



SOUTH ORANGE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION Minutes

Thursday, June 19, 2025 – 7:30 PM (Virtual WebEx Meeting)

Adequate notice given to the public.

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

Green Team/Public attendees included: Alyssa Aronson, Lauren Barnett

ORDER OF BUSINESS

- 1. Call meeting to Order 7:33 pm**
- 2. Minutes of April meeting: APPROVED**

UPDATES ON NEW and CURRENT PROJECTS & ISSUES

Native Plant/Pollinator Garden: Andy reported on the extensive planting and weeding efforts that have occurred this Spring. The garden is now looking better than it has in years. Kathleen recommended that we do some social media and/or press outreach to get some attention for this work.

Stormwater/Green Infrastructure: Andy reported on a May 22nd presentation at the Public Works Committee, by a consulting engineer at Van Cleef, about the State's revised MS-4 Stormwater Permitting Process. Under the State's new process, the Village is completing a complete inventory of its stormwater system (catch basins, storm drains, outfall pipes). Then, in 2026 and 2027 the Village will complete an implementation plan for diminishing the outfall of stormwater in the Rahway River, and improving the water quality of the outflow.

The State and Village's focus on this issue presents the Environmental Commission with a good opportunity to launch a new stormwater effort, focussed on using green infrastructure (g.i.) to manage stormwater. We may call this the S.O. Green Infrastructure Action Team, since we hope to focus especially on implementing pilot projects and educating property owners on implementing their own g.i. efforts.

Energy/Electrification: . Jullanna reported on the newly launched Electrify SOMA (ES) website—<https://electrifysoma.org/> – and shared a great animated video posted on the site. This video, produced by an ES member, reviews the major energy-saving steps that a homeowner can undertake. ES also hopes to soon provide information on its website to help residents with the process of selecting clean energy consultants and installers. There is a tentative date of September 20 for a public meeting on electrification and clean energy.

Kathleen shared that Walter (representing the Village) is working with her to further the grant-funded inventory of Village energy use. A public forum will soon be held on this project.

Expanded Leaf Blower Ordinance: Kathleen and Olivia have been working on the revised leaf blower ordinance. Olivia stated that text will need to be reviewed by the Village Attorney. This may be ready for Village Council discussion this Fall.

State Legislation: Julianna and an active Green Team member—Cindy Thompson— have been active with SOMA Action’s Legislation Committee. Julianna suggested that she and Cindy may occasionally recommend specific State legislation for the EC to consider, and potentially recommend to the Village Council for official Village support.

NEXT MEETING DATE – to be determined

ADJOURNMENT: 8:30 pm