



TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH ORANGE VILLAGE

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

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

Thurs. November 18, 2021 from 7:30pm – 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***, Robert ORGERA*, Isaac BEARG, Jessica MILLER, Georgia MADIBA, Larry HIRSCH*, Joel LEVIN, Jennie AYLWARD, Andy STONE, Michael PARLAPIANO *=Commissioner, **=Trustee, ***=Alternate

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 2021 MINUTES - APPROVED

GUEST SPEAKER - No guest speaker

PUBLIC COMMENTS - No public comment

BOT/PUBLIC WORKS UPDATE - (Haskins)

- Leaves – MPC and FFPC issues - Bill: DPW - leave the leaves in Founders, MP and FFP - had some rough patches in Farrell and MW - the old method started - that's been reset. They have purchased mulching kits that go on the mowers and mulch the leaves. Issac asked how much is being saved from not having to haul away these leaves. Bill notes we could look at total tonnage at the end of the season from Rotundi and see if we can get some numbers. General discussion about time usage being clocked and fuel usage. Linda notes that all these numbers are relevant. Jess asked why we don't have a large machine that sucks up the leaves. Walter notes we used to have one, which was expensive and broke easily. Repairs were expensive and problematic. Isaac: don't we pay to dump them? Bill notes that the amount we keep at DPW is same amount every year, but Rotundi can give us extra data. He also notes that the vacuum machine is single use machine, and the process of sucking the leaves makes the piles looser and the trucks have less capacity.

1. POLICY UPDATES (Next BOT meeting: November 22nd)

- Leaf Blower Ordinance - FAQ and public forum being finalized and scheduled - Linda says that she has not gotten the FAQ ready yet and will work on it this week.
- Shade Tree Committee to Commission Ordinance – BOT presentation summary. The ordinance has not been voted on yet. Bill notes it is still with Clyde Otis. Karen notes that what Linda did for the BOT at the last meeting was great, but they want is an actual "ask" making it very clear what it is we are looking for them to do. "Hit us over the head"

with it. Linda notes that she will do so. Karen says that a letter from the EC would be sufficient - ask them to adopt the ordinance as soon as possible. Could also be public comment. Linda says she will send a letter. Karen notes it will be introduced in the beginning of January, so December is great time to submit it.

2. UPDATES ON NEW and CURRENT PROJECTS

- Founders Park Conservancy 50th Anniversary celebration report - David: he notes that he wasn't part of it. Jessica said that the Conservancy researched the names of the people on the obelisk and then there is a place to read what they found out - it's pretty cool. Linda was at the ceremony and notes there was a steady flow of volunteers all day. Constant Cub Scouts were there - they all brought rakes and learned to rake the leaves into the plant beds.
- Meadowland Park Conservancy 1st Anniversary celebration report - they planted a lot of native plants around the Skate House. Bill, Walter, Karen and other Trustees were there.
- Farrell Field Park Conservancy - Richard notes that Donate a Bench Campaign is starting up this winter. He also notes that SO Connect app is great for reporting issues.
- SOMASD Committee - Georgia Madiba gave a quick background for South Mountain Elementary. This year they are not sure if other schools have Green Teams like South Mountain. They are not seeking recertification with NJ - they are happy about what they are doing. She and Jenny Aylward had started "EcoStar" that educates children about environmental issues and now they are starting a program to green the school grounds. Jesse Graham, a parent at the school, is working with them. They just got approval today from the principal for plantings at the Annex. They hope to get approval for the big school as well. Two issues: Zero Waste and Leaves are both issues that they can bring to the table for pilot programs at the schools themselves. Good news: Jenny has been hired at Civic Story. As part of the EcoStar program they pull info from meetings to push out and pick information that kids can get involved. Last year they had a video. This year they have chosen a theme for kids and environment and Jenny has been writing about that. Walter reminded everyone that Georgia won the ANJEC award. Woo-hoo! Barbara says that they can help with planting trees and species info. Jess notes that CHS is looking to plant trees as well. She says they worry that they need someone to care for them. Linda notes she was on a call with SOMSD and they are very worried about maintenance of trees after they are planted. Walter notes that post-construction landscaping by parent groups offering support would be great - especially watering during the summer months. We could organize as a green team and work with parent groups. Jess notes that funding and maintenance are the main issues. Georgia notes that the principal is very supportive. They have a 7-page proposal that calls for parents to help maintain the plantings.
- Shade Tree Committee - NJTF 2021 fall planting – report. Barbara notes that they are done except for a few minor issues. Three people complained about getting a tree. 110 trees were planted. Tree Plotter was very helpful and everyone used it. The door tags are 90% done. Jess notes that each neighborhood had someone assigned to it and that worked really well. Karen wondered if they had asked the Village for any more money. Barbara said that this was all grant money. Karen said there should be a specific ask. Bill says that 350 trees are needed (at \$400 each). David says we need a few more neighborhood ambassadors if we are going to do this. Jess notes that planting in the yards is possible - there is a right of way - get the word out.
- River – educational sign - Kirk Barrett is putting together info for a sign along the Rahway River.
- ZERO WASTE/MSW/Recycling – On 11/03 Maplewood TWP approved resolution to move forward with ZW strategic and procurement - What's next? Bill: next steps are that we are going to form an RFP committee to carry out the procurement strategy and it should happen in the next week or so.

- Greenway Committee - new committee - we had our first meeting last night - Bill, Richard, Linda and Andy Stone. If anyone is interested in joining us on the Greenway Committee, they should let us know. Rob says he has an interest. Larry also has an interest. Bill gave a brief summary - the current status is that we have to retain a 3rd party inspections agent/engineer for the project. He needs to follow up with them. If we are going to start the project in July, the RFP process needs to start at the beginning of the year. Richard pointed out that this project has been on hold since even before 2015 and it is very important that we stay vigilant to get this done. The southern end of town will benefit so much from the new bridge and bike/walking paths, but it has been delayed for much too long. He noted that he's glad this sub-committee is being formed in the EC, so we can take an "ask" to the BOT for preserving open space and making this project happen. Karen notes that the newer Trustees don't know about this project and they need information about this project - a one-pager, etc. Don't assume they know what you are talking about. What is the ask? Since it's been all these years, keep the info coming.
- Storm Drains – follow up about presentation and software. Linda wanted to know if there was software involved. Georgia said there was "adopt a storm drain" software that can be adapted - Westfield did it. We could also do it. Isaac notes that clogged storm drains are still a problem and wondered if we should investigate. Georgia will send info to Linda and Isaac. General discussion about volunteers and keeping track of who can volunteer and keeping track of them. Barbara suggested that we come up with a list of things to look for in the storm drains. Linda says that Julie Doran has asked for some text to include for people to benefit the DPW - this would be a good way to start.
- Lead Project – under review with village. Lex spoke with us last time. It is currently with the Village and under review. Donna Coalier is working on it.

3. COMMUNICATIONS - Walter & Linda

- FB: 836 (up from 776) followers (last month was incorrect), IG: 301 (up from 288) followers - Linda notes that we need everyone's buy-in to follow the page and follow the blog. You can also write for the blog. Walter notes that we should invite all our friends to like the page and Instagram. They got info and press release into the local news outlets, which helped.
- DPW Contact - requests should go through SO Connect and we can also reach out to Trustee Haskins.
- **APPROVAL of Outgoing SOEC Press Releases and Letters**
 - Reminder - SOEC and SOEC Committee letters, responses, and statements should be sent out from environmentalcommission@southorange.org
 - Linda notes we should be one voice and should approve all letters and releases in the meeting. You can send it to Linda and she will send it from the EC and sign it as from the EC, the committee, etc. We don't want to get into a situation where we are contacting consultants who might bill the Village.

4. WORK DAYS - Most Sundays, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

- WHAT TO DO WITH INVASIVE WEED PILES? It occurred to them that they are pulling knotweed and putting it in the compost pile at DPW, but need to change that. Walter suggested that the DPW could possibly dedicate a truck to get the knotweed to an incinerator. Linda will reach out to the team and see what they can do.
- SHU Crew/Julianna Spector (student) TBD
- Girl Scout Daisy Group TBD

5. NEW BUSINESS

Next meeting's guest - Backyard Composters Jeffrey Brown, BrandBuilders - very exciting.

Also, Trex Bench will donate a bench to Seton Village if they get 500 lbs of plastic bags over 6 months. There is a bin in front of the Italian club. Olivia Lewis-Chang is organizing it. Georgia wants to know what kind of plastic bags they are looking for. Linda will ask Olivia or Georgia will ask directly. Linda will send the photo to everyone that lists all the types of bags. Walter notes that this would be a special challenge for River Day - pull them out of the river, but also bring them to River Day. Linda notes that Trex says plastics must be free and clean. Georgia also says it could also be something that is looped into the plastic reduction law - ok, we've now banned the bags, but what do we do with all the others in circulation? The law is coming up in May. Larry notes that having people bring their plastic bags to River Day would be great. Walter notes that you can get a reusable bag for dry cleaning. Joel suggests we have portable collection containers at local events for people to bring bags - one person could bring them. Linda notes that we should decide on a location for the bench and encourage people to donate bags for it. A competition between all the parks was suggested.

Larry notes that temples, churches and other groups are volunteering to help with cleanups. Linda encouraged everyone to tell their friends and groups to join in.

Rob notes that the State of NJ has a climate report. Walter notes that the amount of rainfall will increase 20% in the future. Rob says he will give a summary of report at the next meeting.

NEXT MEETING DATE – 12/16/21 - 7:30 pm

ADJOURNMENT