

Borough of Somerville
Environmental Commission
Minutes of January 14, 2014 Meeting

Meeting was called to order at 7:40 PM by Commissioner Gina Stravic, chair pro tem.

Roll Call: Gina Stravic, Vijay Tulsiani, Timothy Hayes, Katherine Hughes, Larry Cleveland Harry James, Jr, Granville Brady, Jr., Thompson Mitchell, Counsel Liaison.

Agenda: No formal agenda since this was a reorganization meeting to elect new officers.

Election of Officers: Gina Stravic, chair; Vijay Tulsiani, vice chair were nominated by acclamation.

Review of 2013 matters taken by Commission:

1. South side sewer mitigation-Memorandum of understanding by Borough, RVSA and DEP was ratified to mitigate the problem of sewage runoff and backup at the southern end of town. When completed, it is planned to re-open Southside Park. Councilman Mitchell announced that the sewer rate will be increased for usage along with an increase in the connection fees. Council bonded \$80,000 for mitigation project that will now be taken over by RVSA. Bond money will be used for an I & I study instead by the Borough to locate areas where the system is leaking. New policy: RVSA is developing long range plan to deal with excessive runoff and now requires TWA permits (Treatment Work Authorization) based upon I&I studies before any new construction is approved in the region served by the RVSA.
2. Kiosk at Exchange Field is available for public information related to environmental and other matters.
3. Community Forestry Plan-Tom Affaunorde wrote the new 5 year plan and tree inventory. Plans submitted to State for approval.
4. Tree Farm—progressing nicely. Transplant trees from our nursery going to various parts of town. This is a benefit to the taxpayers and provides a community service partnership between the Borough and the Boy/Girl Scouts who are volunteering to work with us.
5. Demond Place—Wholesale removal of trees to facilitate replacement of sidewalks was discussed. Commission would like to address replacement of street trees with homeowners as well as developing a policy with Public Works that would prevent the widespread destruction of street trees in the future.

Goals and Objectives for 2014:

1. Continue with Community Garden project in spring. Perhaps with HS environmental club.
2. Earth Day celebration April 26
3. Arbor Day event sometime in April-use tree grant funds of \$800 to enhance landscape at Van Fleet Gardens
4. Tree planting perhaps in October
5. Tree pruning workshop in November
6. Sustainable New Jersey application needs to be finished. Most of work is done but we need to review and enhance deficit areas for June 2014 submission.
7. Green Team was discussed. Re-activation should be considered by Mayor to take on Sustainable New Jersey tasks. Gina will discuss matter with Kevin Sluka.

Planning Board: Larry reported three issues being considered: need to regulate use of sandwich boards in DSA; Edgewood Properties (JSM) is coming back to Planning Board with revised plan for phase 2 at old landmark site to include an attached parking deck; Lot 4 parking deck is being proposed.

Councilman Mitchell: Council reviewing Green Seam project on landfill with Rutgers University students participating in study to pump contaminated ground water through a percolation method (bio-remediation) with clean water being pumped into the Raritan River.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Granville Y. Brady, Jr.

CC:

Kevin Sluka

Mayor and Council

Pete Hendershot

Brendan Nally

Michael Cole