

MINUTES TENAFLY ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

January 19, 2023

In person meeting, Borough Hall.

Attendance: Olga Milanos (chair), Eve Bolkin, Mike Cassidy, Anna Makrinos, Julie O'Connor, Dan Park, Nina Seiden, Zina Spezakis, Jon Warms, and Dorothy Quincy (guest).

[The meeting was called to order at 7:40 PM.]

Statement of compliance with the Open Public Meetings Law.

The minutes of the December 1, 2022 were accepted with one correction. Eve Bolkin to send to Omar Stovall.

Julie provided a Council update:

- **Update on the grant award for the dog park/pool property:**
The County of Bergen has announced that the Borough of Tenafly will be awarded \$87,038, of the \$199,237.50 requested, for the improvements at the swim club property. (We received about 50% of the cost of those improvements that qualified for open space funds.) Award letters from the County will be sent in the near future. The next step is to sign the award, and then make engineering arrangements.

Julie distributed a map of the proposed plan for the space. This includes passive open space (e.g., a wildlife viewing area near the Tenakill Brook), a multi-purpose skate plaza, ADA compliant raised flower beds, and the current small and large dog parks. Dan noted that some portion of the work required will need to be submitted for competitive bids.

- **Purchasing Recycled Material:** Nina suggested that any equipment needed for the space (e.g., agility equipment for the dog parks), should be manufactured from recycled content. Julie agreed and noted that the COVID Memorial in Davis Johnson Park (which will be unveiled in the Spring) has now installed a recycled plastic bench ("plastic lumber"). Eve suggested that the town adopt a policy to encourage the purchase of recycled products, where feasible. Mike stated that the Green Team had adopted a similar policy in the past, but it was not a town resolution. Julie will bring this idea to the Council. (There may be similar initiatives in play at the county or state level.)
- **EV Charging Stations:** The Request for Proposal for the EV charging stations has been posted and we are waiting to see which vendors respond. Dan stated that we have now learned that the 2 fast chargers planned for the post office lot will each be able to charge 2 cars at once (i.e., 4 cars total). This updates information regarding charging capacity that was discussed at the last session.
- **Spring Tree Planting Update:** Julie reported that Allison Chertoff reached out to the principal of Maugham school. They are open to planting trees on their property; Mike has not yet had a chance to do a walk-through of the property to determine where trees may be planted. Anna will reach out to other schools to see if they are open to additional trees, as well. Zina will also reach out to her church to see if they would be willing to take trees. If they are interested, Julie will speak with the town attorney to see if the town can plant on the property.

Mike explained that, where a resident is willing, trees are planted within that portion of the resident's property that is considered the public right of way. The town has an easement to use this space and the DPW does not plant on a resident's private property outside of this area. If a tree is on the resident's property beyond this public right of way, the town ceases to be responsible for its maintenance or removal, if required.

Julie had spoken with Omar Stovall, and he will include a notice in the next town newsletter that residents may sign up for a tree to be planted on their property (i.e., in the public right of way space referenced above).

Mike provided a DPW update:

- The town is still paying for recycling, although the costs have decreased somewhat. The December charges were \$74/ton for comingled and \$25/ton for paper.
- The DPW has been seriously short-staffed recently.
- Mike has researched some composting options. Tenaflly has a Class C composting facility for leaves; we ship our grass to a Rockland County facility. We are interested in food waste composting (although, to date, this has not been feasible) because the cost of garbage collection is expected to skyrocket soon. Ridgewood participated in a pilot program in December but no data is available on the results of that experiment yet. There are companies that will collect food waste from homes for a weekly or monthly subscription. Mom's Organic Market in Paramus also accepts food waste (and other items, such as clothes and shoes). Mike will continue to research options.

Dorothy provided information about a composting program in Brooklyn, where she now lives. Residents volunteer to receive food scrap buckets and, once a week, they bring their scraps to collection bins that are placed at specific locations. She will obtain further information about this program to share with the EC.

She had also previously prepared a map of people who had volunteered to let their neighbors use their composter; this includes the Tenaflly Nature Center (TNC), which had agreed to accept food waste. Dan[?] will double-check with Alex from the TNC that we can include this information on the EC website. We recommended that Dorothy can ask the individual volunteers to let their neighbors know but we would not recommend posting this information publicly. Any such shared compost should be in the front yard, since it may be dangerous for people to freely visit someone's backyard.

Commented [EB1]: Confirm

Jon provided a Planning Board (PB) update:

- The PB approved the latest draft of the Open Space plan, with minor changes. They will submit it to the council next week.

Olga provided a Green Team (GT) update:

- Unfortunately, it appears that the Norwood Earth Day event will not take place this year. Eve noted that we are currently scheduling the Tenaflly Trash-a-Thon for May 7. If the Earth Day event is cancelled, we might consider the day planned for that event instead (April 22).
- The GT has requested the Borough Administrator, Jimmy Homsy, to add \$5K to the EC budget, which the EC would then earmark for the GT to use to improve the flower beds.

Old Business:

- Update on other recycling initiatives: There are currently no active recycle bins in town. Mike will check out the cost of piloting new clearly marked bins.
- The EC discussed the 2023 dates of the scheduled meetings. We agreed to move the December 7, 2023 date (which is the first night of Chanukah) to November 30 instead.
- ANJEC: Tenafly paid the \$400 annual fee to join ANJEC, which includes 7 subscriptions for their newsletter. Interested members of the EC signed a list so that Olga may submit their names to be included in the mailing list.
- Julie reported that Abby Kushman met with Tyler Tierney (Hackensack Riverkeeper Inc.). He will be scouting the Tenafly waterways to arrange a cleanup with high school volunteers. Julie will forward Tyler the previous stream study done by Rutgers that Anna will provide.

New Business:

- Zina will write an article for the town newsletter on replacing gas stoves. This will be an appropriate sequel to the previous article she wrote on the Inflation Reduction Act, which provides for rebates to households which replace gas appliances.
- Anna will contact the Board of Education to determine which school will host the Arbor Day planting this year.
- Zina will set up a Facebook page for the EC. Julie will ask Wendy Rubinstein, the town attorney, to learn if there is any social media policy that we need to follow and what disclaimers need to be posted.

Next meeting is February 16, 2023 at 7:30pm. (Olga will circulate the 2023 dates.)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Eve Bolkin.