



SOUTH ORANGE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION AGENDA

Thursday, April 27, 2023 – 7:30 PM (Virtual WebEx Meeting)

Adequate notice given to public.

Attendees:

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| ☒ Linda Beck | ☒ Olivia Lewis-Chang | ☒ Bill Haskins, Trustee |
| ☒ Walter Clarke | ☒ Robert Orgera | ☒ Karen Hilton, Trustee |
| ☒ Lorraine Graves | ☐ Beau Schwegman | ☐ Joe Foligno, DPW |
| ☒ Larry Hirseh | ☒ Katie Skibinski | |
| ☒ David Kraiker | | |

Public: Alisa Aronson, Julia Flath, Kathleen Grant, Alex Tibbets

Kathleen Grant stated that she was interested in our tree plan and electrification inflation reduction act. Walter explained the long term goals of the tree group and the village: more trees, native trees that are diversified to prevent blight wipe outs, and take into account what trees will survive in our changing climate. The numbers: 100 trees this spring, concentrating on a neighbourhood in order to make it easier to care for them and reduce the mortality rate - an idea from David Kraiker. NJ Tree Federation will start this upcoming Tuesday, May 2nd. South Tuxedo Park and Holland Rd. with a few others will be the areas of focus. Fall planting number is yet undetermined. Julia Flath will share when we get to Walk/Bike in the agenda.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Call meeting to Order: Start time 7:36 pm.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

February 2023 - Linda Moved for approval, David seconded. Minutes approved.

3. POLICY UPDATES (read "Administrative" for this month)

o Internal EC positions/functions: Chair, Vice Chair, Recording Secretary, Communications
Walter is willing to become Chair since the position. All Commissioners were in favor. Linda Beck will move into the Vice Chair position and act as Recording Secretary. Communications will now include Linda and Walter, Larry, and Katie, with green teamer Kathleen Grant giving input on IRA coms.

4. BOT/PUBLIC WORKS UPDATE

New Dual Stream system is working. Contamination is down, still working through some pick up hiccups.

10:00 am - Arbor Day planting - white pine will be going in.

Linda brought up whether it's time to design and issue the citizen suggestion postcard. Linda will send an email to Julie to check in with the Sort It Out Communications group about this initiative.

5. UPDATES ON NEW and CURRENT PROJECTS, ISSUES, etc.

- o NJAW Grant Proposal-out waiting to hear
- o Open Commission Member Position – Katie Skibinski Introduction
- o River Day organization, Volunteers needed to staff positions - set up, take down, check in table and environmental commission table 11:00 am - 3:00 pm. Larry, Olivia, Karen, Walter,

and Linda will all be there. Karen will make some calls to rally our seniors who are always a great addition.

- Repair Café needs volunteers - Repair Café will be at CHS (not Morrow Church) with the Makers' Madness Festival Saturday, April 29th, 12:00 pm - 3:00 pm.
- **New Business:** Inflation Reduction Act - SO take advantage of? SOEC communications can roll these out as bite sized chunks for the public benefit. Kathleen Grant noted that Rewiring America website has materials that Katie Skibinski also suggests Climate Reality Project as a further source. Katie attended a webinar on getting grants for electric school buses. Robert Orgera has joined the Citizens Climate Lobby (South Orange is under Morristown region) subcommittee and will team up with Kathleen and Katie in obtaining data to create presentations for the commercial, residential, and administration. Walter shared insight from Sustainable Essex Alliance - part of the communications should recommend that people plan ahead so that residents and businesses know what the best options are when their appliances, etc. go out. Julia recommended that we do some research (heat pumps that work in this area, for example) and then perhaps take advantage of "bulk buying" from vendors. Julia suggested that there is software that can help residents/businesses plan for things like this. Katie suggests Canopy for bulk buying investigation.

- **Sub Group/Green Team Reports**

- **Shade Tree** - Ordinance meeting with Greer Patras coming up.
- **River Greenway** - still waiting on Federal DOT to go forward with construction. The combination of both state and federal oversight continues to complicate and cause delays.
- **Walk/Bike** - 2nd Annual Parade will be Sunday, May 21st, 3:00 pm on Flood's Hill. Meadowbrook Lane will be closed for this. Rain date two weeks later. Bike decorating station, police bike registration table, hopefully a bike shop to do repairs. SOEC will promote this event.
- **No Mow May?** - Linda will check in with the NJPollinates about what the recommended month (and the science behind it) is before the SOEC makes a suggestion to the public. Gas-Powered Leaf Blower restrictions will go into effect May 1st! Linda will ask Julie for a re-up of the postcards. Julia asked if pesticide spray companies are exempt - Bill clarified that they are not. They cannot retrofit leaf blowers to distribute the chemicals.
- **Sus Jersey Schools** - no update. Clinton School is working on starting up the gardening club again. South Orange Middle School also has a person who is trying doing the Environmental Stewards Program.
- **Adopt a Drain** - Pete suggested we reach out to DPW and David Battaglia for CIS data. Linda followed up with Joe F. today. Larry will take over as soon as we have that information.

6. COMMUNICATIONS - Walter & Linda

- FB: 862 page likes, 932 following (up from 922 page likes) IG: 441 (up from 418)
- Social media - Soliciting ideas/input content + discussing the right system for planning content going forward. Walter clarified that all social media posts should be helpful, hyper-local, non-political, and non-divisive. Katie, Kathleen, Linda, Larry, and Walter will meet and work on a content calendar. Rob reminded us to use already existing content. Alex suggested a sort of calculator for how much people will save on making sustainability changes. Kathleen has some suggestions as to websites with calculators that don't take your personal information.

7. WORK DAYS/VOLUNTEERING:

- Work Crew: status

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no further comments.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE – May 25, 2023

10. ADJOURNMENT: 9:11 pm