

Pennington Borough Environmental Commission

Minutes for March 18, 2024

Zoom Virtual

Notetaker: Jim Fuger

1. Call to Order at 7:32 pm.

Attendees: Kieran John (Chair), Nancy Fishman, Jim Fuger, Joann Held, Andy Jackson, Dan Rubinstein, John Valenza, Yasmine Zein

Unable to attend: Brian Friedlich, Nell Haughton

2. Approval of minutes from February 26th 2024:

Motion to approve by Joann Held, seconded by Nancy Fishman

Aye: All Nay: None Abstain: None

3. Public comment - None

4. Administrative Items

- Kieran announced the New Alternate appointment to the Environmental Commission – welcome Nell Haughton!
- Highlights from 2/29 Public Works Tour - Five members of the Env Commission met with Rick Smith, Superintendent of Public Works. This included a tour of the public works building but focused mainly on the Borough's storm water management capabilities and in particular, problem areas / "hot" spots in town. The team collaboratively discussed ideas with Rick. These included but were not limited to need for cleaning out of drains and pipes of leaves, and possible funding with Hopewell Township to upgrade under-sized drainage pipes.
- Notice of Upcoming Events for March & April -
Shining Light on Community Solar webinar on April 9th hosted by ANJEC (Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions)

5. New Business

- Communications:
 - i. EC contribution to the Q1, 2024 borough newsletter was drafted by Nancy F and Yasmine Z, shared with EC, and sent to borough for inclusion. In addition, a list of shortlisted topics for future newsletters and community communications was shared. The EC was requested to

review these topics let Yasmine & Nancy know of any feedback. Q2 newsletter edition may possibly include information on water conservation during the summer.

- ii. EC Borough Webpage Refresh – Kieran and Yasmine proposed a new webpage outline that makes a concerted effort to significantly improve the content on our page in conjunction with the Borough's efforts to upgrade the platform. The document presented outlined why the EC borough webpage needs refreshing, the guiding principles for the refresh, a draft of the website elements and next steps. Kieran & Yasmine discussed there will be a short term fix for the webpage, and a longer term upgrade. These ideas will be presented in coming weeks to borough administrators for feedback.
- iii. Social Media Update – Kieran has connected with Ryan Schwab. He will explore what social media platforms are available to municipal commissions and what, if any, are constraints on how they are used.
- Community Engagement:
 - i. NJ Local Government Week – On April 10th there will be an Environmental Commission table from 5-7pm. There will also be a Master Plan Green Buildings and Environmental Sustainability Element (GBESE) display, from 2-5pm. Kieran encouraged the EC to attend both events to help staff the table and display. Everyone on EC should let Kieran know of their availability on April 10th to assist.
 - ii. ANJEC Community Grant Options – Kieran reached out to Chair of the Pennington African Cemetery and discussed the grant opportunity. A meeting will be arranged with members of the Pennington African American Cemetery board and EC members at the cemetery to discuss ideas, and to see if any of their needs can be met through this grant. The ANJEC grant application deadline is April 26th.
 - iii. Pennington Day (5/18) Planning – general planning details were discussed along with what may be our core messages to convey to the public on Pennington Day. This will be finalized at April EC meeting. Jim F created a new set of Q&A that are Pennington specific, and these will be used for the table engagement games. One unresolved question is whether we are recruiting volunteers for any local

environmental efforts (e.g. the Arboretum)? Otherwise, the blueprint from past years will be employed (Booth, ANJEC games, etc.).

- Strategic Projects:
 - i. Endorsement of GBESE –
EC provided excellent feedback to Andy on the GBESE. The EC's changes were reviewed, and many comments incorporated. Andy J moved that the Commission endorse the GBESE, Don Rubinstein seconded it. The vote was passed unanimously (6 For, 0 Opposed).
 - ii. Update on ERI – Kieran, Andy and John V have elevated the need for completion of the ERI with borough planner, Jim Kyle. Jim is working on it, and this should be finalized shortly.
 - iii. Status of 2023 GHG Emissions reporting – Andy directionally reviewed early data. Carbon emissions from Borough operations were generally down versus 2022. Details of the new data will be presented to EC at our April meeting before sharing more widely. A meeting on this topic with the new borough administrator, GP, will be scheduled in April.

6. General Updates:

- Borough Council updates - none
- Planning/Zoning Board updates – some discussion on possible redevelopment site on N. Main.
- Open Space updates – plan on co-meeting with Open Space committee this year.
- Carbon Neutral Workgroup updates – see above on GHG Emissions
- Green Team & Sustainable Jersey updates - none

7. Adjournment: 9:00 pm

Next Meeting: April 15, 7:30pm (Tax Day!)