



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

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

### Regular Meeting

August 18<sup>th</sup>, 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 August 18<sup>th</sup>, 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: Juan Alvarez; Olga Metaxas; Emilie Stander; Tony Sacino; Heath Hofmeister; Pablo Orozco, Council Liaison
- Not in attendance: Christopher Gussman; Michael DeCicco; Denise Carra, Planning Board Liaison

3) Flag Salute

4) Approval of Minutes: July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022

Mr. Sacino made a motion to approve the minutes; Ms. Metaxas seconded the motion.

5) Report from Borough Council

There is only one Borough Council per month during the summer months, so there is less news from Borough Council. Mr. Orozco reported that he provided the enhanced stormwater ordinance to Borough Engineer Shrek; Mr. Shrek was already familiar with the ordinance. Mr. Orozco raised the issue of street cleaning with Borough Council. The Borough does have a street cleaning machine, but so far the Borough has not designated days and times for street cleaning. The result is that cars are often parked along the sides of the streets when street cleaning happens, which interferes with proper cleaning. Mr. Orozco made a recommendation to designate a set schedule of street cleaning so residents know when to move their cars. He does not support levying fines for people who do not move their cars on time. Mr. Alvarez raised the point that a lot of people are working from home more than in the past and so it may be more difficult to get compliance. Other council members wanted to get input from Public Works staff. The issue will be discussed again at the next Council Meeting. Mr. Alvarez reminded Mr. Orozco to bring the EC's bylaw amendment to Borough Council, as directed by Borough Administrator Colvin.

6) Report from Planning Board

Ms. Carra and Mr. DeCicco were not present, so there was no report from Planning Board.

7) Public Comment

Joe Kempf briefed the group on the Somerville-Raritan bike ride that RideWise is planning and suggested the group reach out to Katie at RideWise for more information.

8) Discussion Items

9) New Business

- Discussion of Environmental Commission budget  
Mr. Orozco indicated that if the Commission wants to request a budget increase, we would need to present a budget proposal indicating what we intend to spend the money on. Mr. Orozco asserted that the Environmental Commission is more of a policy-oriented body that advises Borough Council, rather than a group that puts shovels in the ground. The EC can also work on outreach and awareness, so using the budget to produce pamphlets and fliers is valid.

#### 10) Old Business

- Enhanced stormwater ordinance: Next steps  
As discussed above, Mr. Orozco brought the enhanced stormwater ordinance to the borough engineer for review.

- Electric car charging station

- Summary of additional conversations with RideWise

Ms. Stander summarized email conversations with Leanne McGowan from RideWise regarding finding an expert to speak to Borough Council about EV charging stations. Ms. McGowan suggested reaching out to vendors that install the charging stations. In addition, Ms. Stander indicated that Sustainable Jersey may have a staff member who can speak about implementation.

- Finding an expert willing to speak to Borough Council

The group discussed the pros and cons of several locations in town. Mr. Orozco raised the issue of ongoing maintenance costs; he is not willing to support an installation that would result in increased costs for the borough. He urged the group to find a partner (such as Electrify America) that is willing to cover the expenses of installation and maintenance. The group supports reaching out to both Sustainable Jersey to find an expert willing to speak to Borough Council and to Electrify America to see if they would be interested in installing a charging station in town at their own cost.

#### 11) Green Team

##### a) Free technical assistance for Municipal Water Story action, application due September 23

- The application form is simple and can be completed in a few minutes. The only time-consuming part of the application is getting a resolution from Borough Council supporting the Borough pursuing the Municipal Water Story action. We would need to submit the proposed resolution the Friday before the next Borough Council meeting in two weeks. It would help to have members of the EC attend the Council meeting.
- Mr. Orozco had questions about how to get residents to show up to the required community events to discuss water issues and also about the group's ability to put in the effort to lead the initiative.
- Mr. Orozco suggested devoting some of the EC's budget to advertising for more volunteers to have more hands to run the program in the future. He recommended advertising in The Breeze.
- The group decided to table the item for the time being.

##### b) NJDEP urban rain garden grant program, proposal due November 7;

<https://www.nj.gov/dep/grantandloanprograms/nrr-rain-garden.htm>

The grant proposal is in-depth and requires submitting a full budget proposal in addition to a project narrative and municipal signatures. The state is giving preference to low and moderate income communities, which Raritan is not. That said, given the size of the grant program (\$2M) and the size of the maximum grant (\$300K), there are likely to be at least 10 awards, so maybe the prospects aren't that bad. That said, it would be a lot of work to prepare the grant proposal for perhaps little return.

##### c) Mr. Hofmeister raised the issue that the Borough doesn't pick up e-waste curbside and so individual residents are required to bring their items to the county's e-waste disposal facility themselves. The reality is that the material tends to build up on people's properties. He suggested we could organize an e-waste collection drive, advertise in The Breeze, and bring the material over to the county facility. Mr. Orozco advised that we would need to ask the county

DPW if they can accept bulk drop offs. He suggested it may be easier to ask the county if they're interested in running another county-wide event like they have in the past, and we could help advertise the event in the Borough. Mr. Orozco will provide contact info for the county DPW and for Commissioner Marano.

12) Adjournment

Ms. Metaxas made a motion to adjourn at 8:24; Mr. Hofmeister seconded the motion.