



SOUTH ORANGE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION Minutes

Thursday, November 24, 2024 – 7:30 PM (Virtual WebEx Meeting)

Adequate notice given to the public.

Attendees: Kathleen Grant, Andy Stone, Lorraine Graves, David Kraiker, Rob Orgera, Larry Hirsch

Public: Julianna Garressa, Jessica Weitzman, Chris Sidwa, Jennie Aylward, Lauren Sklaver

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Call meeting to Order 7:35 pm

2. UPDATES ON NEW and CURRENT PROJECTS, ISSUES

- **Greenway:** As per Village Administrator Doran: State DOT has approved issuance of RFP for Phase II (Waterlands) Construction Services. Regarding addition to Phase II—Chyzowich Field to Parker Avenue repaving, the Village Administration will be recommending this to the Village Council for 2025 funding. Andy Stone recommended to the Public Works Committee (at its November meeting) further Greenway funding, to repave the Phase I, Mead to South Orange Ave section. Committee Chair Haskins expressed support for this to happen after the adjacent Cameron Courts capital project is done (i.e. this repaving should be a 2026 budget item).
- **Sustainable Food/Sustainable Dining:** Since the last EC meeting, this new subcommittee met. Jessica Weitzman helped prepare a green dining guide for Westfield, which she suggests as a model. She said the subcommittee will work on a survey to send to restaurants, to elicit information on their green practices. Lorraine asked for more information on what criteria are being used. This may be produced as a digital document, available via a QR code. Attendees discussed issuing it in conjunction with an event such as the Village's Food Stroll and Pub Crawl, held in 2024 on April 21.

Attendees were interested in other food-related sustainability practices—including use of reusable take out containers and sharing information and recipes relating to a vegan diet. The subcommittee was urged to consider having a table at River Day (which serves as S.O.'s environmental fair) to spotlight some of these issues. Larry reminded us that the EC had in the past (in 2015) collaborated with some restaurants including Ariyoshi's, on piloting some green practices.

- **Sustainability Checklist for Developers:** Kathleen raised this issue. David, who also serves on the Planning Board, said he would check with Village Planner Greer Patras, who may have some standard lists or information on sustainability practices which she shares with developers. Once we understand what the Village already uses, we can clarify how we can add value. Both Larry and Chris offered to help with this.
- **Energy:** The EC is working with Electrify SOMA. Kathleen and Julianna reported on a recent meeting of this group. A next step is to distribute a survey to gather information on SOMA residents' experiences with electrification, including their views on contractors working in this area. Using info from this survey, Electrify SOMA hopes to prepare a database of residents willing to share their experiences as well as contractors who have received favorable reviews.

- **Trees:** The recently introduced, new Tree Ordinance was discussed. One tree related item of interest to some attendees: more identification tags on prominent trees in public spaces.
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3. **BUDGET DISCUSSION:** The EC can participate in budget matters in two ways: a) we may publicly endorse capital expenditures being considered by the Village; b) we may request funds for small EC-initiated projects. Andy discussed the latter recently w/ Administrator Julie Doran. Julie said that the EC often receives allocations of \$6-7000. Currently there is \$4323 in unexpended funds for EC projects. If we wish to request more funds in the 2025 budget, it would be wise to spend these unexpended \$\$ very soon.
 4. **NEXT MEETING DATE** –December 19, 7:30pm
 5. **ADJOURNMENT:** 8:45 pm