

Millburn Township Environmental Commission

Tuesday, September 13, 2022 @ 7:00 pm

(Virtual meeting via Zoom)

MINUTES

Members: Reade Kem (Chair), Laura Kosik, Debra Nevas, Abby Packman (will be sworn in at next meeting), Priya Patel, Mark Robison, Odarka Stockert, Roger Timpson and Elizabeth Vollavanh

Township Committee Liaison: Maggee Miggins

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 July 12, 2022, 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) – Balance \$2250. With 1 expenditure for the Invasive Species presentation at the October Township Committee meeting. Roger will check to see if ANJEC membership has been taken out of the 2022 budget. Reade asked members to think of ideas on how to use the funds.

Reade suggested to make a donation in honor of Maureen Ogden who recently passed away. Mrs. Ogden was a previous member of the EC, Township Committee, a township volunteer, and served in the NJ Assembly where she championed wetlands preservation among other environmental initiatives. All members agreed on a \$100 donation to each of the NJ Conservation Foundation and New Jersey Audubon for a total of \$200. Liz Vollavanh motioned to approve the donation and Priya Patel 2nd with all in favor.

Priya asked if a donation was made to the Tour of Millburn, which no donation was made. Reade stated he did not receive a notification for a donation.

Public Comment – Resident Tom Burns spoke about invasive bamboo from his neighbor's property which has encroached on his property and is not being maintained. The neighbors are renters, and the owner lives out of state and is unresponsive to his calls. Mr. Burns expressed his concerns regarding invasive bamboo at the 8/16 Township Committee meeting. He stated that there should be regulations in place for how to maintain bamboo, so it does not encroach on other properties, he is not looking for a ban, but feels there is a gap in the regulations. Mr. Burns stated that at some point the township should step in when there is visible damage to other property owners, and it cannot be resolved between neighbors. In his case an neighborly compromise cannot be reached.

Communication/Updates

- a) Millburn Green Team (MR) – No new update, will update at the next meeting. Reade stated that Renee is stepping down from the Green Team.

- b) Shade Tree Advisory Board (EV) – South Mountain area historic trees log has been completed and the Township Forester will check for compliance. A google sheet will be created so EC members can add potential historic trees to the list. Street trees might have a tag.
The township has been placing Spotted Lantern Fly traps on trees, need clarification on the trees that were chosen.
Short Hills Garden Club contributed \$25,000 for tree planting in Taylor Park, need an update on when the trees will be planted.
Millburn Twp usually plants trees in the spring, which was not done, might plant in fall. Need clarification on this.
- c) Millburn High School E-Club (AP) – New HS E Club President Abby Pachman
1st meeting Friday, September 16.
Projects planned for the year include:
Java Composting – to reduce cafeteria waste.
Have trees replanted that were removed from the back field.
AquaFest Spring 2023 Washington School.
Educate members on environmental issues locally and globally.

Township Committee Report (MM) – At the next TC meeting the following will be presented: 1) Priya will give an update on 132 Millburn Ave (gas station), tank removal, ideas for repurposing that land, ex: pocket park.
2) Native Species discussion on October 16th meeting.
3) Tom Doty was the Forester and was promoted to DPW Supervisor and a part-time Forester was hired.
4) The Zoning Board asked the Township Committee to review a change to the steep slope ordinance. Asking to change the disturbance from 1,000' to 15% of lot area. Mayor Miggins feels the EC should have input in this request.
Reade asked for clarification on 9 Main Street development. Residents proposed to fund another study. Mayor Miggins stated they are not moving forward on any projects at this time until they get in front of a judge. (A new Judge was recently put in place). Mayor Miggins stated the existing studying on the township website had two typographical errors, which were corrected.
She also clarified that animal control was contracted out last year and the 2 employees were transferred to DPW. On deer population control, Mayor Miggins said they are looking at that and to stay tuned for updates.

Planning Board Report (DN) – Last two meetings have been canceled. At the 7/20 meeting the Planning Board adopted the Housing Element of the Master Plan.

Old Business

- a) Lawn equipment /gas powered blowers (RT) – Roger spoke to many people and reviewed a lot of information regarding leaf blowers – He concluded that it remains an environmental negative. Roger stated that there are other ways to maintain your property, although it is not an easy sell. He recommends not to do anything. He sent a write up informational email to EC members. Odarka questioned the health issue and noise of gas blowers. Roger stated there are pros and cons of both electric and gas blowers. Ex: environmental cost to make and dispose of electric batteries. Reade suggested to track Maplewood's gas leaf blower ordinance to see how the township and residents are receiving it. Rogers stated that he would be glad to continue this conversation with any MEC members at any time.
- b) Tree Ordinance (EV, MR) – Mark would like to work on an informational best practice design standard for the Township including streetscape and street trees.
- c) Native & Invasive Plants Resolution (OS, RK) – October 18th Mike Van Clef Invasive Species Presentation to the Township Committee. Odarka stated that the township has removed native trees and planted new trees which are not native. She suggested to add to the ordinance "when a township native tree is removed it should be replaced with a native tree".
Reade will forward the slides for Mr. Van Clef's October presentation to MEC members for review and comments.

- d) 132 Millburn Ave / former Exxon Station (PP) – LSRP (Licensed Site Remediation Professional)– 3 UST's (Under Ground Storage Tanks) to be removed by 10/22/22. If reported as contaminated, the property owner NJ Energy can extend the time frame needed to clean up that site. A thought for this property is to create a pocket park or something similar. One way to attain this property and others is to create an Open Space Trust Fund tax. The funding would come from that tax. Priya will give an update on this property to the Township Committee at their next meeting.
- e) Stormwater Management/Green Infrastructure Ordinance (EV) – As per Mayor Miggins, Rahway's Mayor Coalition meeting is Friday, September 16. Topic is to review John Ruschke's Rahway River study.

New Business –

- a) Open Space (PP) – Discussed the idea of creating an Open Space Trust Fund. This was also discussed in 2021. Such a fund would be dedicated to acquiring and maintaining properties for open space and potentially for recreational use and historic sites. The law requires a referendum initiated by petition or the Township Committee. The process has many steps to be completed before it is proposed to vote on at the November 2023. If approved, the township would create an Advisory Committee to oversee these funds and, the Township can receive matching funds from the State. Priya will email her documentation to members and is making a presentation at the September Township Committee meeting.

Reade Kem motion to adjourn, Priya Patel 2nd with all in favor.
Adjourn 8:24

Carolyn Scannelli
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Minutes Secretary

Next MEC Meeting: *Tuesday, October 11th*