



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

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

### Regular Meeting

June 20th, 2019

### 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 the posting on the bulletin board at the Borough Hall and transmitted to the officially designated newspapers indicating that this Meeting would take place at the Borough Hall, Council Chambers at 7:00 p.m. on June 20, 2019. 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:

Present: Mark Clark; Christopher Gussman, Olga Metaxas; Diana Russo; Emilie Stander; Paul Giralddi, Joni McKelvey (First Alternate)

Not Present: Denise Carra, Planning Board Liaison Michael DeCicco

3. Flag Salute

4. Approval of Minutes: *May 16, 2019*

Motion to approve (Ms. Russo), seconded by Mr. Gussman

5. Report from Borough Council

Nothing to report from Borough Council (Mr. Giralddi)

6. Report from Planning Board

a) Planning Board Applications Review

No liaison present, so no formal report.

The group discussed the application from The Learning Experience. Mr. Clark has been going back and forth with the engineers, and he explained the proposed buried perforated HDPE pipe to the group. The borough engineer will need to review and approve this solution. We discussed asking the developer/owner to report on how well it's working after a year to help determine whether this type of solution could be used in other locations. Mr. Giralddi asked whether the solution is approved or certified by EPA/NJDEP, and Mr. Clark offered that the engineering firm has used it in many applications and submitted specification sheets about the product. A motion to approve the engineer's suggested changes with the HDPE pipe was introduced by Ms. Stander, seconded by Mr. Gussman, and all agreed.

Mr. Girardi brought up the subject of the proposed apartments along Orlando Dr. The planning board did not approve the developer's application. The county is still indicating an intention to purchase all those properties up to the pump house, but they haven't moved on that in a decade. Ms. Stander brought up the Somerset County preservation plan public input meeting next Wednesday evening. Ms. McKelvey will post an announcement on the EC's Facebook page. Mr. Giralddi mentioned that the driving range's contract will be up in the fall, and it is not clear that it will be renewed

Mr. Clark brought up the subject of train noise and exhaust. Mr. Giralddi has engaged a state senator in a discussion about this issue

7. Public Comment

One member of the public, Mr. Tom Kubrak, was in attendance. Mr. Kubrak asked about bike/pedestrian improvements and commented on the state of disrepair of many roads and sidewalks in the borough. This segued nicely into the next topic on the agenda.
8. Discussion Items
  - a) Mr. Clark and Ms. Russo reported on the bike/pedestrian safety audits and discussion they participated in with Ridewise and the town planner. As part of the audit, they noted the location of accessibility ramps, places where the sidewalk is in poor repair, places where there's no sidewalk, no crosswalks, etc., and shared that info with the town planner. Mr. Clark invited Mr. Kubrak to provide some input, and to send in photos of places where he feels improvement is needed. The Ridewise representative said Raritan is not in as bad shape as other places he's seen. The town will likely contract out the job of shaving down pavers as needed to make surfaces more level. The process is also likely to look at road quality. Mr. Giraldi indicated that budget limitations might impede efforts to improve road quality. Mr. Clark suggested that areas that are slated for repaving for natural gas lines could potentially include striping for bike lanes. Councilman Bray is working to install bike racks at the train station, Somerset St, and other locations.
  - b) Next steps? Some previously discussed items include:
    - Impervious coverage assessment
    - Electric vehicle charging ordinance
    - Environmental Speaker Series
    - Energy audit – a previous audit of the municipal buildings focused on lighting, but another audit could be performed to assess the efficiency of heating and cooling equipment. The borough can get an audit for free from the state.
    - Community solar
    - Sustainable Jersey certification – all of these would be activities toward that certification.
    - Mr. Giraldi mentioned the vacant school next to borough hall. He noted the building contains asbestos, is falling apart inside, and he thinks it's in receivership. The town would like to tear it down and build a parking lot since the tiny lot for borough hall is stretched thin, and there's a need for more parking downtown. Mr. Clark suggested it should be a green parking lot.
    - Ms. McKelvey asked about the Stop N Shop property. Mr. Giraldi shared that the previous owner went bankrupt, so the property is now in receivership. There are other owners, but the property is in bad condition and the owners haven't put any money into it, so it's hard to rent available space or induce businesses to purchase it. Ms. McKelvey mentioned that it's located on a landfill. Mr. Gussman pointed out the good location.
  - c) Thank you picnic for borough committee members next Friday, 6/28, 6pm at Frelinghuysen Park. Mr. Gussman and Ms. Metaxas will attend; Ms. Stander and Ms. McKelvey are tentative.
9. New Business – none
10. Old Business – none
11. Green Team
  - a) New Jersey Sustainability Summit, June 14: Ms. Stander provided a read-out about the summit and some of the energy, green business, and water-oriented resources like links to grant programs, etc.

**Action item:** Ms. Stander will send out some notes and pull together a group to look at the

requirements for a 319h proposal to fund an impervious cover assessment and green infrastructure plan. 319h grants are difficult to apply for and require a lot of grant administration; it may be advisable to partner with other communities on a proposal if this is allowed.

- b) Ms. McKelvey thanked those who participated in the river clean ups in April. She spoke about the follow up work, including removing car engines, touring problem properties with a councilman, violation for Liquor Barn. DPW estimated it removed eight truckloads of trash from the canal cleanup.

12. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn from Ms. Metaxas, Ms. Russo seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:12pm.