14. An email will go out with the details. RP needs to be known as a destination but to be a destination, our members also need to attend these events. It is noticed if no one from the GT or CT team shows up at an event they sponsor. Just to inform everyone, the CT holds a dinner about every six weeks – everyone is invited, bring your friends – everyone makes food and then throws \$20 in the pot. This system can't be done forever but it is getting a start for the CT. The CT has been talking about ideas and ways to attract more people. This is new for everyone so it's still a learning process, learning how to budget, plan an event, etc. The CT has talked with Bogota about doing this together and Sustainable Jersey said yes, you can work together and both towns would get points for the task.

The CT needs to set a date for a public meeting. The CT may not reach the June deadline it set but that it is ok. It would be better to delay the project rather than rush to make a deadline. Janet said she has been doing some research. She has looked into Paul Sisco, his wife was an art teacher here and he taught Industrial Arts. He owns a couple acres of land in Mahwah. He is having a showing in the spring. It would be a good idea for the CT to attend to see what they have accomplished. They are both artists and originally from RP. She worked here and they lived here for many years. George Cook, a sculptor from RP, is going to donate some things to the sculpture garden.

Community Garden: Renee Bolduc has not vacated her plot. She said she was going to appeal. The GT will give her the final date of March 15 to vacate. Mark Olson will work on a letter.

Rain Garden: Mark Olson is pushing for raingardens to be part of RP's sewage outfall long term control plan. Rain gardens will cut back on water going into the CSO. When the gates open, raw sewage and garbage goes into the waters. To cut back on the storm water going into that system, Mark is pushing for rain gardens. The DEP's problem is according to their regulations a rain garden needs to be 8 ft. deep at a minimum and there's other requirements such as an engineer must design it; to the point that no one would ever put one in. The DEP is willing to let RP put together a proposal on how to do it. Carolina Espin and Steve Quinn said they would work on this with Mark. It would be something like figuring out a simple way to test it to see how much water will go down there. Once they have figured out the proper way to test it, they can then bring it to the DEP. Mark's intention is to have an answer for homeowners who ask how they can help. He would like all residents to be able to be part of the solution.

Mark said there's a Rain Garden Alliance that tells you how much water you kept from going into the system. Every time it rains, the homeowners gives them their information and they learn exactly how much water they kept from going into the system. The Planning Board is looking into how to fix the problem of the amount of impervious coverage a person can have. Mark said that maybe the GT should create a sustainable house program. This is something to think about for the future. Carolina suggested having a table about rain gardens at the Earth Day/Green Fair. Everyone thought that was a great idea.

Sweatshirts: Sweatshirts were shown during the EC meeting. Samples will be available next month and orders taken.

July 4th Float: At the next meeting, a decision will be made if and how the GT will participate so the July 4th committee can be notified.

Website: Harry Menta and Guillermo Lopez-Acosta will work on the website.

Earth Day/Green Fair: It is scheduled for May 5.

New Business: Carolina Espin said that she spoke to someone from Bergen Community College and they made a partnership to create a community garden and they had a way to somehow have the community garden so you don't need to water it. There was some type of system so they did not have to water it at all. Mark said that's interesting because one of the problems with a garden is people normally water it too much. Mark said the bigger problem is explaining to people not to water. If you water, you need 20 gallons for these plots because it needs to get deep into the ground. If you do less than 20 gallons, it stays near the top. You would be better off not watering at all if you use less than 20 gallons.

As far as the newsletter, the GT really needs someone to spearhead the newsletter. There should be something in every newsletter from the GT. A reminder will be sent to all members three weeks before the deadline to give ample time to write something to meet the deadline. Everyone should think of something they want to write and let the GT know what they are handling. The suggested topics could be discussed at a meeting so the GT can decide what to put in each newsletter. Harry suggested an explanation of the number system for recycling would be helpful to everyone so they understand why things are done the way they are.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mark Olson and seconded by Harry Menta adjourning the meeting at 9:20 p.m. All were in favor of this motion.

The next regular meeting will be March 22, 2018, beginning at 7:30 p.m. or immediately following the EC meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara DeLuca