

Millburn Township Environmental Commission

Tuesday, April 11, 2023 @ 7:00 pm
Millburn Township Conference Room

MINUTES

Members: Roger Timpson (Chair), Debra Nevas, Abby Packman, Priya Patel, Mark Robison, Odarka Stockert, and Elizabeth Vollavanh.

Absent: Kristen Brasil and Laura Kosik

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 March 10, 2023, minutes Mark Robison motioned to accept the minutes and Debra Nevas 2nd, others in attendance who are eligible to vote are in favor.
- d) Treasurer Report – (RT) – Current balance \$855.00

Public Comment

Resident Christine Best – wanted to share the following information:

1. NJ American Water is replacing lead pipes in some areas in Millburn and surrounding towns. NJAW has notified some residents of the lead pipe replacement. Millburn/Short Hills anecdotal does not have a lot of lead piping. Christine has lead poisoning and heavy metal toxicity and uses a water filtration system and drinks water from Mountain Valley. She spoke about her concerns with Mr. Donald regarding the amount of lead piping in the town and expressed that the township should inform the residents so they may look into getting a water filtration system.
2. The Rec Committee is looking to acquire land to create fields. She has concerns about green space, wetlands and passive recreation and the LED flood lights that would be installed at these fields, which are very harmful to your eyes, the environment and wildlife. The LED field behind the library is concerning for the neighbors living near there.
3. A large hedge at Short Hills Park was recently cut down. Christine stated that she saw DPW working there and asked why they were hacking down the hedge, they stated that they did not have the right equipment to remove the hedge. She questioned why DPW would not talk to the EC before removing the hedge.
4. 5G Small Cell – Christine indicated that she is very informed and passionate about this topic. She stated that there is a lawsuit against Pittsfield Massachusetts in which the Board of Health is researching a neighborhood with health concerns possibly caused by cell tower technology. Additionally, there is a small cell tower across from the Hartshorn School. Christine has an EMF reader and her meter read at 19.9 in the parking lot of the school. Christine also stated that the FCC has not done a study since 1996 on wireless technology. Odarka suggested contacting the Township Board of Health with her concerns. Mark asked if anyone has reached out ANJEC for a point of view on 5G. Mark explained that the EC is limited in what they can do nor do they have government power. Mark suggested the MEC can be added as an action item. Priya suggested Christine to research with ANJEC.

Discussion

1. NJDEP Right to know notice regarding Verizon – Notices are sent to the Fire Department and EC. Roger spoke with the Fire Marshall who confirmed receiving such notices which alert them of hazardous situations. There are concerns as this property is in a flood zone. Roger is a new member of the Flood Mitigation Advisory Committee, and he will inquire with them.
2. MEC members inquired as to why there is not a Township Committee liaison attending their meetings, and questioned if it is required that a Township Committee member be at a meeting? MEC members would like a committee member at their meetings so communication can be transmitted.

Discussion of Last Month's Public Comments

3. The South Mountain Conservancy & Meadow Restoration Project – Preparation of the site has started. Priya stated that she has been talking with Lori LaBorde about the project. They are looking for more donors and volunteers. Lori plans to meet with volunteers in May and June. SMC plans on applying for the ANJEC Open Space Grant and listing MEC as the underwriter. If the grant is approved, it would be a MEC project.
4. Taylor Park Proposed Mini Forest - Jennifer Duckworth - Rahway River Watershed Association. Proposal for a Mini Forest Project. At this time the project is stalled as larger entities need to buy into this 5-year project.

Communication/Updates

- a) Millburn Green Team (MR) – unknown if the Green Team is still in existence.
- b) Shade Tree Advisory Board (EV) – Tree giveaway is April 28. Allotted 220 trees per town. Hopefully Mayor Miggins can add to her weekly message. Stacie (Township Forester) and a volunteer of the Shade Tree Advisory Board participated in a Core training. Stacie recommended reviewing Princeton's Tree Ordinance for Millburn.
- c) Millburn High School E-Club (AP) – May 1st compost project commences. Had 1 training from Java. Will have another in April. Currently 20+ volunteers.

Planning Board Report (DN) – Applications for next meeting:

1. 285 Old Short Hills Road – subdivision. The property is not zoned for multi-family housing.
2. Annie Millburn Partners LLC 249 Millburn Avenue

Members discussed a new building on Millburn Avenue that replaced an existing historic building with setbacks not in line with existing buildings. Debra will bring in Planning Board applications to review before the Planning Board reviews, so the EC can comment. Mark discussed establishing an urban forestry standard, similar to Jersey City with design guidelines and a tree fund instead of a suburban tree ordinance. Liz stated that the Township Forester is working to revise the Tree Ordinance. Debra stated that the township is creating a Design Standard Committee.

Old Business

1. Founding Day Celebration: CEDA (OS) – April 22, 2023. There will be a birthday party for the American Elm Tree sponsored by the Historic Society. A new tree will be planted. Volunteers are needed.
2. Native & Invasive Plants Resolution (OS) – MEC members reviewed the original resolution, which will be shortened, edited, and presented to the Township Committee. Review and vote on revision at the May meeting.
Roger will reach out as a courtesy to DPW Supervisor to assure his department will maintain the grounds and plantings before the verbiage is added to the resolution.
3. Taylor Park River Walk cleanup (PP) – April 30th, 12 PM/Earth Day/SH Garden Club connection. Signed waiver is needed to participate.
4. Comprehensive Community Outreach - (MR, OS, EV, KB, LK) – Mark will email members a digital calendar to choose a month and subject.

New Business

- a) Environmental Resource Inventory (RT) – no new information.
- b) Contact with surrounding towns (RT) – no new information.
- c) Livingston's Bamboo Ordinance (RT) – Roger will resend for the next meeting.

Elizabeth Vollavanh motioned to adjourn, Debra Nevas 2nd with all in favor.
Adjourn 8:30

Carolyn Scannelli

