



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

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

September 16th, 2021

AGENDA

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 posting on the Raritan Borough website indicating that this Meeting would take place at the Raritan Municipal Building at 7:00 p.m. on September 16, 2021. 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:

In attendance: Juan Alvarez; Tony Sacino; Michael DeCicco; Christopher Gussman, Olga Metaxas, Emilie Stander

Not present: Jennie Rose Saunders; Denise Carra, Planning Board Liaison; Justice Ifan, Council Liaison

3) Flag Salute

4) Approval of Minutes: July 23, 2021

Ms. Stander made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. DeCicco seconded.

5) Report from Borough Council: Mr. Ifan was not in attendance so there was no report.

6) Report from Planning Board: Ms. Carra was not in attendance so there was no official report. Mr. DeCicco attended the last Planning Board meeting and provided some input. There are two developers interested in the area where the Dollar Store and Stop and Shop are located, although the recent flooding may affect that interest. The approval for the apartment building on Orlando Drive will run out in a couple of years; it's not known whether the developer is still interested in building given the recent flooding. The latest on the movement of municipal facilities is that a new building will be constructed for Public Works in Hillsborough. A small satellite building for police and public works may be constructed at Washington School Park if there's funding left over after the new Public Works building is constructed. Planning Board meetings take place on fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm in the large meeting space. It would be good if at least one of us can attend each month; perhaps we can rotate among EC members.

7) Public Comment

There were no members of the public in attendance.

8) Discussion Items

There were no discussion items.

9) New Business

a) Ms. Stander mentioned that the Somerville Environmental Commission is providing information to

residents about mold remediation. She will reach out to Somerville to see if they would be willing to share their information with us.

- b) Information for homeowners about the Spotted Lanternflies – File attached. Now is the time to remind homeowners to look for egg masses on their trees. Mr. Alvarez will post the factsheets on the Commission’s Facebook page now that he has administrative access.
- c) The group discussed possible strategies for an electric car charging station. Mr. Alvarez found the name of the owner for the Somerville Circle (the Levine Group) and hopes to approach them. Councilman Orozco is interested in pursuing the borough parking lot on Thompson. There’s no electricity there currently, but Mr. Orozco wants to find a way to get the power company to provide it. Ms. Stander will check on the state incentive program from BPU to make sure the grants are still available. Mr. Alvarez will check in with the Economic Development Committee to see if anyone is interested in approaching the Levine Group with him. We should advocate for requiring charging stations for new development of multi-dwelling buildings and large commercial projects. The borough may need to modify existing ordinances or pass a new enabling ordinance to facilitate this. We should review ordinances before our next meeting.
- d) Mr. Alvarez suggested we try to do a clean up this fall in the canal area to try to recover debris that washed through that area during the storm. He will contact Public Works to see if they can coordinate. Mr. Alvarez will send around some possible dates over email. Once we settle on a date, he will send out an announcement over Facebook and the borough website to recruit volunteers.
- e) Any future ideas and or new business are welcome.

10) Old Business

- a) Discover Raritan event – July 31st : The event was a success.
- b) Street tree survey on main street. Mr. Gussman and Ms. Stander will do a survey of main street to see the current status of street trees, determine which ones should be replaced, or where new trees should be planted. They will report back to the EC, and then the group will coordinate with Public Works to possibly plan a planting event in the spring. Perhaps the EC and the borough could split the costs for a handful of trees.
- c) Tree rebate program. Ms. Stander informed the group about a New York Times article she read about tree rebate programs in cities around the US. Homeowners purchase the trees of their choice and plant them on their property and the borough provides a small rebate per tree. The EC could provide the funds from their annual budget.

11) Green Team

- a) Review status spreadsheet to determine activities to pursue over the next year. Mr. Alvarez will email out the Sustainable Jersey status spreadsheet. We should all review this document before our next meeting and volunteer to pull together the documentation for the various events we have held (i.e., rain barrel workshop, tree seedling giveaway, LED light bulb giveaway, Discover Raritan event). We should identify actions that will be easy to do with the resources we have, and then also identify actions for which we would need to apply for grants.
- b) Discuss funding needs and possible sources

12) Adjournment

Ms. Metaxas made a motion to adjourn at 8:02pm, Mr. Gussman seconded.