



TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH ORANGE VILLAGE

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

**Via Village Webex Link:
Dial 1296808032@southorange.webex.com**

Thurs. September 16, 2021 from 7:00pm – 9:00pm

Adequate notice given to the public

MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

ATTENDANCE Linda BECK (Chairperson), Bill HASKINS**, Karen Hilton**, David KRAIKER (Planning Board Rep), Richard BELL* (Secretary), Lorraine GRAVES*, Barbara BOUR, Walter CLARKE, Jessica MILLER, Georgia MADIBA, Larry HIRSCH, Susan HAIG, George FINLAY, Jennie AYLWARD * = Commissioner, ** = Trustee, *** = Alternate

APPROVAL OF AUGUST 2021 MINUTES - APPROVED

PUBLIC COMMENTS - Luke Parker Bowles is a guest tonight. He had a meeting with Susan Haig and Karen Hilton - he is a film producer and CEO of Cinema Lab, and is working with four colleagues to bring movie going back to South Orange and elsewhere - they took on the Bellevue Theater in Montclair - ultimately the landlord did a deal with someone else - they still wanted to do something. His partner is actor Patrick Wilson, and also Andy Childs, who set up Soho House. After Bellevue didn't work out, SOPAC approached them - they were very excited to get on board. They just closed on the Bradley Beach theater, too - the common denominator is to do four or less movie screens - not a big box theater. Want to make sure it is a venue where they can make the most of local artists in the community, local food and thirdly, the environmental aspect. Patrick is very conscious of the environment. He is one of the leads in "Aquaman". Patrick and Jason Momoa are really working on making people more aware of environmental issues. Jason started a water company - they now sell his water. Mananalu - sold in conjunction with recyclable metal bottles - encouraging people to refill at water station. They have taken away plastic straws. The straw, the dome and the cup will be compostable. Andy has been working on impact for the last seven years - they want to be zero plastic in the theater - no single use plastic at any of the cinemas. Also, energy and how we use materials - everything is about being thoughtful and sustainable. Linda asked how we can be a part of what they are doing - Luke thinks we should have a monthly check-in. They can learn a lot from us. Luke also wants to be aware of what the next developments are in Environmental issues. Andy notes they have had a lot of meetings with people from the Village. They want to be fully involved and want to learn from us. Luke notes that they are very open and transparent. Come by the movie theater and test them out and tell them what they can be doing better. 5% independent films, 70% first run films.

TRUSTEE REPORT - Bill - update:

- DPW - substantial damage to the yard from Ida - they will be back in the beginning of October. Regular container day will be at New Waterlands Park this Saturday. DPW meeting next week will have discussion of Trees, Leaves, Storm Drains, MSW/Recycling

and Green Infrastructure. There was a question about what green infrastructure entails and Susan had a question about public communication. Where does the public messaging start for stewardship, etc.? Bill notes that as much as the public does not know about green infrastructure, there are many people in the Village that have a high knowledge and can get it back to the community. Julie Doran has done a good job with some of these things. We have a collaboration with our Zero Waste consultant and survey - modest participation, but better than we've had. Rob asked if there will be discussions about upgrading our green infrastructure. Bill notes that although nothing is on his agenda right now, we need to step and address these infrastructure issues. Lots of examples of how we can change things, and he suggested doing some demonstration projects. Jessica noted that FEMA grants are available with using trees as green infrastructure. Linda agrees with Jessica that we need to be more of an advisory committee to automatically be asked to review plans. She asked Bill and Karen and Walter. Walter notes that the EC is empowered to review planning board issues. David should send the issues to the EC. Bill notes it is a right of this commission to review site plans, etc. We have done it on occasion, but it has not been a big part of what we are doing so far. He thinks the number one way to drive green infrastructure is to create a storm water utility, similar to our water utility, so new construction would need to meet certain criteria for storm water. Walter notes that they need to do a storm water plan and then determine storm water runoff - there would be a fee based on runoff - those fees would pay for an individual to run the utility. Those fees could also go towards paying the budget of shared village storm water infrastructure. Over time you would build out the shared things for storm water utility. It would be a local institution that incentivizes homeowners to assess stormwater runoff. Every property in town would be assessed for current state of runoff and then incentivized to change it. The storm water fee would not be part of taxes - same as water. Bill notes that the application to set up a utility has different levels to it. ANJEC is a great resource on storm water. Next step is that Bill and Walter are going to review the grant application and start working on it. Barbara had a question about the Greenway and flooding. Bill notes that the Army Corp of Engineers designed that area to flood.

- BOT - on Monday at last meeting they had to decide whether to renew the recycling contract for 2022 - they did renew the contract because it was the "best bad option we had". It was the recommendation of our Zero Waste contractor. He notes that we are not going to just sit on our hands for a year, so even though curbside looks like status quo, we are going to start right now to make things better as a community. In parallel we can make improvements to our recycling facility. The DPW is in bad shape right now. They are going to remove the existing structure that is falling down. They are going to work on sorting, signage and education and see if they can get revenue for items. They should start with cardboard. So for 2023 - there will be a joint Zero Waste meeting with Maplewood - he presented 13 bullet points and a timeline. They would put together a joint RFP with Maplewood for 2023 - possibly pay as a you throw or dual stream recycling. Richard had a question about why DPW is being "rebuilt" after the flood and not looking at relocating it in the long term, and possibly merging with Maplewood. There was a general discussion about the need to do that.

1. POLICY UPDATES

- Leaf Blower Ordinance - no news on the ordinance.
- Shade Tree Commission Ordinance - Brief update is that Clyde Otis and Steve Rother reviewed it and gave feedback. They are into the idea and are working on it.
- Resolution for EC consideration: Pay Up Climate Polluters - Linda moved to vote on the resolution. Rob seconded. Everyone voted yes. (Note: Walter will be stepping into an Alternate spot.)

- Resolution for EC consideration: Fossil Fuel Divestment from Pension Fund - Linda moved to vote on it. Larry seconded. Everyone voted yes, except David Kraiker abstained.
- Bottle Bill Proposal (contact NJ General Assembly Mila Jasey and John McKeon) David Kraiker checked to see if there was a bottle bill - he looked it up and it is in the works - Act 1710 - The Smart Container Act. Valerie Huttel in Bergen County is working on it. He suggested we support it and take a look at it. It's still in the pipeline. Something for us to think about. David will send it around. Susan Haig notes that glass is endlessly recyclable, and NJ is also historically the center of the glass industry. Linda suggested that Susan write a blog post about it.

2. PROJECT UPDATES

- Post Ida
 - Storm Drains and Streets (see discussion above regarding storm water runoff). The storm drains were overflowing. Walter notes that there are over 1,000 storm drains and that people should clear them during good weather, not during the storms. There was a question about whether DPW will be able to pick up leaves this fall since the storm devastated them. There was a discussion about having the parks do demonstration of letting the leaves stay on the ground. Founders, Meadowlands and Farrell are committed to doing it. Barbara suggested using paper bags for homeowners.
 - Meadowlands Park Conservancy, SOEC and Beth El did a river clean up after the storm
- Floods Hill - field treatment. George - fall treatment was done a couple days ago. They have been working on Floods Hill for over a year now. They had a \$5K grant, but have some money left. The grass looks good this year. They are trying to find out what can be done. Over-seeding, aerating and feeding has been the process and they plan to continue to do it. He asked that we all let Pete Travers know that we want this demo to continue and spread to other parks. They'd like to continue doing this for more years. Linda asked if he wants to work on a specific field next? He said that any one of them - just keep the demo going. Walter suggested that the next field be a high-use sports field. Jess agrees - parents with kids in rec sports will support that. Rob agreed also.
- Trees - Barbara notes that regarding fall tree planting - they go in the ground first part of November. David notes that they are not putting sewage line in Founders Park.
- ZERO WASTE/MSW/Recycling - has been covered - see above.
- Mosquito Committee - this will be held for next month.
- SEA update - energy aggregation. Goal is for 10 houses in SO to be incentivized to do an energy assessment. Requirements and selection process still be formulated. Walter notes that once this starts the EC should help spread the word so people know it is not a scam. SEA is Sustainable Essex Alliance - the group that does energy aggregation through cooperative buying of power. Through that process there is a fund dedication to conservation effort - they are using it to identify people to do energy adjustments and upgrades. Walter notes it is a pilot program and hope we'll learn a lot from it.
- Native Plant News:
 - Invasive Strike Team - it was on Sept. 12th - Barbara notes that one of the takeaways was that they acquired land (Morris County) - we need to get a little more connected to their techniques. Waterlands, Duck Pond - see if we can get the techniques to work for us.
 - Eco Guide - Georgia says they still have a lot of copies, so let her know if you have any ideas or need for them. Ideas: Newcomer's Day (Oct. 3rd), Repair Cafe, SOMA Action Day, etc.
 - Newcomers' Day is October 3rd, Georgia will help with a table. October 16th is Repair Cafe. There was a discussion about whether the Skate House can still be used.

- Plant sale is Sept. 18th Jess notes there is a link for garden tour - the link is: <https://www.facebook.com/events/2955254248053959/?ref=newsfeed>. Jess notes that fall is an excellent time for planting.

3. COMMUNICATIONS (FB: 813 followers, IG: 272 followers)

- Larry sent an article for publication.

4. WORK DAYS

- Most weekends 10:00 am - 2:00 pm. Linda will not be there this weekend.
- Seton Hall - they are starting to work with us.

5. NEW BUSINESS

- Susan wants to have a big press conference - maybe early or mid October we can get all of these issues out to the public? Work with the library? Central display about stewardship? Also, Linda notes that Gaslight has several items from us.
- Karen notes that the Library will have fencing going up soon and wants to have a press conference to see if we can do something together in October. Barbara notes that tree protection is important during construction. Karen thinks that is a great idea and should be highlighted.

6. NEXT MEETING DATE - 10/21/21 - 7:00 pm

7. ACTION ITEMS - We all know what we need to do.

8. ADJOURNMENT