



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

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

July 21st, 2022

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 July 21st, 2022. 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: Olga Metaxas; Emilie Stander; Tony Sacino; Michael DeCicco; Christopher Gussman; Pablo Orozco, Council Liaison
- Not in attendance: Juan Alvarez; Denise Carra, Planning Board Liaison

3) Flag Salute

4) Approval of Minutes: June 16th, 2022

Mr. Gussman made a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Sacino seconded. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

5) Report from Borough Council

There is development going on in town. So far, the only case that has come before the Council that we haven't already heard about relates to a homeowner wanting to widen their driveway. As for the Stop and Shop redevelopment, the driving range across Orlando Drive has been dismantled. The land now belongs to the county and cannot be developed due to previous landfill activity and lead contamination due to previous police use of the area as a target range. Open space is the best use of the land. County government is planning to convert the area into a native wildflower meadow, and the county will maintain it. The plan is to connect the parcel to the path along the river so that there's a continuous trail from Somerville to Duke Island Park. Redevelopment plans are in progress for the Stop and Shop property. Currently there is a plan in front of the Planning Board.

6) Report from Planning Board

There was no meeting of the Planning Board in the last month. There's a meeting next week to discuss the conversion of the mechanic garage to a convenience store on E. Somerset St.

7) Public Comment

Adam Armahizer expressed interest in the Green Team's outreach activities, particularly the Green Fair. The group indicated that we could pursue a Green Fair in the future, perhaps in collaboration with a neighboring town, such as Bridgewater, which is no longer holding its Eco-Fair, and/or Somerville, with which Councilman Orozco has close contacts. Ryan Bellinger also attended. Both residents expressed interest in working with the Green Team. The group welcomed the two residents and will include them in future communications regarding the Green Team.

8) Discussion Items

9) New Business

- Review of three planning board applications
 - Two residential subdivisions (Quick Ave and Vones Lane)
 - Conversion of mechanic garage to convenience store (E. Somerset St)

The three applications were not available on the borough website in time for this meeting, so we will table this discussion until next month. The group raised concerns about possible pollution from previous car mechanic operations. The group also discussed the fact that the new statewide EV ordinance has gone into effect as of September 2021, and so that means new residential and commercial/mixed use development projects are required to include make ready parking spaces and EV chargers in their applications to the Planning Board.

10) Old Business

- Discovering Raritan event on July 30, 3-9pm
The group was unsure whether to table at the event this year since Ms. Stander, Mr. Gussman, and Mr. Sacino are not available on that date. Mr. Alvarez had indicated to Ms. Stander that he was available that day and willing to run the table, but the group feels badly leaving it to Mr. Alvarez to run the table himself. Several members were willing to provide support and materials to Mr. Alvarez in the week leading up to the event. Ms. Stander will discuss with Mr. Alvarez after the meeting.
- Enhanced stormwater ordinance: Next steps
Ms. Stander provided The Watershed Institute's Enhanced Stormwater Model Ordinance to Mr. Orozco. He will present it to the Borough Engineer. Ms. Stander shared that she put together a short one-page document providing a little context and rationale for the ordinance; she will email the document to Councilman Orozco.
- Electric car charging station
 - Summary of conversation with RideWise
Ms. Stander providing a summary of the meeting that she and Mr. Alvarez had with Leanne McGowan from RideWise. RideWise can connect us to the right people at DEP and PSE&G so that the borough or a private business located in the borough can take advantage of grant opportunities at both institutions relating to reimbursing the cost of making parking spaces EV ready and installing EV chargers. She also shared that the most recent grid capacity maps show that the Burlington Coat Factory/Staples parking lot does not have adequate grid capacity to host an EV charging station, but the municipal lot on Thompson and the parking lot at the former Stop and Shop location both do.
 - Next steps
 - Councilman Orozco would like to bring this up to the Borough Council. He would like us to put him in touch with representatives from DEP and PSE&G who can make a pitch at a future Council meeting.

11) Green Team

- a) Review status spreadsheet to determine activities to pursue over the next year
Ms. Stander shared a copy of the Green Team Sustainable Jersey status spreadsheet and asked commissioners to identify actions that they would be willing to take the lead on documenting some of the actions so we can get credit. Ms. Stander also shared that Sustainable Jersey recently put out a call for municipalities to apply for free technical assistance to create a Municipal Water Story. Applications are due September 23, and we would likely need to ask for support from Borough Council. Council is meeting next week and then early in September.
- b) Discuss funding needs and possible sources

12) Adjournment

Mr. Gussman made a motion to adjourn at 7:49. Mr. Sacino seconded. The group unanimously agreed.