



B O R O U G H O F R A R I T A N

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

March 21st, 2019

MINUTES

1. Open Public Meetings Statement:

In accordance with Section 5 of the Open Public Meeting Act, Chapter 231, Public Law 1975, be advised that adequate notice of this Meeting of the Environmental Commission of the Borough of Raritan, County of Somerset was made by the posting on the bulletin board at the Borough Hall and transmitted to the officially designated newspapers indicating that this Meeting would take place at the Borough Hall, Council Chambers at 7:00 p.m. on March 21, 2019. In addition, a copy of this notice is and has been available to the public and is on file in the Office of the Municipal Clerk.

2. Roll Call:

Mark Clark (present); Michael DeCicco (present); Christopher Gussman (present); Olga Metaxas (present); Diana Russo (not present); Emilie Stander (present); Joni McKelvey (First Alternate) (present)
Denise Carra, Planning Board Liaison (not present); Paul Giraldi, Council Liaison (present)

3. Flag Salute

4. Approval of Minutes: *February 21, 2019*

Ms. Stander introduced a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. DeCicco seconded, all were in favor

5. Report from Borough Council (Paul Giraldi)

Borough engineer had concerns with the NJ American Water draft grant proposal prepared by RBEC. Mr. Girardi spoke to the borough engineer and DPW, and all parties agreed that the borough does not want to submit the grant proposal. Instead we should wait for the new DPW manager to be hired to submit a future proposal. It was also agreed that removing the proposed activity to be led by DPW was still not sufficient to move forward with the rest of the grant proposal.

Action Item: Mr. Clark will contact the borough engineer for more information.

6. Report from Planning Board

Board will meet next Wednesday

7. Public Comment

No one present from the public

8. Discussion Items

Manville will be holding a rain barrel workshop on June 1, 12-3pm led by watershed ambassador Von Scully.

Action Item: Ms. Stander will ask the Manville organizers if they would be willing to have some Raritan residents join the workshop.

9. New Business

- a) Review planning board applications
21 Orlando Dr, near Nevius St Bridge

The proposed development for two apartment buildings is currently in the final stages of the approval process. The developers are asking for waiver for environmental impact study because they have provided a stormwater management plan which they claim addresses all the issues an EIS calls for. The planning board did not agree with the request for the waiver; the group agreed that the developer needs to address wastewater management concerns, bald eagle habitat (potential impacts need to be confirmed or denied). Mr. Clark didn't see that this was addressed in the application, so Mr. Clark proposed that this be one of our comments. RBEC members noted that riparian buffers are required along rivers – 50 feet from the 2 year water level along the Raritan River; it was not clear whether that requirement was met, as the majority of the site appears to be within the floodplain line included in the site plan – this may be included as a comment. Members noted the two proposed rain gardens but wondered how the areas were calculated and how much of the site runoff is offset by the rain gardens. The proposed development is under the required impervious coverage at 55.81% impervious (less than the max of 60%), and the developers claim the site was previously 90% impervious. Several commission members expressed confusion about the application because they thought the county was supposed to buy up all those properties along Orland Dr. that are in the floodplain. The developers are requesting a variance to make parking spots 18' long rather than 20' and to remit the loading area to increase retail area, as part of the proposed site plan includes mixed use space. The developers did submit the green checklist, and cite the rain gardens as an example of sustainable design, as well as LED lighting with directional control. The proposal includes developer commitment to opening the riverwalk to the public and maintaining it as a porous space.

Action item: Mr. Clark will scan in the green development checklist and send that out to the RBEC members.

Action Item: Mr. Clark will ask planner Angela Knowles if there's a study of housing demand that indicates how many new units are projected to be occupied.

2nd application: Former Crown Liquors site, 35 1st Ave

Owners are proposing to turn it into 2-3 apartment units. The main impact is that the proposed development would be 86% impervious. Mr. Clark noted that there is plenty of space to conduct stormwater mitigation in the back of the property. Mr. DeCicco relayed that Raritan eliminated the ability to convert single family to multi-family housing a long time ago, so this application is not likely to proceed. He suggested we hold off on submitting formal comments and wait to see what the Planning Board and engineer do.

3rd application: Janssen Pharmaceuticals, 1000 US HWY 202.

They are proposing to demolish one building and construct a new one. This means a 76000 foot space would be replaced with a 5800 sq foot space, which is a big reduction. The current proposal has an overall net reduction impervious cover, at 25.81% impervious, which is lower than the maximum allowed 40%. They attached a parking study that proposes less parking than they had before. They are not proposing any green stormwater management, just traditional stuff, which seems like a lost opportunity, especially since their site actually contains a stream corridor and associated floodplain according to maps on Conservation Blueprint. Members proposed adding a comment to consider green stormwater management strategies.

- b) ANJEC Environmental Commission Grants Review – tabled as per DPW/borough engineer request.

10. Old Business

a) Raritan Eco Fair

Mark met with Ms. Schulte from the Events Committee about the Eco Fair. Ms. Stander reported out that the Raritan Headwaters Association will bring their traveling watershed classroom to the event and will set it up next to their table. Ms. Stander reported that Duke Farms, the Raptor Trust, and the Somerset County Environmental Education Center did not

have any available staff to present educational activities at the event. So far about 23 vendors have committed; the events committee want to get up to 40. A number of environmental organizations are on the list of potential vendors; Mr. Clark, Mr. Gussman, and Ms. Stander divided up the list of vendors with which to follow up. The events committee will meet again on Thurs Apr 11, 7pm, in the Borough Hall basement to do some arts and crafts work to prepare for the Eco Fair. At the Fair the events committee will spray paint out spots that the vendors can use and parking volunteers will direct vendors to their locations. The Eco Fair flyer has gone out on social media, and the events committee is advertising for an art contest at the schools.

Action item: Mr. Clark will check in with Ms. Schulte to make sure the police chief has been notified about the Eco Fair.

- b) Somerset County Green Leadership Hub Sustainability Summit, Friday June 14th 8:30am-4:30pm in Holmdel, NJ. The \$35 registration fee will be covered by the borough budget. Mr. Clark plans to attend, and Mr. Gussman and Ms. Stander are interested.

Action item: Mr. Clark will make a request for the funding.

- 11. Adjournment – Regular Meeting at 8:18pm

- 12. Green Team

- a) South County Green Team Meeting, Thursday March 28th, 6:30pm in Manville, NJ. Mr. Clark, Ms. Stander, and Mr. Gussman plan to attend.

- 13. Adjournment – Green Team Meeting, Mr. Gussman made a motion to adjourn, Ms. Metaxas seconded.