

Pennington Borough Environmental Commission

Minutes for January 22, 2024, 7:30 pm

Zoom Virtual

Notetaker: Yasmine Zein

1. Call to Order/ Roll Call

Attendees: Kieran John (Chair), Joann Held, Jim Fuger, Andy Jackson, Nancy Fishman, Brian Friedlich, Yasmine Zein, John Valenza (Borough Council Liaison)

Unable to attend: Dan Rubenstein, Michael Abrahamson

Members of the public: Nell Haughton

2. Approval of minutes from 18th Dec 2023:

- Joann identified corrections to the draft minutes in sections 3c, 4, 6c, 9b. Joann Held moved to approve amended minutes. Seconded by Andy Jackson. All in favor. Approved.

3. Public comment

- No public comment.

4. Administrative Items

- Transition of Chair (Kieran John)
 - i. Kieran thanks Joann for her great work as Acting Chair. Going forward, Kieran would like to see us continue the work we have been doing with even greater focus.
- Protecting Minors Video (Kieran John)
 - i. Members should email Mona to confirm after they have watched the video.
- Notice of Upcoming Events Jan & Feb (all)
 - i. Kieran will attend a commission chair meeting on February 1st and will pass on any relevant information
 - ii. ANJEC webinar titled “NJ Stormwater Retrofit BMP Guide Webinar” is happening on 1/23 from 12 to 1pm.
 - iii. Rutgers Extension Green Infrastructure Champions Program happens virtually on Friday mornings.
- 2024 Budget/ANJEC Dues (Kieran John)
 - i. Joann explained that the EC works with Betty to submit ANJEC dues. She will look into what steps were taken last year because the process went very smoothly.

5. Old/Unfinished Business

- MS4 (Kieran John/all)
 - i. A subgroup of the EC will set aside time to learn about MS4 and develop a point of view on stormwater management in the Borough. Nancy, Kieran, and Andy will join this subgroup.
 - ii. The Watershed Institute will be presenting at the Council work session meeting on 1/29 to discuss a coordinated approach between municipalities address stormwater management in the Stonybrook Watershed.

6. Updates:

- Borough Council updates (John Valenza)
 - i. On 1/29, the Council work session will contain a presentation by the Watershed Institute (described in 5.iii).
- Planning/Zoning Board updates (Andy Jackson)
 - i. The EC has been assigned three elements: The Green Building and Environmental Sustainability Element, the Conservation Element, and the Recycling Plan Element. The EC also has to develop a Climate Change/Natural Hazard Vulnerability Assessment for the Land Use Plan.
 - ii. Drafts of these documents are in progress or have been completed by Yasmine Zein. After feedback from the Citizen Advisory Committee is received, the Environmental Commission will be asked to review the drafts.
 - iii. Recycling will be covered in the Utilities and Green Building Elements rather than a standalone Recycling Element.
- Open Space updates (Nancy Fishman)
 - i. There is a tract of land on Federal City Road that is of interest to the Council. They plan to discuss the potential purchase of the property with the owners.
 - ii. In the spring there will be a second enclosure put up in the Arboretum
- Carbon Neutral Workgroup updates (Brian Friedlich)
 - i. A Community Energy Planning Grant through the BPU Clean Energy Program is available. The grant is for municipalities to develop a Community Energy Plan. The deadline for the grant is February 23. The first step is to get a Resolution in

support of the application on the agenda of the next Council work session meeting.

- ii. Motion to approve the pursuit of the grant from Andy Jackson. Seconded by Brian Friedlich. 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention (Jim Fuger).
- Green Team & Sustainable Jersey updates (Joann Held)
 - i. Mercer County Sustainability Coalition is hosting a Green Gathering at Cooper River View on January 24, from 5 to 7pm. All are welcome to attend.
 - ii. Hopewell Valley Green Team is sponsoring a Scrap Metal Collection at Hopewell Township Public Works Building on February 10 from noon to 3pm.
 - iii. The Green Team is looking into applying for a Sustainable Jersey capacity-building grant to develop a Valley-wide Communications Inventory and Communications Plan. The grant would be for \$2000. Application deadline is February 9. They will ask Hopewell Township to submit the application on their behalf since the Township has recently received Sustainable Jersey certification

7. New Business

8. Future Agenda Items

*The 3 new items added are Master Plan documents to be reviewed by the EC

- Community awareness & education (e.g. recycling)
- Junior PEC members
- Sustainable Jersey Certification
- Light pollution restrictions
- Green Building and Environmental Sustainability Element
- Climate Change/Natural Hazard Vulnerability Assessment
- Conservation Element

9. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM.

10. Next Meeting: February 26, 7:30pm