



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

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

September 21st, 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 September 21st, 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; Emilie Stander; Tony Sacino; Christopher Gussman; Heath Hofmeister
- Not in attendance: Olga Metaxas; Michael DeCicco; Ryan Bellinger; Adam Armahizer, Council Liaison; Denise Carra, Planning Board Liaison

3) Flag Salute

4) Approval of Minutes from July 20th

Mr. Hofmeister made a motion to approve the minutes; Mr. Gussman seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with no revisions.

5) Report from Borough Council

The Duke Farms farmer's market will now be moving to Somerville because Raritan was not able to provide the amount of parking and grading of the site that Duke Farms requested.

6) Report from Planning Board

There are new plans for two properties; no details yet.

7) Public Comment

There were no members of the public present.

8) Discussion Items

- Clean up event planning, Saturday, September 30, 10am at Basilone Statue
 - Areas to send teams:
 - Start in the park next to the statue and move toward the Nevius St bridge.
 - Also send some teams to the stream corridor next to JFK school; people can park in the JFK parking lot.
 - Mr. Hofmeister offered to do some additional scouting over the next week.
 - Mr. Alvarez will pick up the clean up materials that DPW purchased. He will also purchase some cheap trash grabbers.
 - We will need to purchase snacks and bottled water for volunteers. Mr. Alvarez will ask DPW to purchase these items. If they can't get that done in time, we can purchase them out of pocket and get reimbursed.

- Rain barrel workshop debrief
 - The event went well. About four people participated, and one shared photos from her successful installation at home.
 - The group is considering planning another workshop for early spring before gardening season gets going. Mr. Alvarez will purchase additional rain barrel conversion kits with our remaining budget.
- Social media update and planning: looking for volunteers to develop content for Mr. Bellinger to post, can also find existing content to re-post
 - Mr. Bellinger posted the flyer for the clean up. Everyone who is on Facebook/Instagram should share it with their contacts.
- Stormdrain stenciling update and planning
 - The members discussed appropriate placement of the stencils on the individual drains.
- Status of recommendation to adopt enhanced stormwater ordinance, in light of new NJ inland flood protection rule: <https://dep.nj.gov/inland-flood-protection-rule/>
 - See extensive discussion under New Business below.

9) New Business

- Electric vehicle car show and outreach event on Sunday, Oct 1, 11am-5pm, in downtown Somerville
- Visit from Joseph Brosnan, Assistant Borough Engineer and Borough Planner, with Van Cleef
 - He has been working on updating the stormwater code for Raritan to match up with new state regulations. Ordinances have to be passed related to tree removal and road salt storage. All of this only applies to major development (over a certain acreage), and Raritan has very few of these. The major developments we do have right now happen to be in the floodplain so are governed by other rules.
 - Developer side – inland flood protection rules that just went into effect over the summer. The code hasn't changed much, but the data the developers have to use did.
 - There's a series of regulations that have to be followed each year, including a stormwater pollution prevention plan. The DPW director is currently reviewing it because most of the work has to be done by his staff. The public outreach component of the plan is usually what most towns don't get around to doing, and the towns need to rack up a certain number of points each year. He's happy to find out that we've already been doing some of these actions (ex. rain barrel workshops).
 - One example of additional work we could do is come up with a plan for a minor development. The group shared that we put forward the enhanced stormwater ordinance, which Mr. Brosnan agreed has not moved forward. He suggested we send him a copy of the model ordinance we recommended and copy Mr. Colvin so that he can explore incorporating elements of the model ordinance into the code updates he is working on.
 - Mr. Brosnan is also working on an element of our Master Plan related to stormwater management that has to be updated.
 - Mr. Brosnan will circulate the draft tree removal ordinance to RBEC so that we can suggest particular species for replacement planting.
 - Ms. Stander asked if it would be worth updating the Natural Resources Inventory, which is now 10-15 years old. Mr. Brosnan suggested looking for a grant so the borough can hire a contractor to do it.
- Mr. Alvarez shared an update from Council President Carra that they will ask the contractor to create a make ready space for an EV charger in the new municipal parking lot. They will wait until the parking lot is renovated to pursue installation of a charger. Ms. Stander shared that we would not be eligible for a grant from NJDEP to install the chargers unless we create at least two EV spaces. There is still DEP funding to get reimbursed for the installation of a Level 2 charger with two spaces.

10) Green Team

- a) Report out and discussion regarding Ryan Bellinger's Sustainable Jersey efforts
- b) Other activities identified by Team members?

11) Adjournment

The group adjourned at 8:52pm.