



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

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

April 20th, 2023

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 April 20th, 2023. 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; Tony Sacino; Christopher Gussman; Heath Hofmeister.
- Not in attendance: Emile Stander, Michael DeCicco; Denise Carra, Planning Board Liaison; Adam Armahizer, Council Liaison

3) Flag Salute

4) Approval of Minutes from March 16th

Mr. Hofmeister made a motion to approve the minutes; Mr. Gussman seconded the motion. All members approved the minutes without revision.

5) Report from Borough Council

No Borough representatives were present.

6) Report from Planning Board

There were no Planning Board representatives present. However, Mr. Alvarez attended the recent Planning Board meeting and was able to provide a report. The recent variance related to parking requirements at Valley Wellness was approved. Char restaurant will be adding a canopy in its outdoor space. The latter should not create an environmental impact.

7) Public Comment

Matthew D'Alessandro, District Manager for the Somerset-Union Soil Conservation District of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), attended the meeting. See the New Business section below for notes related to his remarks.

8) Discussion Items

- Event planning and discussion of budget items and ordering materials for upcoming events
 - Mr. Alvarez brought up the subject of the rain barrels. He noted the significant increase in price compared to past years. The Commission is still attempting to find the best price and source for the barrels themselves. We may need to ask participants of a rain barrel event to purchase their own barrels. When we find a source, we will still need to determine the most efficient way to get them to Raritan. Mr. Hofmeister found a source of 77-gallon food grade barrels with metal clasps for \$55.00 per barrel with agreement to deliver. Guest Matthew D'Alessandro mentioned that NRCS receives a lot of e-mails and notices for

various environmental related items. He will keep an eye out for rain barrel sources and perhaps other items the EC may be interested in. For example, the Xerces Society recently offered material for a pollinator garden to interested parties.

- The status of recommendation to adopt enhanced stormwater ordinance is unknown at this time. Councilman Armahizer was not present at this meeting.

9) New Business

- Mr. Mathew D'Alessandro spoke of his work with NRCS and possible opportunities to help the EC. Mr. D'Alessandro, because of his position, has numerous connections related to NJ DEP and NRCS. Perhaps he could provide assistance in identifying funding sources related to rain gardens, pollinator gardens, etc. Tree seedlings are usually available although he notes there is a shortage this year. Mr. D'Alessandro will keep in contact as he sees opportunities arise. He also presented the EC with two fish stencils that can be used, with permission, to mark sewer grates to indicate that the stormwater flows to the river.
- Ms. Metaxas asked about community garden possibilities at the old Washington School location.

10) Green Team

- a) Green Team items were tabled until a future meeting. Ryan Bellinger may have some input at the next meeting.

11) Adjournment

- Mr. Alvarez made a motion to adjourn at 8:30; Ms. Metaxas seconded the motion.