

Borough of Hightstown
Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes
February 26, 2019

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

Meeting Location: Hightstown Housing Authority Conference Room

Attendees: Keith LePrevost (Chair)
Donna LePrevost
Todd Frantz (Secretary)
Gary Grubb
Barbara Jones
Leigh Isleib (Meadow Lakes Liaison)
David Zaiser (Shade Tree Official)
Susan Bluth (Council Liaison)
Yan Troizier (Vice Chair)
Joe Cicalese (Planning Board Liaison)
Jennifer Morgan (Peddie School Liaison)

Also in Attendance: Tom Musa
Sandra Johnson (Oak and Hutchinson resident)

Absent: Tara Misiura (Hightstown High School Liaison)
Josh Jackson
Mike Pisauo (Watershed Institute)

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 January 15, 2019. Barbara Jones motioned to approve the minutes as amended which was seconded by David Zaiser.

Shade Tree Matters:

a. **Shade Tree Officials Report:**

- i. Three oaks were reported in poor condition near the playground at Association Park. One is dead and two are diseased and require pruning. David will speak to Kenny with Public Works, EC recommendation is to remove dead limb from diseased tree near the playground and wait until the trees begin to leaf out to prune diseased portions of trees and remove the dead tree.

- ii. 301 Summit – resident asked David to evaluate an oak due to concerns it was overhanging resident's porch. Tree is not currently overhanging porch and does not pose a threat.
- iii. Shade tree report was submitted to the State and has been approved. Hightstown will be designated a Shade Tree USA community again this year.
- b. RISE – discussion on fine for tree removal and replanting – four Zelkova trees between the Borough parking lot and the Greater Goods store were removed by RISE to erect canopies on store. Borough will be levying a fine for removal of the trees under the existing Borough ordinance.

Parks and Recreation:

- a. Pedal boat storage – Gary has been in communication with various parties and has identified a supplier of fiberglass pods that can be used to store the pedal boats and life preservers. The pod is portable and can be dropped off at the boat launch for the summer and removed for storage at the recycling center during the winter. Tom identified a 24 foot mobile trailer that could be used to store about 6 boats and life preservers. Tom and Gary will meet before the next EC meeting to discuss options and present various options and costs at the March meeting.
- b. The walkway bridge construction over the dam on Peddie is planned for the coming summer months. Due to the construction, it has been proposed that Fun Fridays be moved from Memorial Park to Association Park for 2019. When the diseased oaks in Association Park are trimmed, the other trees in the park will also be evaluated for safety and needed pruning.

Borough Council Liaison:

- a. **Lincoln/Hagemont Project:** The survey has been completed and the Borough Engineer, Carmela, completed the map of existing conditions and began preparation of conceptual drawings. Sandra Johnson asked about committee that was formed per the Mayor's request. Keith clarified that once Carmela completes the conceptual design, he will reach out to set up the meeting of the committee formed to evaluate street trees for this project.
- b. **Rocky Brook Retaining Wall:** Project has been delayed for the foreseeable future.
- c. **Rocky Brook Park:** Construction debris from a Borough construction project is being staged in the park. Keith requested silt fencing be placed around soil and debris piles; silt fencing was erected by the contractor.
- d. **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.
- e. **Greenway Extension into East Windsor:** Councilmember Bluth will be reaching out to the Mayor of East Windsor to discuss the possible extension of the Greenway from Hightstown into East Windsor. This project is of interest for Mercer County.

Planning Board Update:

- a. **Green Development Checklist:** 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 will be on the March agenda.

Sustainable Jersey (SJ) Update:

- a. Keith has engaged multiple people from various commissions and Borough offices to assist with the preparation of action items for the next SJ submittal.
- b. Todd is working on the action items for the Climate Adaptation: Flooding Risk action. This action requires three primary steps – 1) build a team, 2) map community vulnerability, and 3) assess town readiness.
- c. Joe provided an update on the Walkability Audit. Streets and Sidewalks subcommittee met and is working on completing the audit but it may not be ready for June. The subcommittee will discuss what is needed to meet the goal for the Complete Streets Policy. Keith requested as much information be documented for the June submission even if the submission is not complete.
- d. Lee Stults is leading the Effective Parking Management action.

Grants and Funding Update:

- a. ANJEC Grant – Peddie Environmental Club has proposed Sundays as the best day to organize a cleanup day for Rocky Brook Park due to class and athletics schedules
- b. The Watershed Institute “Green Infrastructure” grant: The watershed is dedicating approximately \$35,000 to Rocky Brook Park for stormwater and wetlands work. This is currently on hold due to the Borough’s retaining wall project. Keith will work with the Watershed to identify alternate ideas for the grant.

New Business:

- a. Mercer County Sustainability Coalition update – MCSC is sponsoring Mercer Green Fest on March 16, 2019.
- b. Storm Water Ordinance – Keith proposed revising the ordinance to Borough Council but it was not well received. The item will be tabled for now.
- c. Todd – presented basics of the concept of the handout (attached) describing ways to eliminate single use plastics.
- d. Barbara – working on ways to make the Harvest Fair more sustainable.
- e. Keith – Recycling – working with Public Works to develop a pamphlet and educational program on proper recycling and how to distribute the information to the community.
- f. Keith – Direct Install Update – Keith has been meeting with local business owners to promote the program.
- g. Keith – Tree tagging in Association Park – The Park contains 27 unique varieties of trees. Plan to map the trees and add durable tags identifying each tree including a QR code with a link to info on the tree species. The trees have been mapped and we are ready to tag trees. Cost to tag is between \$260-\$290.
- h. Hightstown/Allentown – looking for ideas to work with Allentown on initiatives. First idea is a styrofoam drive to collect and recycle styrofoam. Let Keith know if you have any ideas.

Plan Review:

- a. No plans to review

Liaison Update:

- a. Meadow Lakes:
 - i. Evaluating a food waste recycling program.
 - ii. Meadow Lakes is moving forward with a reusable food storage container for leftovers. The community is no longer using plastic straws and now uses only paper straws.
 - iii. Citizens Climate Lobby is supporting the Carbon Dividend Act which places a fee on generators of carbon dioxide to reduce CO2 and evaluate alternative fuels. Meadow Lakes residents are currently writing letters to political officials in support of the Act.
 - iv. April 2 at 3pm – C Change Conversations will be speaking at Meadow Lakes.
- b. Peddie School: Food waste recycling plan will begin after Spring Break to recycle food waste from the dining hall. This will include recycling waste from the kitchen as well as educating the students on recycling requirements.
- c. Hightstown High School: No update.
- d. Watershed Institute: No update.

Correspondents, Conferences and Workshops:

- a. Keith attending the Rutgers “Stormwater Champions” program. Seven training sessions with Certificate at the end. Completed 2 of 7 trainings, next one is in early March. The goal of Rutgers is to have at least two “Champions” in each county to be a storm water resource.

Calendar:

- a. 3/16/19 – Mercer Green Fest – Rider College
 - i. Come up with theme – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.
 - ii. Hours are 10 – 4. Email Keith if you can volunteer.
 - iii. Make displays
- b. 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
- c. 4/28/19 – St. Anthony’s Green Fair
 - i. Come up with theme: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
- d. 6/2/19 – Sustainable Jersey Application Due – goal of 500 points
- e. 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, March 26, 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-aways
- **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.