

Borough of Hightstown
Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes

March 26, 2019

Meeting Date and Time: March 26, 2019 at 7:00 PM

Meeting Location: Hightstown Housing Authority Conference Room

Attendees: Keith LePrevost (Chair)
Donna LePrevost
Gary Grubb
Barbara Jones
David Zaiser (Shade Tree Official)
Susan Bluth (Council Liaison)
Yan Troizier (Vice Chair)
Joe Cicalese (Planning Board Liaison)
Jennifer Morgan (Peddie School Liaison)
Josh Jackson

Also in Attendance: Tom Musa
Eric Post
Charlie Harlich
Curtis Cromwell
Sandra Johnson (Oak and Hutchinson resident)

Absent: Tara Misiura (Hightstown High School Liaison)
Mike Pisauo (Watershed Institute)
Todd Frantz

Open Public Meetings Act Statement: In compliance with Chapter 213 of the Public Laws of 1975, notice of this meeting was given by way of the Annual Notice published in the Trenton Times and Princeton Packet by the Borough Clerk and posted on the Borough website.

Approval of Agenda: David Zaiser motioned to approve the agenda which was seconded by Donna LePrevost.

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes of February 26, 2019. David Zaiser motioned to approve the minutes as amended which was seconded by Donna LePrevost.

Shade Tree Matters:

a. Shade Tree Officials Report:

- A Princeton Elm will be planted in Association Park to replace one of the Oaks that is dying. Public works will remove the Oak and dig the hole.

Parks and Recreation:

- a. Top soil has been purchased for the community garden and will be spread and rototilled in.

- b. Fun Fridays will be in Association park this year. Everyone is concerned with the construction project and the impact on the park. The Borough and other commissions were not consulted and the Council is not pleased with the change. Keith feels the pedal boats may be a waste of time if the event is in Association Park. Susan will take up the issue with P&R and the Borough.
- c. The Police night out is being moved to Association Park this year also. Due to the wetness, mosquitoes and other issues.
- d. Tom and Gary met and discussed the Pedal Boats trailer and the modifications that will need to be made to the trailer so that its easy for whomever is working the boats. Tom will continue to work on acquiring a reasonably priced used trailer.
- e. Skate able art park is on track to be built this summer.

Borough Council Liaison:

- a. **Lincoln/Hagemont Project:** Carmela is still working on it. Carmela promises nothing is being done without our input. Keith commented that her email stated she was going to present to the Planning board and EC at the same time. This means the project is already set in stone. Sandra Johnson stated this is exactly what was done on Hutchinson, which has been terrible for the neighborhood. Susan promised to speak to Carmela to make sure resident and EC input is included. Curtis commented the neighbors do not want to see saplings replacing the majestic trees that exist. David commented that larger trees are more difficult to transplant, and they are very difficult to place between the curb and sidewalk. Eric commented that the Mayor promised the neighbors would be involved, and that is not happening. David commented we are having trouble getting across to Council that trees are an essential part of the street projects, and only cost about 1% of the overall budget. Barbara commented this town has never been tree friendly, look at the tree losses we have suffered in the last week, Bank Street, Stockton and Grant. These are major trees and assets that are just being removed without any consideration. Curtis questioned why the town doesn't budget and take care of the street trees, Keith commented that is a major push in the EC budget, to begin a tree maintenance program.
- b. **New Municipal space planning:** The Borough has asked all commissions and committees for input on the planning for the renovations to the YMCA building. Send ideas to Keith who will compile them and forward to the Borough for discussion at the public meeting.
- c. **Greenway Extension into East Windsor:** The mayor passed this on to Susan. Peddie has engineering drawings that were done, but no one knows where we are in the process. Keith requested that at meeting be set up with Hightstown, East Windsor and Peddie to discuss. Susan will set up the meeting.
- d. **Tree Ordinance:** The council will take up the ordinance again in a future meeting. The council is concerned with the process and penalty portion. Susan noted that all the municipalities are different and David needs to look closely at other towns for the next presentation. David feels the council did not completely understand the proposal, and he will prepare for the next meeting.

Planning Board Update:

- a. **Green Development Checklist:** Originally introduced in February, 2017, presented in December 2018; Carmela reviewed and modified some language. The checklist was reviewed by Planning Board and was on February's agenda to be voted on; however, the meeting was cancelled. The checklist was on the March agenda, and Steve Misiura asked that some of the cover letter language be modified. Carmela will modify for the April meeting.

Sustainable Jersey (SJ) Update:

- a. No update this month

Grants and Funding Update:

- a. ANJEC Grant – We need to discuss work days. Sundays seem to be the best days for the Peddie kids, as they have Saturday classes. Early afternoon is always best. Keith is meeting with Shani Peretz from Peddie and Ken Lewis to discuss volunteer days.
- b. The Watershed Institute "Green Infrastructure" grant: The watershed is dedicating approximately \$35,000 to Rocky Brook Park for stormwater and wetlands work. The mayor has finally agreed to allow the project to move forward.

New Business:

- a. Mercer County Sustainability Coalition update – Green fest was a great success, with over 1100 people came though, over 100 vendors. We had a good time and met a lot of people.
- b. Barbara – working on ways to make the Harvest Fair more sustainable. First meeting in April. Keith explained the goal of Greening the Harvest fair to the guests at the meeting.
- c. Hightstown/Allentown – looking for ideas to work with Allentown on initiatives. First idea is a Styrofoam drive to collect and recycle Styrofoam. We are also working with Allentown to do a larger joint Storm Water presentation and event. Let Keith know if you have any ideas.

Plan Review:

- a. We reviewed two pool additions.
- b. Perritt labs meeting tomorrow to discuss Green Infrastructure on their new addition.

Liaison Update:

- a. Meadow Lakes: No Update
- b. Peddie School: Composting program is working very well; students and kitchen staff are working well together and compliance seems good. Earth day events, kids are going to help down at Meadow Lakes with new floating wetlands, adding gravel to paths and general clean up. We will provide maps of the walking trails for the kids to clean up.
- c. Hightstown High School: No update.
- d. Watershed Institute: No update.

Correspondents, Conferences and Workshops:

- a. Keith discussed a letter received from a resident. He asks if the EC can step up and provide some enforcement of the idling laws. He has a bus stop near his house, and the parents just sit there idling. Keith wrote back asking him to discuss this with the Police department, as they should be enforcing both State Law and Local laws.
- b. Curtis reported he is going to remove the mature colony from the garden and replace with a younger colony that has a lesser chance of swarming.

Calendar:

- a. 4/13/19 – Arbor Day Stream Cleanup and Shredding Event
 - i. Coordinate with Watershed - Done
 - ii. Coordinate with Peddie and Hightstown High School – Peddie school students will not be available to assist due to schedule conflicts.
 - iii. Schedule Shredding Truck – Done – scheduled for 10 AM to 12 PM
 - iv. Advertise on Borough, EC, Downtown Hightstown, MCSC site
- b. 4/28/19 – St. Anthony’s Green Fair
 - i. Come up with theme: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
- c. 6/2/19 – Sustainable Jersey Application Due – goal of 500 points
- d. 10/12/19 – Harvest Fair
 - i. Theme – “Greening the Harvest Fair” – Barbara will start developing some ideas that we can discuss with the Harvest Fair committee.

Next Meeting: The next regular EC meeting is Tuesday, April 23rd, 2019, 7:00 PM.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned.

Ways to Eliminate Single Use Plastics

Food Shopping

- **Take reusable plastic containers to the fish market, butcher and deli for fresh meats**
 - Rectangular, shallow containers are perfect for the fish market and deli while deeper square containers are more suited for poultry and red meat
 - Provide the container to the sales person before ordering so the container can be weighed on the scale
 - Reusable plastic containers can be purchased online or in stores in multipacks at prices ranging from less than \$5 to \$25
- **Take your own shopping bags**
 - Some retailers give discounts to customers who bring their own bags
 - Reusable shopping bags are often given away free as promotional items
 - Bags can be purchased at stores or online for less than \$5 per bag
 - If you do have to use disposable plastic bags, repurpose the bags to line household trash cans, pickup animal waste, or recycle at a local grocery store
- **Reusable produce bags**
 - Eco-friendly, mesh bags allow produce to breath and they are washable for reuse
 - Nearly transparent to clearly see contents and scan barcodes
 - Many brands include the tare weight on the bag
 - Prices range from \$10-\$15 for multi-packs containing various sizes of bags

Eating Out

- **Take your own container for leftovers**
 - Avoid using disposable paper, plastic and aluminum single-use containers
 - Reusable plastic containers can be purchased online or in stores in multi-packs at prices ranging from less than \$5 to \$25
 - Repurpose plastic take-out containers for FREE
- **Leave the bag behind** – many restaurants offer a plastic bag to carry containers with leftovers. Tightly sealing containers shouldn't leak, so no need for the plastic bag.

On-the-Go at Work or Play

- **Try beeswax food wraps as a sustainable alternative to single use plastic wrap**
 - Made with eco-friendly ingredients including beeswax, natural fibers and tree resin
 - Washable, reusable and compostable. Wash in cool water with mild soap and air dry.
 - Beeswax wraps can be reused multiple times per week for up to a year!
 - Useful for wrapping cheese, fruit, vegetables, bread and sandwiches. Cover a bowl or pack a snack for your next adventure.
 - Use the warmth of your hands to soften the wrap and form over a bowl, container, or piece of food. As the wrap cools, it creates a seal and stores food naturally.
 - Available online in a variety of sizes sold in multipacks for around \$16.
- **Take your own travel coffee mug to the convenience store or coffee shop**
 - Keep beverages fresher and hotter than single-use paper cups

- In addition to reducing waste, some retailers offer a discount to patrons with refillable mugs
- Travel mugs made of various materials including stainless steel, ceramic and plastic are available in an array of sizes and designs
- Available at prices ranging from less than \$10 and may be found as promotional give-a-ways
- **Drink from reusable straws**
 - Eco-friendly straws made from durable materials such as stainless steel or silicone
 - Easy to clean – many are dishwasher safe or are sold with easy-to-use cleaning brushes
 - Food grade materials are safe for all ages and do not impart plastic flavors
 - Sold in multi-packs by stores and online retailers beginning at prices less than \$5
- **A travel cutlery set is perfect for eating lunches at school, work, or on-the-go**
 - Fork, knife, and spoon in a convenient and compact travel case
 - Made from a variety of eco-friendly products such as bamboo or available in traditional stainless steel or reusable BPA free plastics
 - Reusable and easy-to-clean
 - Sold for around \$8 online and in stores
- **Refillable water bottles**
 - Refilling is even better than recycling!
 - Water bottle filling stations are becoming increasingly available at airports, parks and other public places
 - Reusable water bottles are available in a wide array of styles, materials and designs at a wide variety of prices to meet the needs of everyone
- **Kick the single-use cup**
 - More than 57 BILLION plastic single-use coffee pods have been thrown away – that enough plastic to wrap around the Earth more than 72 times!
 - Regular coffee sold in single-use pods costs an average of \$50 per pound!
 - Eco-friendly refillable cups are available for around \$10 from a variety of retailers. Grind your own whole bean coffee for a fresher, cheaper and more sustainable cup of coffee
 - If you still want the ease of single-use pods, look for single-use pods made of 100% compostable materials available at Costco
 - If you do use single-use coffee pods, learn how to clean and recycle them properly. Many pods are made from #7 plastics which are not recyclable at many facilities.