

**Pennington Borough Environmental Commission**

Final Meeting Minutes for Dec 16, 2024, 7:30 pm

Zoom Virtual

*Attendees: Kieran John; Brian Friedlich; Joann Held; Yasmine Ze; Jimin Fuger; John Valenza; Nancy Fishman; Dan Rubenstein*

*Absent: Andrew Jackson; Nell Haughton*

*Notetaker: Brian Friedlich*

1. Call to Order/ Roll Call

2. Approval of minutes from Nov 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024:

Motion to approve by: \_Nancy Fishman\_\_\_ 2nd by: \_Jim Fuger\_\_\_

3. Public comment

4. Administrative Items

- Recognitions and Transitions

- *Acknowledging contributions of EC members transitioning out and celebrating recent achievements. Kieran expressed gratitude to Yasmine for her tremendous contributions to the Commission—particularly her enthusiasm and ideas, her work on reviewing the environmental components of the Master Plan, and her leadership in communications, including writing the quarterly newsletter with Nancy and developing a library of topics for future use. Yasmine is stepping off the Commission, and we wish her well. Kieran also thanked Dan, who is transitioning from the Commission to serve as a Council Person while remaining involved as our Council Liaison, noting Dan’s valuable input and perspective. Andy Jackson was recognized for masterminding the 2025 Master Plan, including its environmental elements, as well as for his ongoing dedication to the Commission. Special thanks went to Joann for all she does, including her recent Sustainable Jersey recognition and acknowledgment by the Mayor and Council at the last Borough Council meeting. Finally, Kieran highlighted the extraordinary efforts of every member of the Commission throughout 2024, emphasizing that none of these achievements would have been possible without their commitment and hard work.*

- 2025 Calendar of EC Meeting Dates

- *Kieran discussed proposed dates. There was agreement on list of dates, keeping Monday evenings for meeting schedule.*
- *Kieran will check on links for zoom calls.*

- Upcoming Events

- *January Council Meeting – Mayor will announce new EC members. 2 members are expected to fill alternate spots.*

5. New Business

- **Continuous Learning**

- *Andy attended "New Climate Vulnerability Assessment Action and Technical Assistance". Andy was not present at EC meeting – will discuss at future meeting.*
- *Nancy discussed Sierra Club webinar on artificial turf.*
  - i. *Nancy to send out 1 pager on artificial turf.*
  - ii. *Data is compelling – tremendous amount of plastic in artificial turf.*
  - iii. *Concern over forever chemicals in products and underpadding that breaks off and can be transported into waters.*
  - iv. *The temperature on artificial turf is 20-30 degrees higher than regular grass.*
  - v. *High maintenance cost of artificial turf fields.*

- **Community Engagement:**

- EC Speaker Series Community Event #3 (Jim, Dan, Nancy, Kieran):
  - i. Discussed news that number 5 plastics are now eligible to be recycled per MCIA. This should be a primary headline at the recycling event.
  - ii. Discussed January 16<sup>th</sup> or January 30<sup>th</sup> as possible dates. There was agreement that January 30<sup>th</sup> would be the better date.
  - iii. Speakers will include Kieran, Jim, Joann and Michelle Patnick from Terracycle.
  - iv. Joann will talk about recycling; reduce/reuse first; slide on examples of number 5 plastics; recycling reminders from MCIA. Terracycle initiatives include all-in-one zero waste boxes; upcycle store. Terracycle should focus more on technical information and less on advertising/marketing.
  - v. Dan Napoleon with MCIA could be potential speaker.
  - vi. We should discourage “wish” cycling.
  - vii. We could show videos of separating recycling materials at MCIA.
  - viii. Kaitlin Macellaro will be free to make sure technology is up and running and will moderate session.
  - ix. Joann will create an outline for session by end of first week in January.
  - x. We should have time limits on speakers – include in outline. Total time is estimated at 1 hour and 15 min.
  - xi. Jim will coordinate with speakers. Joann will send Jim Michelle’s email address.
  - xii. Name: Recycling: Beyond the Basics.
  - xiii. Should include a thanks to Terra Momo for survey award.

- ANJEC Open Space Community Grant (Nancy, Nell, Joann, Jim, Kieran): *update on EC arboretum project, including QR coding progress, Eagle Scouts and Arboretum Committee involvement.*
- **Strategic Projects:**
  - Carbon Neutral Workgroup (Brian/GP/Joann/Andy /John V/Kieran)
    - i. *Brian provided a recap from November Carbon Neutral Meeting, other related carbon neutral meetings from November, and key next steps re: development of the Community Energy Plan.*
    - ii. *Workgroup had a kickoff meeting with Sustainable Jersey. Discussed Pennington energy usage data and potential resources.*
    - iii. *Workgroup members attended Sustainable Jersey Peer Event on reducing energy consumption and emission from the transportation center.*
    - iv. *Finalized working team.*
    - v. *Exploring the need for a consultant to help with guiding and producing Community Energy Plan.*
- **Communications** (Nancy/Yasmine/Kieran)
  - Next steps regarding the “*National Wildlife Federation Community Wildlife Habitat Program*” (Kieran/John V). Costs are included in PEC budget.
  - Other communication updates (all); Nancy discussed email communications and social media.
  - Green Team can help with getting word out on events.
- **2025 Planning**
  - Looking Ahead to 2025 (all) – reflections on 2024 Plan (shared as a pre-read) & ideation on:
    - *Focus on community events in 2025.*
    - *Work on Carbon Neutral and Community Energy Plan.*
    - *Training for Site Plan Reviews.*
  - Next steps (Kieran)

## 6. Old / Unfinished Business

## 7. General Updates:

- Borough Council updates (John Valenza) - None
- Planning/Zoning Board updates (Andy Jackson) – Andy not present.
- Open Space updates (Nancy Fishman) - None
- Carbon Neutral Workgroup updates (Brian Friedlich) – Community Energy Plan updates.
- Green Team & Sustainable Jersey updates (Joann Held)

- Community Solar – 31% discount if you are a PSEG customer through Solar Landscape.
  - Green Team is working on getting word out on #5 plastics.
- Dan brought up an article on dangers of black plastics.

8. Future Agenda Items

- Junior PEC members
- Sustainable Jersey Certification

9. Adjournment: 8:50 PM

Next Meeting: January 27, 2025, 7:30 pm