



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

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

### Regular Meeting

April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024

### 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 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024. 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; Christopher Gussman; Heath Hofmeister; Ryan Bellinger
- Not in attendance: Adam Armahizer, Council Liaison; Michael DeCicco, Planning Board Liaison

3) Flag Salute

4) Approval of Minutes from March 21<sup>st</sup>

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

5) Report from Borough Council

Councilman Armahizer was not present so there was no report from Borough Council.

6) Report from Planning Board

Mr. DeCicco was not present so there was no report from the Planning Board.

7) Public Comment

There were no members of the public present.

8) Discussion Items

- Assistant Administrator and DPW Director, Vincent LoMedico's visit
  - Mr. LoMedico asked that we help spread the word about the Recycle Coach app, which is much better than the recycling calendar and magnets. Mr. Alvarez will print a stack to have at the cleanup.
  - May 18<sup>th</sup> tire, ewaste, and grass clipping drop off, free of charge, trailer will be located at the DPW yard. Mr. LoMedico would prefer that people mulch grass clippings and leave them on their yards, so would like help spreading that word, but in the meantime DPW will expand the grass clipping drop off days so it's not just weekends. People just need to know to not drop off the clippings in plastic bags because the plastic contaminates the entire load when the borough tries to sell the clippings to recyclers.
  - Tree removal and enhanced stormwater ordinance efforts in progress
    - DPW is now cleaning out catch basins every year and is doing additional activities to keep up with the strengthened state MS4 stormwater regulations.
  - Mr. LoMedico will keep an eye out for grant programs for tree seedling giveaways and will

keep us informed. He also has access to a small shade tree fund.

- Mr. Hofmeister asked about Tree City certification. Mr. LoMedico shared that the town would need a Shade Tree Commission that meets regularly and is open to the public, then we could apply to be a Tree City. Mr. Bellinger shared that this certification would be bundled into the Urban and Community Forestry effort he is working on.
- Once the borough was certified, then we would have access to more grant funding, and there would be requirements for CEUs, etc.
- Mr. LoMedico will find more about setting up a Shade Tree Commission and bring back additional information to the Commission.
- Clean Communities event planning for April, Sat, Apr 27 (rain date Sat, May 4)
  - Event planning with Department of Public Works
    - Mr. LoMedico is willing to help organize next year's event and is happy to use Clean Communities funding for expenses, including food, tents, etc.
    - For past events he has brought a food truck to give out sandwiches and drinks, give away gift certificates afterwards, etc. Let's plan to do this next year; not enough time to arrange these things this year.
    - Mr. LoMedico will procure food and beverages for 25-30 people.
    - He will ask his crew if there are particularly trashy spots that we should send participants to clean up. He will email any ideas to Ms. Stander so we can make up maps to share with participants.
  - Coordination with DPW to use funds for installing hydration stations
    - The hydration stations are an allowable cost under the Clean Communities program.
    - Mr. LoMedico will move on the price quotes that Mr. Hofmeister acquired.
    - The two locations in Frelinghuysen already have water lines, so Mr. LoMedico's team should have no problem getting them installed.
    - Mr. Alvarez suggested getting signs made up crediting the funding source.
  - Recreation Committee involvement
    - They are not prepared to help out this year, as they just don't have the volunteer manpower. Mr. Sibilis will bring over his corn hole set up.
  - Advertising
    - Mr. Bellinger will finalize the flyer. He will set the times for the event as 10am-2pm and make sure the Clean Communities logo is on there. The flyer should also state that there will be food and beverages. Mr. Bellinger will send the flyer to Mr. Alvarez so he can print up a stack of flyers for everyone to post around town. Ms. Stander will get it posted on the borough website. Mr. Bellinger will post it on social media.
  - Giveaways
    - Mr. Bellinger will work with Valley Wellness to see if they can provide swag/giveaways.
  - Tabling materials:
    - Mr. Alvarez will print out copies of the Recycle Coach app and the tire and ewaste drop off flyer to have at the table. Ms. Stander will try to get tabling materials from ANJEC.
    - Mr. Alvarez has the canopy, table, gloves, bags, grabbers, and waders. Ms. Stander has the t-shirts and banner.
    - We will bring a sign up sheet to gather names of people who are interested in a rain barrel workshop this summer. Mr. Alvarez will bring his rain barrel to display.
  - Other logistics
    - Mr. Hofmeister suggested asking Mr. LoMedico if he can arrange for a port a potty, since we will be providing food.

- Environmental Resource Inventory
  - Mr. Alvarez will look into discussing this with the Planning Board chair, Mr. McMullin. If the Board is willing to pursue it, we would need to engage the grant writing firm to obtain funding to hire a GIS specialist to do the work.
- Ordinance review
  - The group is interested in using some of the EC's funding for this year to hire a professional planner to review the borough's ordinances. Mr. Alvarez will approach borough administration for approvals. Ms. Stander will reach out to the potential consultant to work up a proposal.
- Social media update and planning
  - Mr. Bellinger will post the clean up flyer on social media this month.
- Community Forestry updates
  - Mr. Bellinger will reach out to Councilman Armahizer to get more information about the grant writing firm.
- Status of bylaws revision
  - Status of invitation to Eugene DeStefano to attend RBEC meeting
  - These items were tabled until next month because Councilman Armahizer was not present.

#### 9) New Business

- The Commission currently has one open slot for a second alternate member. Ms. Stander offered to reach out to a new resident who is working for the Raritan Headwaters watershed association to see if he would be interested in joining. The group enthusiastically agreed.

#### 10) Green Team

- a) Report out from ongoing efforts and planning future activities

#### 11) Adjournment

Ms. Metaxas made a motion to adjourn at 8:25pm.