

Millburn Township Environmental Commission

Wednesday, April 13, 2021 @ 7:00 pm
(virtual meeting via Zoom)

MINUTES

Members: Joe Barbanel, Reade Kem, Priya Patel (chair), Odarka Stockert, Elizabeth Vollavanh and Jorge Mastropietro
Absent: Edward Hilzenrath, Mark Hubertus (MHS) and Wendy Minocha

Township Committee Liaison: Tara Prupis - present

Secretary: Carolyn Scannelli

Call to Order: 7:07 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, 2021 minutes Joe Barbanel motion to accept, Reade Kem 2nd, Odarka Stockert abstain; all others are in favor.
- d. Treasurer Report – \$1530.00 remaining balance. Treasurer position open.

Public Comment - No Public Comment

Communication

- a. Millburn Green Team liaison (position open) – No report.
- b. Millburn High School E-Club (MH) – No report.
- c. Millburn Township Green Schools Team (JM) – No report.
- d. Pedestrian Safety Advisory Board (TP) – Last meeting was in January, next meeting April 28th.
- e. Bike Walk Millburn (JM) – April 17-24 <https://twp.millburn.nj.us/620/Millburn-Bike-Week-2021>
Weeklong celebration of biking in Millburn. Many events planned for everyday throughout the week. Sixty bikes were collected and donated throughout Essex County.
- f. Downtown Area Vision Plan (PP) – 2nd meeting was held on March 23.
Attendees broke into three separate groups for discussed.
 1. Reuse/repurpose DPW yard
 2. Traffic
 3. Taylor Park revitalization – Priya Patel participated in this group and discussion consisted of multi-generational use, native plantings, entrance way.
Mayor Prupis reported that the County approved the 2-way traffic pattern on Millburn Avenue and Essex Street. The Township Engineer will present the traffic plan to the Township Committee.

Township Committee Report (TP) –

Recent Township Committee discussions consist of the following:

- Zoning codes
- Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers
- Park regulations
- Expanding uses
- Development Review Committee
- Flood modeling
- Cell tower at JFK leaf composting
- Hunterdon County Energy Aggregation

Planning Board report (JM) – Jorge stated that the Woodland Chatham Road application is still in review and as there are no ordinances pertaining to Green Building and Green Infrastructure and there are environmental concerns, Jorge suggested a letter be sent to the Planning Board from the Environmental Commission voicing their concerns. Odarka previously prepared a draft letter to be reviewed at this meeting expressing concerns for LEED certification and environmental impacts to the township that are not being addressed in addition to impacts on wildlife and stormwater runoff that could lead to future problems. EC Members reviewed and discussed the letter and agreed that the letter still requires a lot of work in terms of editing and conveying factual information. Joe, Ed and Wendy were also absent from the discussion. It was agreed to submit the letter only after further review. Members are to email their comments and edits to Odarka for finalization of the draft and submittal of the statement by April 28.

Old Business

- ⇒ Stormwater Management/Green Infrastructure Ordinance (EV/JM/EH) - next meeting
- ⇒ Green Building Ordinance (EV/JM/EH) – next meeting
- ⇒ Open Space Trust Fund (RK/OS) – Reade prepared a slide presentation of property types, existing parkland, vacant lots, reservoir lands, community garden and similar parcels which might be of interest through open space funding. Discussed reasons for open space funds; bike and walking paths, birding, nature, and maintain existing parks and recreation areas and deter further development.
Next step, determine how EC should move forward, more details are needed for proposal - create an open space plan by listing 1-5 potential purchases/parcels. Prepare for November 2022 ballot. Reade and Odarka will work on for next meeting. Liz suggested considering to restore and/or renovate township owned property, such as the Bauer Center or the Parsil House. Also, Liz will check into the Community Garden Parcel.
- ⇒ Gas Powered Leaf Blowers Ordinance (JB) – Joe researched and Priya and Joe proposed a temporary summer ban, similar to what Summit passed, to the TC at their last meeting. Some TC members have concerns with increased equipment expenses to landscape businesses, a handful of which are located in town, and that those expenses will be passed on to their customers/township residents.
Many neighboring towns have passed ordinances consisting of bans, restrictions, or strict regulations: Summit, Maplewood, Princeton, Montclair.
Concerns are noise level, health, environmental impacts, direct harm to people using gas blowers. EC members expressed that community education is required and residents need to express their concerns to the Township Committee.

New Business

- ⇒ Community Choice Energy Aggregation (PP) –
A representative from the Hunterdon Area Energy Cooperative will present to the Township Committee at the May 18 meeting.

Announcements/Events/Updates: Food Waste Recycling pilot, pollinator garden

Food Waste Recycling pilot – 4,000 pounds of food scrapes have been diverted from Millburn solid waste.
Pollinator Garden – Liz and Odarka met with Mark Robison, a landscape architect, and have a proposed plan that needs Township Administrator approval. Location is the triangle area by the tennis courts.

- Next MEC Meeting: Tuesday, May 11, 7:00 PM.

Jorge Mastropietro motion to adjourn, Reade Kem 2nd with all in favor.
Adjourn 9:16

Carolyn Scannelli
Minutes Secretary