

## MINUTES TENAFLY ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

February 16, 2023

In person meeting, Borough Hall.

Attendance: Olga Milanos (chair), Eve Bolkin, Mike Cassidy, Allison Chertoff, Julie O'Connor, Nina Seiden (by phone), Zina Spezakis, Jon Warms, Joie Evar (HS liaison), and Dorothy Quincy (guest).

[The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM.]

Statement of compliance with the Open Public Meetings Law.

The minutes of the January 19, 2023 were accepted. Eve Bolkin to send to Omar Stovall.

EC welcome Joie Evar, who will be the HS liaison next year. She is sitting in for Abby Kushman, who was unable to attend this meeting.

Julie provided a Council update:

- Tenafly Nature Center (Alex Braunstein) confirmed to Dorothy that it may be listed on the town website as a food waste compost center. Dorothy will request a few more details on the logistics and then we'll post this on the website.
- Tenakill Brook "stream clean up" with Hackensack Riverkeeper Inc. is set for March 26, 2023, from 12-1:30pm. The HS Green Team will be volunteering and may promote to rest of HS. Joie will also see if there is a Middle School Green Team and, if so, see if they wish to participate.
- EV Charging Stations: The town received 1 bid for charging stations and will be reviewing.

Jon provided a Planning Board (PB) update:

- The PB received a soil moving application to install a tennis court at 62 Churchill; after neighbor objections, the plan has been revised to move the area to the center of the property.
- The PB also received an application to combine two units (at 62-64 Piermont and 45 Harold St.) to create 2 warehouses, an a 1<sup>st</sup> floor office. There is some concern that they will be a lot of traffic, including trucks, at an area that has a lot of non-commercial traffic. One of the lots abuts the school at the Lubavitch Center.
- The PB also receive an application to merge 2 single family lots to create a 4 story building (ground floor office with 15 apartments) at 27-31 Central Ave, at the corner of West Railroad Ave.

Mike provided a DPW update:

- He spoke with a nursery and is waiting for their response to source the 200 trees that the TNC is willing to plant. Mike explained that these young trees are called "whips". (Proof that you can learn something every day, especially if you attend the EC meetings!)
- 13 residents have signed up in response to the notice included in the recent town newsletter notifying residents that they may sign up for a tree to be planted on their property (in the public right of way).

- To encourage more residents to plant trees, Julie will draft a notice for the town LED sign, which Mike will have posted. Julie will have this included in the Mayor's weekly message. Joie will write a piece for the HS paper, the Echo.
- Anna Makrinos (who was unable to attend today's EC meeting) followed up with the Superintendent to discuss planting options at school locations and is waiting for information.
- EC members discussed the increasing number of trees being cut down in town and the many streets that have no trees at all. Olga shared a picture of Downey Drive, which was almost completely bare of trees. Eve suggested that we create a leaflet that we can put in people's doors on streets that are particularly bare. She will draft a proposal for consideration.
- Spring Tree Planting Update: On February 24, 2023, Mike and Allison will do a walk-through at Maugham School to select locations for tree plantings.
- Arbor Day will be at Maugham School on April 28.
- Recycling charges have remained constant: in January, the town paid \$74/ton for comingled and \$25/ton for paper.

Dorothy provided a composting update:

Dorothy provided information about a composting program similar to the one she had described in the last meeting that was being offered in Brooklyn. This program is being offered by a company called Neighborhood Compost (see attached sheet). Residents volunteer to receive food scrap buckets and, once a week, they bring their scraps to collection bins that are placed at specific locations. The EC discussed and considered that there should be two drop off locations. The cost is approx. \$12-15K/year for a pilot program of 100 households, assuming 2x week collection bin pickup. However, there may be grants to help fund some of this cost (Dorothy and Zina will coordinate looking into this) and perhaps the pilot participants might fund a portion of the cost as well.

Dorothy noted that studies have shown that at least 25% of municipal waste is food waste. Zina noted that some studies say as much as 50%. If a successful food composting program were able to be implemented, savings on garbage collection might be able to offset the cost of the composting program.

Nina will look into whether Green Faith still exists. This was an organization that encouraged faith-based groups to become involved in environmental causes. If it still exists, they may be able to provide some support for this initiative.

Olga provided a Green Team (GT) update:

- The GT is working on the Community Garden. They will contact Joie to help enlist HS volunteers for to help lift soil bags for spring plantings.

Old Business:

- Olga will contact Dan Park (who was unable to attend today's EC meeting) to follow up with the town attorney to finalize the donation form, for plaques and benches.
- Eve confirmed that the Tenafly Trash-a-Thon date is remaining May 7 (12-4pm).
- The Downtown Committee (Jeanne Mermelshtayn) had contacted Eve to see about

coordinating EC Earth Day activities with local organizations. Eve suggested that they may wish to encourage shops to volunteer for the Trash-a-Thon. Otherwise, Eve suggested that they work with the Chamber of Commerce to plan Earth Day tie-ins on Earth Day itself (April 22) or that weekend. Eve suggested activities such as having eateries offer new vegan/vegetarian menu items that weekend or discounts on existing items; having clothing stores promote sustainability sourced materials. Olga suggested that eateries cease offering utensils or condiments, unless requested. New York State instituted a similar policy, called "Stop the Stuff". Julie will follow up with Christine Evron, Chamber of Commerce, to see if she is interested in pursuing such ideas.

- Update on other recycling initiatives: Mike will follow up on purchasing two or three recycling bins for the center of town for a pilot. Potential locations are by the bike store, the corner of Mint and the Brasserie, and by the old movie theater. Nina recommended that these be placed next to garbage cans to reduce the contamination of non-recycled materials being thrown into the recycling bins.

Miscellaneous:

- Attendees agreed to reschedule the March meeting from March 16 to March 30. Eve will not be able to attend so someone else will take the minutes.
- We understand that John Purdy, a member of the EC, recently underwent neck surgery and is recuperating. We send him our best wishes.
- Jon Warms noted that the Rotary Club is hosting a family game night on Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>, from 6-9pm, at David Johnson Park, with proceeds going to benefit the THS Senior Scholarship fund. \$15 adults; \$10 for children under 10.

Next meeting is March 30, 2023 at 7:30pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Eve Bolkin.