

Pennington Borough Environmental Commission

Agenda for Nov 18, 2024, 7:30 pm

Zoom Virtual

Notetaker: Kieran John

Attendees: Joann Held, Jim Fuger, Nancy Fishman, Andy Jackson, Nell Haughton, Dan Rubenstein and John Valenza

Guest: Katherine Fullerton

Absent: Brian Friedlich, Yasmine Zein

1. Minutes were approved as amended from Nov 18th, 2024:
Motion to approve by: __Joann Held _____ 2nd by: _Dan Rubenstein ____
Aye__7__ Nay_____ ABS_____
2. No public comment
3. Administrative Items
 - The Commission congratulated Dan Rubenstein on his recent election to become a Council Representative
 - Kieran provided feedback from the October Committee & Commission Chairs Meeting. Borough administration will now be posting meeting minutes and agendas on an ongoing basis. They will post the backlog from all months in 2024. PEC have been submitting monthly minutes and agendas routinely in 2024 and these will now be uploaded to the borough website by Betty, and other commissions and committees were encouraged to do the same.
 - Kieran shared that the 2025 PEC Budget was submitted on time. Borough administration will let Kieran know status in due course.
 - Andy provided a brief overview of the last landfill focused redevelopment committee meeting that was open to the public. Not all EC members were able to attend so this was helpful.
4. New Business
 - **Continuous Learning**
 - i. A Discussion with Shade Tree Committee. The goal was to better understand the committee's priorities and to explore collaborative opportunities. Kate Fullerton provided an overview of the shade tree committee mission and scope of work. She also talked about the Community Forestry Management Plan which will be reviewed and updated by the committee in 2025. Should any input from the EC be required, the shade tree committee will reach out. Kate also talked about the status of the ongoing work involving numerous street tree removals (e.g. Pin oaks) due to bacterial tree spore infections. Lastly, Joann mentioned that she would forward to Kate whatever is the latest list of arboretum trees from the latest arboretum master plan.
 - **Community Engagement:**
 - i. Community Event #3 (Jim/Dan)

- Jim updated the commission on the latest developments regarding speakers, dates, suggested format of event, ideas for publicity & next steps. The plan currently is for Joann and Dan Napoleon to be featured speakers. The two dates identified are January 16th and 30th. Kieran will reach out to borough administration regarding having Kaitlyn moderate the online presentation. Format would involve a brief introduction by Kieran, followed by Jim F giving an overview of the survey, followed by Dan Napoleon, and then Joann. We would end with Q&A. Kieran would close the meeting. Joann will follow up with Dan Napoleon regarding his involvement. There was support to possibly extend the meeting up to 1hr 15mins. If possible, team will consider sharing a pre-read or backgrounder, possibly making it available on our EC webpage and referenced in any publicity around the event – the green team green card would be a good candidate for this backgrounder document. The team will also consider using PowerPoint slides during the presentation. Team agreed to name the event in line with the recently fielded survey, and will go back to the survey description to make sure we are addressing the topics as we presented it. Team would also explore the use of social media (via a one way communication format) with borough administration.
- ii. ANJEC Open Space Community Grant Award Update (Nancy/Nell/Joann/Kieran)
- Kieran, Nell and Nancy walked the arboretum cataloging trees & shrubs for QR coding. The team developed a document that was shared with the commission that outlined all the trees & shrubs that they proposed for inclusion in this project, along with photos of the trees, and they also developed a map of their exact locations. Nancy mentioned that we should have a tree expert verify the tree names team identified and the locations to make sure these are correctly identified.
 - Kieran described work ongoing with the Eagle Scouts. They are working on their internal Eagle Scout approvals necessary to begin their work on the QR code system and signage.
- **Strategic Projects:**
- i. Carbon Neutral Workgroup (Brian/GP/Joann/Andy /John V/Kieran)
- Joann and Andy provided a recap from the team’s October Carbon Neutral Meeting
 - Also shared was highlights from our November 14th Community Energy Plan Dialogue with Sustainable Jersey (SJ). During this dialogue SJ presented data on energy consumption in Pennington. There were some potential inaccuracies within the data presented which Sustainable Jersey said they were going to re-check. SJ also shared a draft generic high-level timeline that we will adapt for Pennington. John V reminded team that we should ensure that the carbon neutral

resolution related to being carbon neutral by borough operations by 2035 is incorporated into the planning.

- **Communications** (Nancy/Yasmine/Nell/Kieran)
 - i. Next steps for adoption of the “National Wildlife Federation Community Wildlife Habitat Program” was outlined by Kieran. It will involve presenting our recent EC recommendation for adoption of this program to Council. Kieran will develop a one-pager to send to Council and John will present this at next Council meeting.
 - ii. Kieran mentioned that during the next 2 EC meetings we would want to look ahead to 2025 and consider future planning & work prioritization
 - iii. Nancy & Yasmine mentioned that they would help draft content for the upcoming borough newsletter. They also discussed that they can help contribute towards the PR activities involved to promote the EC Community Event on recycling. As plans develop, the communications team can also help with communications involving community engagement related to Carbon Neutral CEPG planning, and also the NWF Community Wildlife Habitat Program.

5. General Updates:

- Borough Council updates (John Valenza). None.
- Planning/Zoning Board updates (Andy Jackson). Andy provided a short overview on recent ordinance amendments from 2023. He also explained that the Planning / Zoning Board have approved another area of redevelopment (Block 205, Lot 5 on North Main St). Finally he talked about their work related to developing and evaluating further affordable housing units in the Borough.
- Open Space updates (Nancy Fishman). Next meeting will be later in the week, so Nancy will report back on this at the next EC meeting in December.
- Carbon Neutral Workgroup updates (Brian Friedlich). No further updates or announcements to what has already been mentioned.
- Green Team & Sustainable Jersey updates (Joann Held). February 8th 2025 will be the next scrap metal recycling collection event. Last year the team collected 7 tons. Joann talked about a commercial mailer she saw sent to Pennington residents a few weeks ago and she has forwarded it to Tracey Woods at Sustainable Jersey. Tracey will help verify that what is being offered is truly legitimate. Joann will follow up on what she finds.

6. Future Agenda Items

- Junior PEC members
- Sustainable Jersey Certification

7. Adjournment: 9:02PM. Next Meeting: December 16, 7:30pm