

EC Meeting Minutes

August 11, 2015

Attendance: Tim Hayes, Katherine Hughes, Vjay Tulsani, Roberta Harmon, Larry Cleveland, Harry James, Gina Stravic, Tom Mitchell

There were no July minutes to approve as no meeting was held.

The Commission met at Van Fleet Gardens at 7:15pm to conduct a walk-through of the area gardens, trees, rain gardens and bike path to Exchange Field. Some observations for improvements and safety were as follows:

We will host an Environmental Commission led volunteer day with scouts and residents to work on:

1. Gazebo refurbishing
2. There are dead trees street side in the garden area that need replacing; suggested red buds or dogwoods from GS tree Arbor
3. Need to remove poke berry and creeper vines off shrubs by gazebo
4. Plants beds along Bridge Street need care and suggest dividing the peony and day lily tubers to expand planting and growth
5. The date chosen for the clean-up day was: ????
 - a. Larry and Tom will mobilize the boy scouts
 - b. Gina will communicate to: Middle Earth, the girl scouts, recreation commission, and Paul Alena for the website posting and e connect newsletter mailing

DPW suggested tasks:

1. Need DPW to cut 2 dead trees by gazebo; street side
2. Cut 1 dead tree by Grove Street corner
3. There is also a stump within the bush at the end of the fence street side to grind
4. DPW Hazard PRUNING ALONG BIKE PATH WAS ALSO RECOMMENDED for safety

Gina will check with Recreation Department to see if it is still being rented for wedding photos to learn their interest in the clean-up.

After evaluating the Van Fleet Garden and bike path area we walked over to Exchange Field.

Observations in that area include:

1. WW II monument could use some gardening care as existing shrub roses and plants are sparse
 - a. Suggestions for improvements included adding an ornamental tree or flowering shrubs
 - b. Also suggested we ask American Legion for donation as it is for the war monument and they are supportive financially
2. Playground opposite the YMCA is in dire need of mulch. The area is overgrown with grass and the mulch bed is not deep enough to meet state regulations. Members expressed liability concerns with the heavy use it gets especially by the YMCA
3. It was suggested that perhaps the YMCA can make a donation for improvements if there are costs beyond mulching or can DPW address this in full.

4. We looked at the updates to the rain gardens at Exchange Field. Tara was not present but she has assumed responsibility for their upkeep and it was difficult to know what the weeds were versus the native plants so she did obtain a chart with photos to aide in the process. Roberta will also reach out to the RVVC class/college volunteers to see what their schedule was for assisting with the rain garden care as previously arranged.

Reports:

Larry- gave a brief update on local building projects in town

Thom Mitchell had no report

Old Business

1. Meeting with Rodney Hadley – our member consensus was that it was productive and learned of the deficiencies of the department especially in manpower. The EC needs to encourage trainings for them and us and advocate for priority work and assist with mobilizing project and work days.
2. Katherine is completing the Emerald Ash Borer project for the state
3. The Rotary Club cherry trees were planted at the middle school but it was not the big project we thought it was to be.
4. The trees left over from the Earth day distribution were planted in the GS arbor by scouts

New Business

1. Green Team Focus - Tim spoke about working to obtain the next level in the Sustainable NJ program. He thinks that the brownfields project will gather a substantial number of points for work that is going on and relevant. Roberta also spoke to the walking school bus documents needed. The group set a date to meet as the Green Team and further look at what project we want to outline for 2016 submissions.
2. Gina reminded the members that to maintain our community forestry status we have to get core credits in a group training or 2 people will need to go to the conference again. No decisions were made.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, September 8th 7:30pm at Borough hall building

