

MINUTES TENAFLY ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

March 30, 2023

In person meeting, Borough Hall.

Attendance: Olga Milanos (chair), Mike Cassidy, Julie O'Connor, Anna Yoon (Green Team), Anna Makrinos, Donna Sack (Green Team), Sue Truesdell (Green Team), Nina Seiden, Jon Warms, Joie Evar (HS liaison), Abigail Kushman (HS liaison).

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

Statement of compliance with the Open Public Meetings Law.

The minutes of the February 16, 2023 meeting were accepted, with no corrections. Eve Bolkin to send to Omar Stovall.

Julie provided a Council update:

- The SGAR's will not be used by the town this upcoming year. We put in the budget a rodent birth control called Contrapest. This will help take those poisons (SGARS) out of the environment.
- The resolution to install 4 dual port level 2 or higher EV chargers will be on the April 18, 2023 Council agenda. If all goes as planned, you will see EV charging in - at no cost to tax payers!!!! - by October, 2023.
- Free tree flier - They are made and can be distributed. Joie will be the point person to maintain an excel spreadsheet. People will determine which areas to target and the streets that receive the fliers will be noted on the spreadsheet so that they do not get repeated flyering. The spreadsheet will be shared.
- Cameras were not previously installed at the Rose Garden or the Davis Johnson Park meeting room entrance, but that will now be pursued in the upcoming month by Julie. Olga mentioned that the goal for the cameras is to be up by summer, because some people steal rose bushes in the summer months.
- Julie congratulated Abby, Joie, and the high school Green Team for their participation in the Tenakill Brook cleanup on March 26, in collaboration with The Hackensack Riverkeeper Alliance. Six bags of trash were collected in just 90 minutes! The photos are available on the town website and Environmental Commission page and the THS newspaper covered the event. This coverage and exposure will also serve as a way to promote the town-wide Trash-a-Thon on May 7th.

Mike provided a DPW update:

- He spoke with Barton Nursery to source the trees that the Tenafly Nature Center wants to plant. These young trees are called "whips." The whips will be in 3 gallon and 5 gallon pots. The TNC will receive 120 trees (as the 30 black walnut and the 50 chestnut oak are not available) at the cost of \$5600 to be paid from the town tree fund. This was noted as very reasonable.
- The Arbor Day planting will be on April 28th at 9:00AM at the Maugham School (see separate section).
- After Arbor Day, Anna Makrinos and Mike will communicate with the school

superintendent to see which schools will take trees. The schools are very open to this project and all 6 schools in town will be considered.

- The DPW now has 40 requests for trees from residents (as of 3/30/23). The town LED sign and the town newsletter advertising the tree program appear to be working. [Residents may sign up for a tree to be planted on their property (in the public right of way).]
- Recycling charges have remained constant: in February, the town paid \$74/ton for comingled and \$25/ton for paper.
- McKay Elementary School is getting a visit from the DPW recycle truck and the students will learn about recycling.
- Mike wanted to note that the DPW has a shortage of driver/laborers.
- A tree truck to do the trimming of trees is arriving on April 4th. The town will own this one and not have to borrow from other towns.

Jon provided a Planning Board (PB) update:

- The PB received an application for the Benjamin Brothers property for a four - story apartment building. The application is extended to the end of the month.
- Nina inquired as to whether there was a limit to the number of variances the PB gives to any one property.
- The parking issue is still unresolved in relation to the movie theatre and other downtown properties. Building apartment buildings is contingent on whether parking is supplied.

Olga provided a Green Team update:

- There are 6 new gardeners.
- There are twice as many gardening plots this season due to the new bed construction.
- They are spreading compost this weekend (first weekend of April)
- The pollinator garden, abutting the council chambers, is diversifying the plants with more variety.
- Sue Truesdell is working on the Master Gardener Certification.

Composting:

- Julie read the following statement from Zinna Spezakis about neighborhood composting (in-absentia on 3/30/23):

“Zinna will be talking about the financial model for a test Pilot program she built with respect to Tenafly composting at the next meeting. She has also reached out to additional organizations that do municipal composting as a price and service comparison to “Neighborhood Compost”. She will have that data available for the next meeting.”

Anna provided a school update:

- The Maugham school library is receiving three Arbor Day books. They are getting the tree at 9AM on April 28th- The tree is being dedicated to “the Maugham community”.

Abigail provided a high school update:

- The high school has had some recycling compliance issues this year, but now

recycling is being organized with janitors. The HS Green Team and the janitors are solving the issue internally and promoting it among the student body.

Old Business:

- Dan (who was unable to attend today's EC meeting) will present the garden donation form for the next meeting. Olga mentioned that she is not receiving his email attachments.
- The Tenafly Trash-a-Thon date is May 7 (1 - 4pm).

Next meeting is April 20, 2023 at 7:30pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Julie O'Connor, PhD.