

**BOROUGH OF SOMERVILLE  
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES – January 12, 2016**

**Present:** *Gina Stravic (Chair), Timothy Hayes (Vice-Chair), Vijay Tulsiani (Secretary), Sande Benscoter, Katherine Hughes, Harry James, Tara St. Angelo, Larry Cleveland (Planning Board Liaison), Tom Mitchell (Council Liaison)*

**Absent (excused):** *None*

**Members of Public Present:** *Adam Taylor*

Meeting called to order at 7:45 pm by Vijay Tulsiani.

**I. DECEMBER MINUTES – NONE**

**II. INTRODUCTIONS/WELCOME**

- Sande Benscoter was appointed to the Commission as a new member.
- Adam Taylor attended the meeting as a visitor. He is interested in getting involved with the Commission. We proposed adding him a member of the Somerville Green Team to assist in updating our Sustainable Jersey Application.

**III. COMMUNICATIONS:**

- NJ Shade Tree Federation CEUs: Gina passed along information regarding upcoming Webinars and Meetings for CEU credits.
- Paul Allena has been appointed to the Sustainable NJ Public Info Task Force.
- Environmental Commission Appointments were announced in the Jan 1, 2016 Borough of Somerville Reorganization Meeting: Gina (3 years ending Dec-2018), Tara (3 years ending Dec-2018), Sande (2 years ending Dec-2017).
- Tom Mitchell sent an e-mail (Dec 20, 2015) with the proposed Wastewater Planning rules.

**IV. REPORTS:**

**A. Planning Board:**

- Approved signs for Shades of Somerville.
- Issue with west lot of JSM/Shoprite development, construction debris and fence. Asked for motion to Planning Board to send request to JSM to remove debris or mask it with a proper covering fence.
- Davenport Apt Building requested extension of approval granted previously to complete PSE&G work.
- Kirby Avenue redevelopment site previously approved for 16 units/acre requested change to 22 units/acre. Request was not approved as no development plans were provided. It was recommended that they should try for transfer of development rights to get the higher density.
- Demolition underway for former Somerville Aluminum Building.

- B. Borough Council:
  - No environment issues discussed.
  - Steve Peter was elected as Council President.

**V. OLD BUSINESS:**

- A. Discussion on code enforcement for bulk items and recycling. Continue discussion on better education.
- B. Discussion on Complete Streets
  - Ordinance was passed and Planning Board is looking at the implications.
  - May provide grants for repairing sidewalks.
  - Restricted on Main Street projects since it is a state road.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. Commission Appointments
  - Gina was re-elected Chair by acclamation. Tim was selected as the Vice-Chair, Vijay was selected as the Secretary.
- B. Community Forestry Management Plan
  - Gina gave an overview and asked Commission members to review and provide feedback.
- C. Environment Commission Charter
  - Commission members to review and provide feedback on document sent by Gina (e-mailed Jan 12, 2016)
- D. Environment Commission Goals and Objectives
  - Commission members to review and discuss during the February meeting.
- E. Green Team Expansion
  - Adam Taylor (visitor at the meeting) volunteered to support the effort.
- F. Annual Community Forestry Plan Report
  - Commission members to review and provide feedback.

**VII. OTHER:**

- Need to remove the Tulip trees from the Girl Scout Arbor as they are getting pretty large.
- The EC should connect with the Recreation Commission regarding tree removal. A large tree was unnecessarily removed during the Exchange Field Playground renovation.
- The EC should also connect with DPW as it appears that their staff is not adequately trained on tree pruning as evidenced by the work on Main Street and other locations.
- Vijay to follow up with Kevin regarding renewal of the Commission membership in ANJEC.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.