

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

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by Chair Gina Stravic

Roll Call: Gina Stravic, Katherine Hughes, Harry James, Jr., Granville Brady, Jr., Tara St. Angelo , Thompson Mitchell, Counsel Liaison.

Also present: Roberta Harmon

1. **Minutes of the September, 2014 meeting was approved.**
2. **Somerville Girl Scouts presentation:** Andrea Thorne and the members of the Girl Scouts presented a tree pruning project that was overwhelmingly supported by the Commission The Girl Scouts' goal is to win a Bronze award for the project that would begin at Exchange Field with 20 hours of volunteer effort by each scout.
3. Communications
None
4. **Old Business:**
 - a. **Sewer updates-** No report
 - b. **Green Team**— Gina recognized contribution by Green Team and EC in preparing Sustainable Jersey application.
 - c. **Community Forestry Grant-**No update
 - d. **Tree Replacement Demond PI:** Gran finally got agreements from Kevin giving residents' approval to plant trees on Demond. Gran gave packets to Vijay and Tim to meet with Demond place residents and finalize the type of tree that would be planted. for Borough to
 - e. **Rain Garden project**— Tara communicated with Gina that the rain garden project is on track for October 14.
 - f. **Downtown Tree Preservation Committee**— Larry & Gran have been appointed by Mayor Gallagher this committee. Date and time TBD.
 - g. **Highlands's issue-** Tara wrote to the representative requesting EC to be informed if any further action is taken by the Highlands Commission. At this time, the issue is dormant.
 - h. **Rain Garden-**Leadership Somerset member Tara St. Angelo reported that 3 depressions have been dug for 3 linear rain gardens at Exchange Field to take excess water from the field. Press release will be sent out by Leadership Somerset when the project is complete. Tara asked if EC would be point of contact for media but it was suggested we reach out to the Rec Commission that operates Exchange Field about maintaining the Garden.
5. **New Business**
 - a. **Main Street Tree Pruning-**Vijay sent e-mail to all of us about the tree pruning on Main Street. This will be done on successive Sundays so as not to interrupt business downtown.

- b. **Shade Tree Conference**—Gina and Katherine plan to attend a shade tree conference on October 24.
 - c. **Sustainable NJ**—Former EC commissioner Roberta Harmon reported about her attendance at Duke Gardens to address issues about Sustainable NJ. The group shared experiences to help with topics such as Safe Routes to school. Thanks to Roberta and her team, Somerville attained 170 –points to be awarded Bronze status.
 - d. **Shredding project**—Vijay will work at Green brook on their shredding day to gain information about having such a project perhaps as a shared effort for Somerville. It would allow residents to shred large quantities of paper.
 - e. **Grants for 2015**— Vijay suggested that the EC devote time to exploring what the EC priorities for obtaining grants in 2015 would be.
 - f. **Main Street Tree Task Force**— Larry reported that the task force met to survey the trees on Main Street. He indicated that the second meeting was productive and that good rapport was being established with the task force members. Gran expressed concern about setting priorities that the EC could support. Gina suggested that the Task Force and the EC should meet with an expert in urban forestry. If that was not possible, Gina suggested that Rodney Hadley the interim head of DPW be invited to a future EC meeting to be apprised of the Committee’s concerns.
6. **Planning Board** —No activity to report
7. **Council Report**—Thompson has followed up with Council about a resolution for a Complete Streets Review. Planning Board has taken no action to date. Complete Streets is a concept that includes the main facets of street planning, e.g., cutouts, traffic calming, bike lanes, etc.) The sewer surcharge is still an issue with the RVSA. There continues to be a sewer backup in the area of Cadillac Drive that appears to be caused by grease. The issue of smart covers to sound an alarm when a sewer backs up is one area that could alleviate the problem but not the cause.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM

Respectfully submitted:

Granville Y. Brady, Jr.,

Secretary