



SOUTH ORANGE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION Minutes

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

Adequate notice given to the public.

Commissioner Attendees: Kathleen Grant, Andy Stone, Julianna Garreffa, David Kraiker, Cindy Thompson

Village Reps: Olivia Lewis-Chang (Councilmember), Walter Clarke (DPW)

Green Team/Public attendees included: Jennie Aylward, Lauren Sklaver, Caleb Salmon, Elizabeth Payne, Rick Kalish, Betsy Chernoff

ORDER OF BUSINESS

- 1. Call meeting to Order 7:34 pm**
- 2. Approval of Minutes of August and October meetings: APPROVED**

UPDATES ON NEW and CURRENT PROJECTS & ISSUES

Stormwater/Green Infrastructure: Andy provided a brief update on the rain garden installed in October. He and Kirk Barrett met with the Columbia HS Environmental Club. The Club is interested in helping to monitor the amount of water diverted by the rain garden, using the equipment installed at the site. Tentative plans are for the club to visit and work with Kirk each month to retrieve and analyze the data.

Andy also mentioned a draft Village ordinance pertaining to accessory structures which includes language on stormwater management. He will be sharing comments he has prepared with EC members, seeking EC endorsement of the comments (*Note: since the meeting, these comments were shared and a majority of the EC members responded, with all of them in support. Our comments have now been shared with the Village Planner and Engineer.*).

School Recycling: Lauren provided an update. Since the last meeting, she spoke with the School District's Business Administrator, who said that a new contract for recycling of various materials is now in place with the S.O. Disposal Company. However, Lauren reports that relevant contacts at several schools are not aware of any recycling activity. She will continue to check with schools on this, and will seek more information on the contract. Walter stated that a key factor in activating a recycling program is also having a contract with a sorting facility (we are not clear if such a contract exists).

Legislation: Prior to this meeting, Julianna shared w/ EC members a written recommendation to request that we ask the Village Council to formally endorse the Packaging and Paper Product Stewardship Act, being considered in the State Legislature. Members present voted unanimously to make this recommendation. Olivia will help route this to the Council.

Website: Julianna and Andy reported on a subcommittee (which also includes Cindy) that met to discuss updates to the EC Wordpress website. The group is planning to develop three content areas (of particular interest to the EC currently)---Electrification/Alternative Energy; Green Infrastructure for Stormwater Management; and Reduce/Reuse/Recycle. For each area, we hope to provide links and articles describing current local efforts as well as background info on best practices. EC members

described other subject matter they hope will be readily accessible, including native plants and trees. Walter noted that some of this is actually on the current website. The Subcommittee will be sure that important info currently on the website is highlighted and (if necessary) updated.

2026 Environmental Summit: Kathleen raised the idea of the EC sponsoring an Environmental Summit, aimed at bringing together a variety of South Orange (or possibly South Orange and Maplewood) groups committed to sustainability, to discuss areas of common interest and perhaps develop joint goals. Olivia suggested we be sure to involve Seton Hall. Several EC members expressed strong support for this event.

Electrify SOMA (ES) is very focussed on increasing outreach. Julianna said they hope to utilize the S.O. Village Digest and the Gaslight. Olivia offered to help connect ES with the Community Coalition on Race to seek their help with outreach.

NEXT MEETING DATE – December 18, 2025

ADJOURNMENT: 8:30 pm