

Millburn Township Environmental Commission

Tuesday, March 14, 2023 @ 7:00 pm

MINUTES

Members: Roger Timpson (Chair), Kristen Brasil, Priya Patel, Mark Robison, Odarka Stockert, and Elizabeth Vollavanh.

Absent: Laura Kosik, Debra Nevas and Abby Packman.

Township Committee Liaison: Unoccupied at this time

Secretary: Carolyn Scannelli

Call to Order: 7:00 pm

Commission Business:

- a) Open public meeting statement: *This meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meeting Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6-10: 4-21. Notice of this meeting has been published in the Item of Millburn and Short Hills, and on Tap as filed by the Environmental Commission and on bulletin board at Millburn Town Hall*
- b) **Master Plan Environmental Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations:**
 - I. Protect and manage critical environmental resources in the township.
 - II. Improve the quality of life for residents.
 - III. Minimize the environmental impact of the township on the environment.
- c) Acceptance of February 7, 2023, minutes Mark Robison motioned to accept the minutes and Elizabeth Vollavanh 2nd, others in attendance who are eligible to vote are in favor.
- d) Treasurer Report – (RT) – Starting balance \$2500.00.
Expenditures - ANJEC membership \$470 and MHS Java project \$1175
Remaining balance \$855.00

Public Comment

- a) Lori LaBorde of The South Mountain Conservancy & Meadow Restoration Project shared a power point presentation on creating a 1-acre pollinator garden at Shady Nook Picnic, South Mountain, Millburn. SMC partnership with Citizens Science for this project. The pollinator habitat garden is for butterflies, moths, caterpillars' chrysalis, birds, and insects. The garden would take roughly 3 years to establish. The garden will be data driven with a viewing platform using a time lapse program called Chronolog. This will increase local pollination diversity. Many organizations and groups are volunteering, Cora Hartshorn, Girl Scouts, High School groups, Environmental groups and she is asking for MEC to volunteer. Fund raising and grants are necessary to help subsidize the project. Looking ahead may require one day a month where volunteers are needed for maintenance. Lori will advise as to the type of signage. The project will start in June 2023. Partnerships include:
Essex County Department of Parks
Turtle Back Zoo
Local Chapter of NJ Native Plant Society
Cora Hartshorn
Millburn Environmental Commission
- b) Jennifer Duckworth is a member of the Rahway River Watershed Association. Jennifer presented a power point of the Mini Forest Project proposal. Jennifer was asked by the RRWA to create a mini forest in Millburn. As per the book Mini Forest Revolution, Jennifer discovered that this is a worldwide effort to create mini forests in urban areas. Certain native species would be recommended for the Millburn area. The potential mini forest would be located near the East Branch of the Rahway River in Taylor Park by the boy scout's pollinator garden. The Department of Public Works, the Rahway River Watershed Association and MEC would partner together to

care for the mini forest for the first 3 years. The forest will sustain itself in the fourth year. During the first 3 years, weeding, watering and media replenishment would be required. Jennifer suggested reading the Mini Forest Revolution, the Miyawaki Method to grow forests.

Donna Goggin Patel of Summit Environmental Commission spoke regarding Summit's timeline of creating a mini forest that commenced in April 2022. A fence enclosed ¼ acre area to keep the deer out. The area is filled with an assortment of native trees. They used a 600' water hose tied into the baseball field house. They also have a bird song monitor. Summit received a grant from NJ American Water and donations from township businesses to create the mini forest.

Communication/Updates

- a) Millburn Green Team (MR) – No report.
- b) Shade Tree Advisory Board (EV) – No report
- c) Millburn High School E-Club (AP) –
- Tuesday 3/14, Java compost came to the school to train the e-club volunteers in anticipation of the May Pilot. There are 20-25 volunteers interested.
- Planning on holding a school bake sale to raise money for an environmental cause. organization for the donation to be determined.
- E-club to attend an April beach clean-up for Earth Day, details TBD
- Wednesday (3/15) the HS is hosting a club fair for the incoming freshman and the e-club has a table set up to recruit new members

Planning Board Report (DN) – No report

Zoning Board Report (LK) – No report

Old Business

- a) Founding Day Celebration: CEDA (OS) – April 22, 2023. There will be a birthday party for the American Elm Tree. Volunteers are needed.
- b) Native & Invasive Plants Resolution (OS) – Odarka would like to resend a shorter version of the native and invasive plants resolution to the Township Committee to vote on. Odarka will email the resolution to MEC members before the April meeting for review with anticipation to vote on at the April meeting and forward to the Township Committee.
- c) Creation of a Tree Fund -
- d) Tree Ordinance (EV, MR)
- e) Stormwater Management/Green Infrastructure Ordinance (EV)
- f) Open Space (PP)
- g) Taylor Park River Walk cleanup – April 30th, 12 PM/Earth Day/SH Garden Club connection (RT)
- h) Comprehensive Community Outreach - (MR, OS, EV, KB, LK) – No February meeting.
 - a) Started to create a content calendar. Every month has a primary communication. 4 repeating categories on a 3-month rotation: Storm Water Management, Energy, Waste, Planting for Ecology. When creating content, first run by EC before release on social media. The township media will post, and everyone can share. Hoping for 1st post in April.
 - Liz is working on a resolution for the township to have an energy audit as they are considering renovations to some of the township buildings and playing fields. The last audit was 10 years ago.
 - b) Creating a folded 8x11 informational on-line guide on invasive/native planting. Including the top 8 offenders. First one spring - perennials & ground covers / fall - trees and shrubs.

New Business

- a) Environmental Resource Inventory – Roger talked to the original company that prepared the last report dated 2014. The report cost \$15,000. and was paid for by a grant from ANJEC. This company no longer does this type of business. Roger will ask ANJEC if they know of a company that can prepare an ERI. This report is not required but is essential to the township, Master Plan, and the EC.
- b) Contact with surrounding towns (RT)
- c) Livingston's Bamboo Ordinance – MEC members to review and discuss at the next meeting.
- d) New NJDEP regulations. Township Engineer reviewing before May approval.
- e) NJDEP Right to Know list – Received a letter regarding Verizon's building on Millburn Ave which has chemicals/batteries stored in the building. Further information is needed. Roger will research.

Mark Robison motioned to adjourn, Elizabeth Vollavanh 2nd with all in favor.
Adjourn 8:58

Carolyn Scannelli
Minutes Secretary

Next MEC Meeting: *Tuesday April 11, 2023*