

Millburn Township Environmental Commission

Tuesday September 14, 2021 @ 7:00 pm

(Virtual meeting via Zoom)

MINUTES

Members: Joseph Barbanel, Edward Hilzenrath, Reade Kem, Wendy Minocha, Noah Packman, Priya Patel (chair), Odarka Stockert, Elizabeth Vollavanh
Absent: Jorge Mastropietro

Township Committee Liaison: Tara Prupis

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 June 8, 2021, minutes - Odarka Stockert motion to accept the minutes, Wendy Minocha 2nd, Edward Hilzenrath and Elizabeth Vollavanh abstain, others in attendance are in favor.
- d. Treasurer Report – Balance unknown at this time. Treasurer position open, interested committee member should contact Chair Patel.

Public Comment

Township residents Dennis and Melinda Culp spoke regarding the proposed parking lot at the library field. As residents of Glen Avenue, they feel that area is a natural waterway, and the area would serve a better purpose as a rain garden or something similar, especially after the high level of rainwater and destruction due to Tropical Storm Ida. Another parking lot is not needed and will make the area worse during storms. A few people have reached out to Chair Patel regarding the same issue. Chair Patel suggested the group get together and visit the site to see what can be done.

Communication

a. Millburn Green Team liaison (position open) –

b. Millburn High School E-Club (NP) 1st meeting Tuesday, Sept 21.

Projects in the works/completed:

1. Millburn Deli – established a 2 Good 2 Go offer which will offer discount food at the end of the day instead of discarding the leftovers. Priya will discuss the Food Waste Recycling Pilot with Noah as he is not familiar with this project.
2. After school hikes in the quarry to remove litter and broken glass.
3. Trash pickup in Taylor Park from Tropical Storm Ida.
4. An idea of upcycling used carpet to cover patches of invasive Japanese Knotweed to eliminate it.

5. Spotted Lanternfly – spreading the word to kill/destroy the fly as they cause serious damage to certain trees and plants.
6. Open enrollment for new Freshman members coming soon.

- c. Millburn Township Green Schools Team (JM) -
- d. Pedestrian Safety Advisory Board (TP) – No new update. Next meeting is in October.
- e. Bike Walk Millburn (JM) – Event postponed due to storm recovery.
- f. Downtown Area Vision Plan (PP)
 - Taylor Park - Finalize RFP at the September 21 Township Committee meeting.
 - This is for a redesign of the park entrance.

Township Committee Report (TP) -

- 2-way circulation – Preliminary phase continues to be worked on. Currently on hold due to Tropical Storm Ida. Eventually this will be presented by the Township Committee for public comments.
- DPW house proposed plan for a 75-unit affordable housing complex. A subcommittee is working on a high-level concept plan that will be presented to the judge and Fair Share Housing Center by the end of December.
- The affordable housing settlement agreement states that the township, including the EC, which is part of the local government, cannot openly directly or indirectly oppose the Woodmont properties housing development, who are proposing to build on land that is currently protected under the Watershed Protection and Moratorium Act.
- Flex parking removal is complete.
- Flood mitigation efforts – Rahway River Mayors Council met. A consensus plan was derived. The Army Corps of Engineers would oversee the plan. The DEP needs to advocate and sponsor the plan by sending a letter of intent to the Army Corps of Engineers, as this is a Federal Funded project. This has been an ongoing plan for many years, as the Army Corps of Engineers do not forecast storms, which could be problematic to the consensus plan, because the Orange reservoir has a bypass.
- FEMA will be at townhall Wednesday, September 15 to assist residents and business owners with applications.
- September 28, the Township Committee is meeting to discuss Tropical Storm Ida and flood mitigation. The Township Committee will form a Flood Mitigation Advisory Committee.
- Discussion of proposing a Bamboo Ordinance – Mayor Prupis suggested for the EC to add to their agenda under New Business, for further discussion. Which would include invasive species.

Planning Board report (JM) – The Township hired a new planner who will review a revised zoning re-elevation plan.

Old Business

- ⇒ Stormwater Management/Green Infrastructure Ordinance (EH/EV) – A New Jersey law recently required adoption of amendments and improvements to government Stormwater Management ordinance that requires major developments to have rain gardens and more natural conditions to absorb run-off. The enhanced version of the ordinance is to include minor development, residential and redevelop and to change the size of major redevelopments from 1 acre to .5 acre. Liz will have ANJEC review the proposed ordinance that she and Ed worked on. The proposed ordinance will be circulated to the EC for review prior to the next meeting.
- ⇒ Gas Powered Leaf Blowers Ordinance (JB) – Joe has not received feedback from Summit and Montclair, although he did receive a more positive feedback from Maplewood and Princeton. Some Landscape contractors are aware of these changes and are adapting to the use of solar & battery powered equipment and along with 2-tiered pricing. There is an editorial in the Millburn Item regarding banning leaf blowers and the AARP regarding everyday noises. Joe is finding it difficult to present to the Township Committee information that addresses landscaper contractors, residents, and noise. Priya stated that she spoke with Summit EC chair who stated the pilot summer ban seemed to have gone well. Joe will look further into Montclair's noise ordinance regarding

blowers. Tara stated that the Township is redrafting the noise ordinance, so now would be a good time to add input. Priya stated that there is a draft amendment to the noise ordinance. This will be forwarded to Richard for review.

- ⇒ Green Building Ordinance (JM/EV) –
- ⇒ Open Space Trust Fund (RK) – Reade would like direction from the EC, should the town create an Open Space Trust Fund without funds, so that properties could be discussed and pursued with funding later. Odarka thought that an Ordinance exists and references a fund, whereas when a developer develops properties that shouldn't be developed, they have an option to pay into that fund. Those funds can purchase similar land. Odarka asked if the funding could purchase residential flooded properties. Reade stated Green Acres Funding and Blue Acres Funding can assist with the purchase of these properties and preserving the property. Tara stated that the Township has had contact with Blue Acres, which is federally funded through FEMA. Residents must be willing, and the area must be a cluster of homes (more information on Blue Acres will be available on the September 28th meeting). Tara will share a link for Blue Acres with the EC. Priya stated that their needs to be a reason to set up an Open Space Trust fund. Once there is a purpose for the fund, and there is Township support, it could then be posed on the election ballot. Odarka suggested funding for properties along the river for flood mitigation. Wendy asked if the funds can be for one purpose or open ended. Priya stated that the Township Committee could set terms and add other elements such as recreation. Given the state of the town, there could be interest in supporting this fund for the purpose of purchasing river adjacent properties. Tara clarified that the JFK composting site could become a field – for a cell tower and DPW trucks. The leaves would be transported out of town. This would not be an open space area.
- ⇒ Food Waste Recycling Pilot (PP) – As of September 9th, 15,517 pounds have been diverted.
- ⇒ Whittingham Triangle Pollinator Garden (EV/OD) - All native pollinator plants have been planted. Many volunteers helped including The Green Team and Mark Robison. Liz and Odarka are proposing a new resolution that promotes native planting to be included on all Millburn government projects. The ordinance will provide both a native plant list and an invasive plant list for residents and business. A draft will be sent out for review. Also proposing a small event with the Green Team for a native garden seedling exchange. This will be promoted on the Sustainable Millburn website.
- ⇒ Energy Efficiency/Carbon Footprint webinar series (WM) – Will look into an energy efficiency topic. Late fall/early winter.
- ⇒ Community Choice Energy Aggregation (PP) – The Township enter into an agreement with Hunterdon Area Cooperative. Concord Energy is accepting bids. Rates should be in place for January and plus another rate for 100% renewable. Information will be mailed to residents. Solar panel homes are not eligible.

Announcements/Events/Miscellaneous

- Next MEC Meeting: Tuesday October 12, 7:00 PM.

Joe Barbanel motion to adjourn, Elizabeth Vollavanh 2nd with all in favor.
Adjourn 8:37

Carolyn Scannelli
Minutes Secretary