



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

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

July 18th, 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 July 18th, 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; Emilie Stander; Christopher Gussman; Heath Hofmeister; Benjamin Harris; Adam Armahizer, Council Liaison
- Not in attendance: Olga Metaxas; Tony Sacino; Ryan Bellinger; Michael DeCicco, Planning Board Liaison

3) Flag Salute

4) Approval of Minutes from June 20th

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

The Raritan Mall rezoning proposal was turned down by Borough Council at its Tuesday meeting. The acquisition of a property on Tilman St for flood mitigation was also discussed at the Council meeting.

Cathy DeBellis is not able to serve as the Environmental Commission's liaison to the Planning Board. There aren't many members of the Planning Board that seem like good candidates at the moment.

Councilman Armahizer applauded the group for the installation of a hydration station at Frelinghuysen Park. Mr. Hofmeister suggested installing the second one near the baseball field.

Green Communities grant – we're still waiting for the revised RFP to come out.

Mr. Armahizer will look into our Clean Communities allocation this year.

The Planning Board is currently looking at a proposal for a 38-unit building at 21 Tilman St. (two lots). Six of these units would be affordable housing.

The county will help the borough rehabilitate the park with tennis courts on 1st Ave. The borough needs to make the park ADA accessible first in order to free up funding for rehabilitation. Councilman Tozzi is interested in gardens and athletic facilities. Mr. Alvarez and Mr. Hofmeister suggested an easement from the private landowner on the other side of the park (i.e., 5th St) to provide ADA access.

6) Report from Planning Board

The Commission's liaison to the Planning Board was not present, so there was no report.

7) Public Comment

Councilman Agrawal expressed his desire that the expertise of the Environmental Commission be

engaged when the borough is considering development and redevelopment proposals that have environmental concerns. The group discussed a number of environmental concerns at the site, including the TCE, PCE, and benzene groundwater plume, methane release, and flooding. The group discussed questions about the remediation plan that would best be directed to the owner's licensed site remediation professional.

8) Discussion Items

- Planning for upcoming events
 - Rain barrel workshop on Sept 7
 - Mr. Alvarez will contact Purchasing about buying more installation kits and the Recreation Director about holding the event under the pavilion at Frelinghuysen. Once Mr. Alvarez gets the ok from Mr. Sibilina, we can tell Mr. Bellinger to start advertising the event on social media.
 - Community clean up on Sept 28; rain date Sept 29.
 - Mr. Alvarez will contact Mr. LoMedico about remaining Clean Community funds to procure food for the event, perhaps a food truck.
- Ordinance review proposal from potential consultant
 - The group reviewed the proposal from the potential consultant, Angela Knowles. Members felt that the proposed scope of work would help the Commission identify priority areas for modernizing the borough's environmental ordinances and thus benefit the community. It was noted that the effort may complement Ms. Knowles proposed work for the borough related to implementation of the downtown revitalization plan.
 - Mr. Alvarez moved to submit the proposal to the borough administrator and Council for their approval. Mr. Hofmeister seconded the motion. All members were in favor.
- Social media update and planning
 - Mr. Hofmeister has been contributing posts.
 - Mr. Harris will ask Mr. Bellinger for access to the Instagram account so he can post photos he takes in and around the river.
- Status of Ben Harris's membership
 - The mayor has seen Mr. Harris's credentials. Mr. Armahizer will follow up to establish a date when he can be formally sworn in.
- Bylaws revision
 - The borough lawyer was not able to attend tonight's meeting. Mr. Armahizer will invite him to our next meeting on Thur, August 15. If that timing doesn't work, a subcommittee will meet with him either in person or virtually before the 15th and report back to the entire membership.
 - Members discussed two additional people who have expressed interest in getting involved with the Environmental Commission, but there are currently no open slots. The Commission is eager to amend the bylaws to allow for participation of nonvoting members.

9) New Business

- Environmental contamination and remediation plan at Raritan Mall redevelopment site
 - This point was discussed during the Public Comment.

10) Green Team

11) Adjournment

Mr. Hofmeister made a motion to adjourn at 8:28pm. Mr. Gussman seconded the motion.