



TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH ORANGE VILLAGE

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

**Via Village Webex Link:
Dial 1296808032@southorange.webex.com**

Thurs. February 25, 2021 from 7:30pm – 9:00pm

Adequate notice given to the public

MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

ATTENDANCE Bill HASKINS* (Chairperson), Walter CLARKE**, Barbara BOUR***, George FINLEY, Richard BELL* (Secretary), David KRAIKER* (Planning Board Rep), Lorraine GRAVES*, Linda BECK***, Larry HIRSCH*, Rob ORGERA*, Jessica MILLER, Susan HAIG, Michael PARLAPIANO, Georgia MADIBA, Isaac BEARG, Joel LEVIN, Whelan MAHONEY, Chris ERLANDSEN, Evelyn CHU, Jenny AYLWARD, Joe RIDER, Julia NICHOLS, Sarah CLORE
*=Commissioner, **=Trustee, ***=Alternate

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 2021 MINUTES - APPROVED

PUBLIC COMMENTS - David asked if we could move the meeting to 7 pm next time - Bill agreed. Lorraine noted that she attended a webinar today about a national plastics bill that will be introduced next month. It's going to include a national bottle bill and phase out certain products among other things. She will stay on top of this and keep us updated. Linda notes that she had someone from Tuxedo Park who reached out to her. She got a message that they wanted to align with us on environmental cleanup, but she couldn't access the message. Walter was able to access the message. Her name is Laura Napier. They hope to host a neighborhood spring cleanup. Wants to know if we have resources or info to offer. Lorraine lives in Tuxedo Park and suggests a "neighborhood swap". She will reach out to Laura and coordinate with Linda. Other ideas were also discussed. Richard asked about the Master Plan timeline, which was originally scheduled for the March 1st Planning Board meeting. Walter and Bill said that Topology received so many detailed suggestions and feedback that they will need to take time to review everything, so it will not be on the agenda for the March 1st meeting. David noted that he is on the Planning Board and the agenda has only a small item at the end about the Master Plan.

1. River Day

Walter reports - It will be May 2nd, with May 9th as the rain date. We will have a socially distant River Day this year. Will have to figure a way to do the sign-in process remotely or another way. He wants to reduce the number of plastic bags we have used in the past and focus on reusable garbage cans. Won't have school participation this year, but we will be "returning to our roots". Will need volunteers and people to run the sign-in tables. Walter

suggested maybe if we could get electronic sign off, that would satisfy legal. Bill also suggests we have people at table socially distant and people can sign up with us 6 feet away. Linda says that SO Public Library really wants to be involved. They took over the Skate House two years ago and had a great exhibit - we need to think about how they will be involved. Sarah Clore suggested in the chat "they are so good at crafts for kids in the children's library. Could do a river themed craft for hand out for folks!" We also want SO Seniors involved again this year - they should be vaccinated and less risky for them. Barbara and George said they could hand-prune shrubs on the day before or the day of River Day - if DPW could pick up the branches, that would be great. Walter suggested we could get a group of people to help out. Bill notes that Amanda Cavanaugh at Seton Hall has students who want to be involved also.

2. Project updates

a. MSW / Recycling - Bill notes that we partnered with Maplewood for a robust plan via RFP and it has been out there - good response so far. It is due on Monday, March 1st so next week we will know what the response is like. David reports on the Recycling Committee: they are working on a recycling guide - Michael P has been working on it - they will post it on the Village website. They also talked about sending a letter to the BOT about using the recycling facility. Also, setting up mini-sites around town for people to bring their recycling. A stepping stone to that is setting something up at the DPW. If it's self-sorted it is less contaminated. They also talked about having an online class or presentation informing people about recycling issues (composting, re-use, etc.) David will try to work with the Adult School. Bill shared the recycling guide that Michael put together - very comprehensive - Michael pointed out that it is still in drafting phase. There was a general discussion about updating and completing it and then getting the info out to the public. Hopefully, we can have it ready for River Day. Maybe have a table for Waste and Recycling. Bill would love to see a link to Recycling Info right there on the Village Website front and center. Bill showed a draft letter that is about expanding our facilities at the DPW. This will be a part of our future - more robust recycling at the DPW - better sorting and cleaner material. This letter will be sent to the BOT to encourage pursuing making the DPW facility better in this way. At the Monday BOT meeting there was discussion of re-thinking the DPW facility and we are encouraging this process. Walter notes that they need to rebuild the covered area at the DPW and there will have to be a concrete base because of the flood plain - they want to provide access for a better flow of vehicles. They want to buy five or six weather proof roll-off containers that can be picked up and driven away. If they are successful, we could get more of them for other parts of town. Lorraine asked if the design can be changed. She suggests that this would be a good time to move toward a commitment toward re-use. E.g., swap stations could be set up and she would be happy to share information. General discussion about how this would be a good idea. Right now Giordano is taking everything to Waste Management. Bill asked that we read the letter and give them some feedback over the next couple of days. They will add something about a swap station to it in the meantime. The reason this letter is important is because there is an issue with how much info Giordano gave us per the contract. They are going to try to give us more info, but it's going to be very difficult for a good story on our current recycling setup to come out of this. David notes that the six recommendations each need to have a "short version" so it will be a "check-off list" for them. Michael notes that he will edit it with David's help.

b. Trees - Tree Grant - Barbara - they have decided on the number of trees and species for every park and it has been sent out so they can submit the Purchase Order. They have a meeting with NJ Urban Forestry to make sure they are compliant. They will go over it on Friday.

Two things still out there. 1) placement in Meadowlands, especially Floods Hill - Neil and Pete are not in agreement yet. 2) we need to talk with Sal, Mike, Don and Rich about where each tree will go - she wants to set up a conference call about how they will mark where every tree goes. Bill notes that we will need to be in touch with Mike, who will consult with Sal. If we share the locations with them, they will do the mark-out. A walk-through of the actual sites with them will be helpful, too. They need a two-week "heads-up". We also need to clarify delivery of the trees. Lisa from NJ Tree Federation has been communicating with Mike. What are the logistics? They also need a formal "sign-off" for the planting.

Ordinance - got feedback from Village Counsel - need to give more info to the attorney and are working on that now. By the time the next meeting of Tree Committee we will have that document. Our goal was to simplify it, but it is getting complicated. Barbara suggests looking at Chatham's.

Other Spring Tree Planting - county will be providing trees in the spring - that is in planning stage. Also, Walter and Bill have been working on historical tree loss - they came up with the number of 225 per year. The numbers may be re-visited as we get hard data going forward. Adam confirmed with Walter that is in the budget for 2021, which is not yet finalized. The cost is about \$500 per tree.

c. Eco Guide - Georgia Madiba gave a short recap of her project - she is working on a Home Eco-Guide for her Rutgers Environmental Steward Program. She has been doing the course-work and this is her project for the class: an Eco-Guide that tells people what they can do for the environment besides recycling. It is currently in the review stage and once it is finalized it will be distributed around town. It will now go out in the late April issue of Matters Magazine. It lists 10 things you can do to protect the environment in your home and community. She wants to partner with realtors in town to get the info to new homeowners. She notes that Matters Magazine would like to continue working on this idea. Also there will be info from Environmental Stewards program and she will post it for us. The program is 20 weeks and starts in January - very affordable - \$200. 3 or 4 hour sessions every week for 20 weeks. Great program.

d. Fields - Ritzer Field Artificial Turf Issue - Jess Miller has reached out about Ritzer Field and has a dialogue going with the BOE. They will forward their concerns to the architects and will work with the community. It's a couple of years down the line - minds can change. She has been pushing Environmental Justice issues, as well as run-off (it's really close to the Rahway). She gave a general overview about environmental issues and how other towns have approached this issue. Jess and David are coordinating about discussing this issue with their neighborhood association. Bill asked what the timing was for Underhill. She was not sure. She will inquire. George notes that the lawsuit that the women's soccer association is pursuing wants natural turf, not artificial turf. Bill notes that the cost of these artificial fields is very high also.

Flood's Hill - George notes that True Green has put in a competitive bid to do organic - it's within the range that Pete Travers has set aside. Also Save-a-Tree has also moved towards organic. Goal right now is to do Floods Hill this year and then spread to others. Tomorrow's event: two nationally known organic lawn maintenance guys are giving a presentation. Pete is going to talk tomorrow as well. George and Bill sent us all info on the event.

3. Seton Hall

Earth Day/River Day - both are events with SH students. Bill notes that we have a job description out for an intern - it went out to many schools in NJ. Also there is "EPA CC" - a new emerging organization with Seton Hall, led by Joe Rider (on the call tonight). Joe notes: the group deals with Environmental Protection and Conservation - he has spoken with Walter and is reaching out with other students and will keep us updated.

Capstone Projects - Prof. Wanda Knapik has partnered with us on other projects. She presented Capstone Project ideas and we have three projects we are working on. Ashley is working with Barbara. Jackson is working with George on river water quality. Chris (on the call tonight) is working with Bill, Richard, Neil and Will (from Topology) to look at the Master Plan. Chris notes: he's from Maplewood and lives in South Orange - looking to give back to the SO community - he's really looking forward to working with Seton Hall and South Orange. This weekend we hope to get out and do a walkabout with Chris.

4. New Ideas

Susan Haig has two save-the-dates: Monday April 26th at 7 pm - Summit coalition is presenting Doug Tallamy with Q&A - hoping to get a huge diverse audience - please invite people. Then on Thursday April 29th at 7 pm - "Homegrown Nation". All events are virtual. Bill will share the links as we get closer. Lots of speakers on Thursday.

Sarah Clore asked how these meetings are publicized. Bill notes that we are on Facebook and Instagram. We also work by "word of mouth". In the last year it was difficult to reach the community as we did in the past, especially with River Day being cancelled last year.

David notes that in the next month or two there is a Newcomer's Day and we usually have a table (also on Play Day). Summer Jones is in charge of Newcomer's Day. Bill notes that there are events throughout the year, but this year has been difficult.

Regarding River Day, Georgia noted that it would be a good idea to really promote the Green Team and Environmental Commission as the people who are running the event. She felt that the first few years she didn't really know that the Green Team was running it.

Joe asked about how he can get copies of the Minutes. Bill noted that they are posted on the Village website and he will also include Joe in the distribution email each month.

Next meeting date: March 25, 2021

ADJOURNMENT