

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

August 16, 2023
Meeting Minutes

The Regular Meeting of the Environmental Commission of the Borough of Roosevelt was called to order by Chairperson Ellen Silverman on Wednesday, August 16, 2023 at 7:01 P.M.

The Roll was called by Chairperson Silverman

ROLL CALL:

Present: Sam Ashburner, Michael Hamilton, Tim Hartley, Michael Ticktin, Mary Tulloss, Ben Johnson

Absent: David Teich, Erin Schneider

ADEQUATE PUBLIC NOTICE OF MEETING STATEMENT: Adequate notice of this meeting has been given, in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Law, by notices published in the Asbury Park Press on March 21, 2023 and the Times of Trenton on March 22, 2023 and posted on the bulletin boards in the Borough Hall and at the Roosevelt Post Office.

Mary Tulloss reads the following:

Land and People Acknowledgement

The land and waterways upon which the residents of the Borough of Roosevelt gather and live are the ancestral and unceded Lenapehoking territory of the Lenni-Lenape nation. We honor the contributions of their ancestors, those now in the diaspora, and the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape, Ramapough Lenape and Powhatan Renape who continue to live in the areas we call New Jersey. We honor this ancestral land of the Lenni-Lenape Nation. May we live in harmony, caring for this sacred land.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE AGENDA

Chairperson Silverman opened the meeting to the public for comments on the agenda at 7:02pm.

1. No Public Comment.

Chairperson Silverman closes the public portion for the agenda was closed at 7:02pm.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: Motion was made by Michael Ticktin to approve the agenda and second was made by Michael Hamilton. This passed by unanimous vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: June 21, 2023 – Michael Ticktin made a motion to approve the June 21, 2023, minutes with a second from Mary Tulloss. Minutes were passed by unanimous vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: July 19, 2023 – Michael Ticktin made a motion to approve the July 19, 2023, minutes with a second from Tim Hartley. Minutes were passed with an abstention from Michael Hamilton.

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. ANJEC – Action Alert: New Inland Flood Protection Rule Informational Webinar, Tuesday, August 1
2. NJDEP – i-Tree Open Academy Summer 2023
3. The Watershed – The NJ Inland Flood Protection Rule has been adopted and published
4. NJLM – Governor Signs Advanced Clean Cars Proposal
5. ANJEC – Accepting Nominations: 2023 Environmental Achievement Award & 2023 Municipal Leadership Award
6. NJDEP – NJUCF News & Updates 8/1/23

Ellen Silverman states that she has signed up for a webinar: How to tackle New Jersey's Growing Flooding Crisis – Monday, August 28, 2023 from 6:00-8:00pm. New law went into effect on July 15, 2023, we will need to update our flood protection rules

Ellen Silverman signed up for Complete Streets Summit, sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Transportation, will be held on Wednesday, November 1, 2023. Maureen Parrot and Michael Hamilton will also be attending. The full-day event will be held in person at the College Avenue Campus Student center at Rutgers University in New Brunswick and is free to attend. They will announce what money is available. Michael Ticktin states that this came up a few years ago and Isaac Mendies, who was the chairman of the Planning Board, he was trying to propose they put in bicycle lane in the center of Roosevelt – but it wasn't terribly needed, due to low traffic in Roosevelt, they would have had to cut down many trees on one side of N. Rochdale Avenue, which made no sense. There may or may not be things that are relevant to Roosevelt. Ellen Silverman states she agrees; we have to pick for our situation also it not only covers bike paths but walking trails. If we wanted to improve the path between Pine and the school, which always floods, that would be of interest to us. Maybe also connectors that wouldn't require cutting down trees, that may also be something we are interested in.

REPORT OF PLANNING BOARD LIAISON: Tim Hartley reports that the Planning Board has met and ruled on a variance on Pine Drive for, impervious coverage (they are allowed 20% owners asking for 24%). The Planning Board Engineer did calculations and there was less concern due to the property drains back to Empty Box Brook, there is no impact to street drainage or neighbors. The variance was approved, however the survey shows on the rear of the property a sizeable encroachment on the green belt, plus there are some large sheds. The owner has been directed to consult with the Zoning Code Enforcement Officer. The owners will have to pull the fence in and remove the sheds. Michael Ticktin states the Mayor and Council should follow up, if any legal action is to be taken it would be brought by the Mayor and Council. The owner's states that the fence was on the property when they bought it and if it was possible for it to be grandfathered, the answer is no.

The Planning Board also discussed the proposed Ordinance 23-07 which has to do with potentially permitting vineyards and wineries in the RAG 400 zone. There is a potential buyer for Foot Light Farm, that currently owns an existing business in Allentown, this would be an expansion of that. There are other RAG 400 properties in the borough, Mendes lot, the one on Nurko Road and the Wong farm. The Planning Board Planner, Andrew Thomas, discussed pros and cons and he will review the proposed ordinance further. It's a requirement when the council introduces a change to the Zoning Ordinance that the Planning Board review with recommendations back to the council within 35 days. Vineyards, wineries and winery tasting

rooms are three distinct things, grapes are a crop and crops are allowed, but not all vineyards have to have wineries, which is a commercial use. State regulations allow for Agricultural businesses to have a commercial use attached. The Planner has been given a month to comment on the proposed ordinance – more information to follow next month.

REPORT OF COUNCIL LIAISON: Michael Hamilton states we had a brief meeting by Zoom on Monday night to adopt the municipal budget. We will be receiving additional State Aid to the amount of \$8,539.00 (municipal relief fund) which is double what we received last year. The net increase is about 1.5 cents per \$1000.00 of assessed value, property assessments in the borough have gone up. It's good news, it's a minor increase on the municipal rate however, the school increase more. Tax Bills are not out yet; they probably will be out in a couple weeks. It will be a significant increase because of the school and the big item was Fire and First Aid increase, we are now paying the same rate as a Millstone resident, we are paying our fair share.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES:

- Administrative: No Report.
- Forest Management: Ellen Silverman reports that our grant for the tree inventory; Kevin Scibilia does have the paperwork in his name – there was a problem which has been straightened out. Ellen Silverman will meet with Kevin Scibilia regarding a schedule. The woman for the forest part of the survey – she has some health problems, we have rescheduled for September. With the Forest Management we also have the Community Forest Management Plan – Kim was maintaining the volunteer and education hours for reporting. We do need it to have stay in good standing with our grant. When Kim left Sam Ashburner took it over; he would like to resign so we need someone else to take over. People have taken education classes this year but if we don't have anyone recoding it, Sam Ashburner states he will take another look at it and maintain it, but he still wants to resign.
- Invasive Plant Species: No Report.
- Stream Monitoring: Mary Tulloss reports we missed last month, we will be out this weekend. Ellen Silverman reports that she and Hilary Wilder are doing a 5 week testing program of lakes; this is the 3rd. week, they test in 3 different locations. Assumpink Lake, Etra Lake and Meadows Lake. Each Sunday we test then we drive the sample to them. We have not received any information on these samples, but we are adding to the data.

Tim Hartley reports on the Stream Gauges and states that Steve Marcher is making a detailed survey, however, he has to stay off his feet – so we will hold off for a couple of weeks. In the mean-time Ted Hartley suggested a simpler method of gauging the water level at Empty Box Brook (see chart below) for sample of how it could be done.

Tim Hartley indicated that there was another area that he would like to monitor the water level, but there is no way to get to the stream by the Sewer Plant.

Ellen Silverman asks Michael Hamilton how is the storm water mapping coming along? Michael Hamilton responds that he will check with Carmella Roberts.

- **Sustainable Jersey:** Ellen Silverman reports that we have applied for enough points for the Bronze level and recently sent an email to the grants department making sure they received all the paperwork to close out the grant. Closing out the past grant will open us to other possible grants to apply for.
- **Dessert and Discussion:** Ellen Silverman reports that Dessert and Discussion was the third Tuesday, however from August to the end of the year it will be the fourth Tuesday, the one coming up will be on fall gardens. Ellen Silverman will bring the seed library; the talk will be about outdoor fall gardening and some food crops that can be grown indoors. Everyone is invited.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Follow up on EC Goals** – Ellen Silverman states we did pass mission statements but we need to decide on our goals for the next year. A list was provided on goals and a list on possible actions to work towards these goals. Ellen Silverman suggests that everyone look at them and see what is feasible. It was decided that Mary Tulloss and Ben Johnson will form a sub-committee and review the goals and come back to the Environmental Commission with a priority order of goals and actions. During the discussion Education and Community Outreach is believed to be most important. Ellen Silverman asks Mary Tulloss and Ben Johnson to report back at next month's meeting.
- **Open Space Plan** – Ellen Silverman requested information on Roosevelt's Open Space Plan. Do we have one and if so when was it last updated? She recommends that the Open Space plan should be a document used by the Environmental Commission and updated by them. She recommends that it would be a good focus on the current year's Environmental Commission activities. Michael Ticktin states that the Borough Open Space Plan is to preserve as much open space as possible. Tim Hartley will check with the Planning Board. Secretary, Maria Dellasala states if there is one it has to be on file in the Clerk's office, she will check with Kathleen Hart and then email the Commission and let them know if there is one on file. C/Hamilton asks when was the last Master Plan Review? Michael Ticktin states in 2017 and Ellen Silverman states that's what she thought also.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Develop list of community outreach ideas, with a list and Environmental Commission partners to effectively fulfill our goals - Ellen Silverman states that C/Herrstrom is willing to work with us to develop a list of different communications outlets including newspapers, This list will be develop into a data sheet; including organizations, newspapers, and other things area out there where we can post

information, that will be helpful with community education and outreach method of approaching our goals. This came up while I was doing Sustainable Jersey – outreach. Mary Tulloss asks does that include websites? Yes. What clubs are in town, who is the cub scout leader, who is the girl scout leader. General information such as Recycling, Liter Pick up. It would include also our partnership with Millstone and the Watershed.

- Ben Johnson reports on the March to end Fossil Fuels. Save the date for the March to End Fossil Fuels – Ben Johnson Action E-mail about this. He has signed up for March to End Fossil Fuels which will take place in New York City on September 17, 2023. Ben Johnson explains about the march and the groups that will be involved. More information to follow. Ellen Silverman asks Ben Johnson to email everyone the link in case anyone is interested in attending. Tim Hartley asks if there is any other organization affiliated?

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Chairperson Ellen Silverman opens the public comment at: 8:00 P.M.

1. Steve Taylor, Oscar Drive – his question is that this year’s mosquitos are very bad, has anyone else noticed, he checked the County website for mosquito control – and they have no control spray scheduled. The Borough is a part of the County Mosquito Control Commission and the spray is only for the lava. (believe the control spray is only for the adult mosquito not lava. They would not be able to spray near the wetlands if it was a pesticide that effect the lava since it lives in the water). The Commission members continue with a conversation about the Spotted Lantern Fly.

Chairperson Ellen Silverman closes the public comment at: 8:04 P.M.

Tim Hartley asks about the vegetable swap – Ellen Silverman responds she spoke with Sharon Walter about that and were thinking Thursdays are not good maybe we can do another night. Last year Lawrence Mendes and Heidi donated very generously but they can’t at that time, so another night and Ellen Silverman ended up taking to Solar Village. Ellen Silverman will reach out to see if they want to receive the donations this year.

Ellen Silverman checked with CORE training about who is an Elected Official, and they did not consider a School Board Member as an Elected Official.

Tim Hartley asks if the Council is looking into the possibility of modifying the tree ordinance that would require the removal of dead and dangerous trees? It was discussed whose responsibility it is when a tree falls. Ellen Silverman states that when we have the tree inventory and hazardous study it will help have a program that will take care of the town trees.

C/Hamilton states he has noticed the fuel that is in our green belt and a lot of downed trees. But the climate is changing and with all the abnormal climate events if we had a drought and then a fire it would run right through. Ellen Silverman states when the forester comes out that is when we will find out, what is the balance. She will let us know what has to go and what should stay. Michael Ticktin states part of the abnormal climate we are seeing there is also an excessive amount of rain fall, that would make it less hazardous. It’s been a very wet summer, but a very dry spring. The forester will give us recommendations. The problem is if a tree falls and damages your property your insurance company will cover it – insurance companies are not there for preventative measures.

Steve Taylor states the question to the forester should be the type of tree and the risk of the trees.

C/Hamilton states he went out during the rainstorm to see how the water was flowing and a lot of the storm drains were covered and the ones that are clear the water is just running over, they need to be jet vac. The County came in and jet vac the drains.

Mary Tullos states she went to a Forest Resource Education Center in Jackson – she did not know of this educational resource. Ellen Silverman states they do an educational performance each month.

First Friday is going to be at 6 S. Rochdale - it's a summer pot luck from 6:00pm-9:00pm on September 1st

ADJOURNMENT: Michael Ticktin motioned to adjourn **Sam Ashburner** offered a second. It was unanimously passed to adjourn at 8:21pm.

Maria Dellasala, Secretary