



SOUTH ORANGE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION Minutes

Thursday, February 20, 2025 – 7:30 PM (Virtual WebEx Meeting)

Adequate notice given to the public.

Commissioner Attendees: Kathleen Grant, Andy Stone, Larry Hirsch, David Kraiker, Rob Orgera, Olivia Lewis-Chang (Village Council)

Village Staff: Walter Clarke

Green Team/Public attendees included: Julianna Garreffa, Jennie Aylward, Rick Kalish, Jessica Weitzman, Cindy Thompson, Chris Sidwa, Julia Flath, Susan Haig, Lauren Sklvaver, Allan Mendels

ORDER OF BUSINESS

- 1. Call meeting to Order 7:35 pm**
- 2. Minutes of January 2024 meeting: APPROVED**
- 3. UPDATES ON NEW and CURRENT PROJECTS & ISSUES**

Climate Superfund Act: Kathleen, in her 2/10 presentation to the Village Council, described the EC's support for this bill. Mayor Collum stated that she is personally supportive. Kathleen forwarded a draft resolution to her, and Olivia reports that this is on the agenda for the next Council meeting.

Greenway: Greenway subcommittee call is scheduled for March 3. One agenda item: support for creating an interim bike lane on Church Street (as part of an upcoming funded reconstruction project).

Rain Garden: Andy reported that Kathleen included \$4000 for this project in her \$7200 EC budget proposal to the Village Council early this month. Councilmember comments were positive. We will hear about our \$2000 proposal to Sustainable Jersey, by late April. Attendees encouraged maximum communication with the Middle School.

Alternatives to Meat: Jennie announced that she has a possible fiscal agent, to raise additional funds.

Electrify SOMA: Julianna said that completed electrification surveys (targeted to interested residents) are being returned, with the deadline for submission approaching. Attendees suggested several avenues for further outreach to obtain more participation. Also, a new website for this program is in development.

Tree Issues: David, who also serves on the Planning Board, reported that the Board recently saw the schematic design for the Cameron Courts redevelopment, and that he was surprised to see apparent removal of trees. He shared his concern with Village staff at that meeting. Olivia will follow up to get more information on this.

Walk/Bike/Ride Julia stated that her Committee won't try to do the annual Greenway bike ride on the same day as River Day, but will hold it in the fall. However she shared the idea of having a more modest ride, as part of River Day, from the Duck Pond, down Church Street, to the community garden. This was well received.

River Day: Walter shared the following confirmed participants: Rahway River Watershed Association, State DEP, S.O. Middle School science students.

School Coordination: Lauren shared that she is hoping to improve coordination between green teams operating at various schools in SOMA, and is currently identifying contacts for each.

Press Outreach: Jessica reported on several environmental pieces she's written for the Village Green, including an interview with Walter. She encouraged EC and Green Team members to pitch ideas to her for future articles.

NEXT MEETING DATE –March 20, 2025, 7:30pm

4. **ADJOURNMENT:** 8:40 pm