



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

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

October 21, 2021

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 posting on the Raritan Borough website indicating that this Meeting would take place at the Raritan Municipal Building at 7:00 p.m. on October 21st, 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; Michael DeCicco; Christopher Gussman; Olga Metaxas; Emilie Stander; Justice Ifan, Council Liaison

Not in attendance: Tony Sacino; Jennie Rose Saunders; Denise Carra, Planning Board Liaison;

3) Flag Salute

4) Approval of Minutes: September 16th, 2021

Ms. Metaxas made a motion to approve the minutes; Mr. Gussman seconded. All were in favor.

5) Report from Borough Council

Borough Councilman Ifan spoke to the borough engineer about the electric charging stations. Mr. Shrek will attend the Council's next work session on Tuesday, and the question of EVs has been put on the meeting agenda. There will need to be a resolution first and then existing ordinances will have to be revised. There is a model ordinance from the state that can be reviewed by the borough. Mr. Alvarez asked Mr. Ifan what support the EC can provide to Borough Council in helping to push this initiative forward, especially looking ahead to future development and redevelopment, such as the redevelopment of the building next to borough hall. The Borough Council should review the state's EV model ordinance at the Tuesday working meeting.

The group also discussed the proposed splash park at JFK school or Frelinghuysen and the runoff that would be produced. The Recreation Department will be requesting bids, and hopefully they can require the bidders to calculate the amount of runoff that would be produced from their design. We could potentially have a cistern that stores the runoff and releases it slowly, or possibly a rain garden or some other type of bioinfiltration system. We could also contract with Rutgers Cooperative Extension's Water Resources Program (<http://www.water.rutgers.edu/>) to get a runoff infiltration system proposed/designed. They may also be able to estimate the amount of runoff that would be produced if the project bidders cannot. We will provide contact info for Rutgers Cooperative Extension's Water Resources Program to Recreation; Sara Mellor would be the best person to contact first (sara.mellor@rutgers.edu). We could potentially apply for a NJDEP 319h grant to pay for design and install since the project would be constructed on municipal property. Perhaps the Rutgers group could write the grant proposal.

Councilman Ifan also mentioned that the recycling bin on the Nevius St Bridge washed away in the storm. Mr. Alvarez will reach out to DPW to see if they have a standard design for recycling containers. None of the EC members could recall seeing recycling containers in the downtown area. This may be a

potential project for the EC to take on. We could potentially find a grant program to fund the purchase of new bins, and/or partner with the county.

6) Report from Planning Board

The planning board liaison was not in attendance. Mr. DeCicco reported back that the Planning Board was asked to consider a redevelopment proposal for the Dollar Tree/Retro Fitness set of stores. The current owner wants to redevelop following the flooding from Hurricane Ida. The Planning Board is sending the proposal up to Borough Council. The group discussed the fact that any redevelopment in this area will need to plan for potential flooding in the future. Is the Planning Board required to consider climate change when reviewing development proposals?

There is a proposal to do an economic development study of the old Stop & Shop site, but funding still needs to be secured for the study.

On Wednesday, October 27 at 6:30pm there will a presentation from a developer who wants to redevelop the old elementary school site.

There were no Planning Board applications to review.

7) Public Comment

No members of the public present.

8) Discussion Items

9) New Business

Mr. Alvarez was contacted by Home Depot because the rain barrel diverter kits have become available again. He will look into purchasing some kits using our current budget. We will look into finding cheaper barrels elsewhere. We could run another rain barrel workshop in the spring or summer next year. Ms. Stander mentioned that she recently met the new NJDEP watershed ambassador who serves our area. Her name is Ginny Rockey, and if she stays with the program, she'll be around into June or July next year. We could potentially ask her to help run the workshop.

10) Old Business

- Mold remediation information from Somerville EC.

We reached out to the Somerville EC but didn't hear back. By this point flood-impacted residents have probably already done whatever mold remediation they plan to do.

- Spotted Lanterflies egg masses

We can put some posts out on the borough and EC website to encourage residents to survey their trees for egg masses and provide tips on how to remove them.

- Electric Charging station in town
Ongoing discussion.

- Clean up in town after Hurricane damage

Mr. Alvarez called the county and determined that the Somerset County Sheriff's Office is planning to do a clean up of the canal between the Basilone Statue and Duke Island Park. Mr. Alvarez will contact them about teaming up on this.

11) Green Team

- a) Review status spreadsheet to determine activities to pursue over the next year

Mr. Alvarez will send out the Sustainable Jersey status spreadsheet to the group and we will all review the document before the November meeting. The goal will be to determine which actions just need a little more documentation and which need more planning and funding to be carried out.

- b) Discuss funding needs and possible sources

Revisit this item during our next meeting.

12) Adjournment

Ms. Metaxas made a motion to adjourn at 8:11, Mr. Alvarez seconded.