

Pennington Borough Environmental Commission

Minutes for May 20th, 2024

Zoom Virtual

Notetaker: Kieran John

1. Call to Order at 7:32 pm.

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

Also in attendance: Meredith Moore (member of public)

Unable to attend: Brian Friedlich, Dan Rubinstein

2. Approval of minutes from May 20th, 2024:

Motion to approve by Joann Held, seconded by Nancy Fishman.

Aye: All Nay: None Abstain: None

3. Public comment - None

4. Administrative Items:

- *April Commission & Committee Chairs Meeting* – Kieran shared an overview from the meeting which included a representative of the senior advisory board and who advocated for the needs of seniors in all committee and commission planning. Kieran mentioned the Borough is continuing to evaluate each commission or committee having a single email address. More details on this will be shared when available.
- *Highlights from ANJEC's April Workshop* – Joann shared that ANJEC had a speaker talk about various stormwater management strategies, including but not limited to the use of rain gauges, detention and retention basins.
- *Notice of Upcoming Events for May & June* - Kieran mentioned about this year's Memorial Day Parade on May 27th and the upcoming June Council Meeting where Kieran will share our 2024 Commission priorities. Joann reminded all of us that May 25th was the opening Saturday for our local farmer's market.

5. New Business

- Communications:
 - i. *Website Update.* Kieran shared that we made an update to our existing EC webpage on the borough website. This update is live

and includes a new graphic, our EC Mission & Vision, a message from the Chair encouraging the public to get involved, and some information on meeting logistics. A fuller recommendation on our longer-term website needs was shared at a prior EC meeting, and this will be shared with borough administration in coming weeks.

- ii. *Social Media Policy Update*. Kieran shared the latest borough policy on social media.

- Community Engagement:
 - i. *Pennington Day (May 18th)* – Kieran thanked the team for their time and requested feedback on what worked well, and whether there were any areas for improvement. There was discussion that the ANJEC games were a good draw for the public into the booth, and once they were there, we successfully transitioned to our key messages (such as educating public on the role of Environmental Commission and what we do, the Watershed, the Arboretum, the GBESE and the ERI). What worked well were the Pennington specific questions Jim developed this year. For next year, a few areas of improvement would be to adapt more questions for younger (<10 years old) children, and to ensure that any candy we offered were nut free.
 - ii. *ANJEC Community Grant Submission* – Kieran shared that the application was submitted before the April 26th deadline. Kieran thanked Nancy, Joann, Nell and Jim who were involved. The grant results will be made public by ANJEC in late May / early June.

- Strategic Projects:
 - i. *Update on ERI* – Kieran, Andy and John V pushed in May for completion of the ERI with key borough stakeholders and the borough planner, Jim Kyle. Andy mentioned he also received some minor feedback from Kit Chandler which will be addressed. Andy proposed a motion that we approve the ERI subject to these minor changes. It was seconded by Jim, and all were in favor. The final version will be shared by John V for review at the next Council Working Session, and once that occurs, Kieran will ensure it gets posted and appropriately linked on the Borough website.

- ii. *2023 GHG Emissions report to Council* – Kieran reported that the GHG data that Andy compiled was incorporated into a slightly redesigned memo. This memo was shared with the borough administrator, who appreciated receiving an early version and he proposed no changes. Andy proposed a motion to approve the memo for distribution to the Council and this was seconded by Nell. All were in favor. Kieran will share the memo with Betty to distribute to the Council.
- iii. *Conservation of Natural Resources Element*. Kieran acknowledged the commission for everyone's efforts in reviewing and providing comments and suggestions to Andy. Andy proposed a motion to approve the element. Nell seconded it, and all were in favor.
- iv. *Green Building and Environmental Sustainability Element*. Andy provided an update based on new comments received from Susan Bristol. These would be evaluated by the GBESE writing team and Master Planning Committee and if appropriate, will be incorporated into a new version of the GBESE which will be shared with the EC for feedback and final approval.

6. Review of Latest EC Project Timelines & Priorities:

- Kieran reviewed our EC timelines and 2024 priorities, and conveyed we are on track with our plans.
- Kieran highlighted to Jim and Dan, that we should probably start thinking about plans for our 3rd and final EC Community Engagement event in 2024 (earmarked for late summer/fall). Jim said that he would start to discuss with Dan and any share ideas with the EC once further developed. Kieran offered to be involved in the planning should the team want.
- Andy mentioned that the descriptors and dates for the Master Plan elements in our 2024 Priorities document needed to be revised. Kieran would make these changes.
- Regarding stormwater management planning as mentioned in the plan, John V said he would bring up the topic at the next Public Works meeting and keep the EC in the loop as to next steps and level of involvement given existing work by Rick & his team in this area.

7. General Updates & Other Business:

- *Borough Council updates* – none.
- *Planning/Zoning Board updates* – none.
- *Open Space Committee updates* – Nancy reported that the committee is continuing efforts to negotiate a new tract of land purchase. She also suggested we might consider inviting the Open Space Committee to a future EC meeting to discuss this topic more. Andy mentioned that the Open Space Element of the Master Plan was also approved in May.
- *Green Team & Sustainable Jersey updates* – none.

8. *Any Other Business (AOB)* – Light pollution was briefly discussed and the team was reminded by John of what is covered within the latest ordinance, but the discussion was curtailed early due to time constraints, and we agreed that any further discussion would be moved to next month's agenda.

9. *Adjournment*: 8:54 pm

Next Meeting: June 17, 7:30pm