



SOUTH ORANGE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION Minutes

Thursday, April 17, 2025 – 7:30 PM (Virtual WebEx Meeting)

Adequate notice given to the public.

Commissioner Attendees: Kathleen Grant, Andy Stone, Larry Hirsch, Lorraine Graves, Rob Orgera, Julianna Garreffa, Olivia Lewis-Chang (Village Council)

Village Staff: Walter Clarke

Green Team/Public attendees included: Jennie Aylward, Alyssa Aronson, Chris Sidwa, Julia Flath, Lauren Sklvaver

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. **Call meeting to Order 7:35 pm**
2. **Minutes of February 2025 meeting: APPROVED**
3. **EC membership:** Rob Orgera announced that he will be stepping down following this meeting but will remain active as a Green Team member, with a particular focus on energy issues. Kathleen thanked Rob for his years of service.

4. UPDATES ON NEW and CURRENT PROJECTS & ISSUES

Greenway: Following up on a Greenway subcommittee call March 3. Andy proposed that the Environmental Commission vote on whether to publicly endorse an interim Greenway bike lane along Church Street. Councilmember Lewis-Chang requested that the EC postpone such a vote, pending some additional outreach by the Village to residents. Based on a suggestion from Walter, Andy plans to draft a simple statement, for the Committee's consideration in May, of the basic principles that the EC recommends for the redesign and reconstruction of Church Street.

Stormwater/Green Infrastructure: Village staff will be doing a presentation on progress with their inventory of our stormwater systems (leading up to a plan for improving these systems) as part of the State's new MS-4 permitting process. This will occur at the Public Works Committee meeting on April 17, at 8am.

River Day–May 4 11am-2pm: Walter reported on his planning for this event. EC and Green Team members are encouraged to sign up to help.

Energy/Electrification:

- a. Julianna reported on progress toward completing and posting a new **Electrify SOMA** website, to guide residents wishing to make progress with electrification
- b. Kathleen reported on a meeting that she, Bob McCoy (Maplewood Env. Advisory Committee), and Phoebe (SOMA Action) had with the **SOMA School Superintendent about possible energy programs**. Solar may be a focus of future discussion. This led to an EC discussion of school recycling. Lauren expressed a concern about the lack of any school-based recycling. The EC should look into this further because, as Lorraine stressed, NJ requires school districts to do source separation and recycling.

c. Walter and Deputy Administrator Peter Travers are leading the Village's grant-funded effort to **assess energy use by the municipality**. Walter obtained an additional grant from Sustainable Jersey to help set municipal baselines.

Meat Me in the Middle (alternative to meat consumption): Jennie will have a table at River Day

EC Involvement with the Development Process: Kathleen and David Kraiker continued discussions with Village Planner Greer Patras. Greer stressed there are already a number of code requirements with which developers must comply. And there may be a need for some additional sustainability requirements (e.g. re. electrification). But there are also incentives, whereby developers may get things like density bonuses or lower parking requirements in exchange for sustainability measures.

NEXT MEETING DATE –May 15, 2025, 7:30pm

ADJOURNMENT: 8:40 pm