

MINUTESTENAFLYENVIRONMENTALCOMMISSION

April 20, 2023

In person meeting, Borough Hall.

Attendance: Olga Milanos (chair), Eve Bolkin, Mike Cassidy, Anna Makrinos, Julie O'Connor, Dan Park, Nina Seiden, Zina Spezak, Jon Warms, Joie Evar (HS liaison), Dorothy Quincy (guest), and Nydia Bonilla (guest).

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

Statement of compliance with the Open Public Meetings Law.

The minutes of the March 30, 2023 were accepted. Julie O'Connor to send to Omar Stovall.

Julie provided a Council update:

- **EV Charging Stations:** The town received 1 bid for charging stations from the vendor, Greenspot, and it was approved by the Council on Tuesday, April 18. There will be no cost to the town and the vendor will be responsible for maintenance. Moreover, the stations won't have any advertisements. There will be Level 2 charging stations in 4 locations: the municipal lot by the library, by CVS, by the bus stop, and across from Café Angelique near Huyler Park. Each port will be capable of charging two cars. The vendor has agreed to install Level 3 charging stations where possible. Dan added that another EV charging station is under consideration to be installed in the post office lot, pending a decision as to whether it will be a single port with 2 plugs or 2 machines with 1 plug each. This station will cost \$250K but the town was awarded a grant of \$200K toward this amount.
- Jon noted that the town might need to consider if it wishes to update the code to provide that only EV's can park in an EV charging spot. The EC agreed that a sign that the spot is reserved for EV charging may be all that's needed for the time being. If this is found not to be sufficient, a change in the code might be warranted.

Mike provided a DPW update:

- Arbor Day will be at Maugham School at 9am on April 28. The EC will present and give a brief history of the EC. In this regard, it was noted that the 1st meeting of the EC occurred in 1992.
- Of the 40 trees for which residents signed up, the DPW "sited" 30 trees and will be planting them shortly.
- Eve and Julie distributed leaflets which encourage residents to sign up for a tree to those persons interested in placing these in mailboxes on streets that are particularly bare of trees. Joie (and Abby Kushman, not present), on behalf of the HS Green Team, shared a link of the spreadsheet of the town streets that they created. Before leafletting a street, an EC member can check the spreadsheet to see if someone else has already passed out notices. Anyone leafletting a street should tell Joie and Abby so that they can mark this on the spreadsheet.

Jon provided a Planning Board (PB) update:

- The PB received a proposal for an apartment complex at the Benjamin Brothers (BB) site (to be called "The Benjamin"). The proposed development will have less impervious space than the present imprint but more than the maximum currently permitted (i.e., 65% max permitted; BB has 97%; proposal is for 79.5%). The comparison isn't exact, of course, since the usage of the space is completely different.

- A draft of the revised Master Plan is available and will be subject to public hearings in May. Julie requested a copy.

Olga provided a Green Team (GT) update:

- The GT is working on the Community Garden. They sent soil from 4 spots in the garden to Rutgers for testing. Rutgers determined that the soil was safe and produce from plants in the garden would be safe to eat.
- The older garden boards (i.e., on the west side of the garden) are rotting. They were made with 12x1 boards instead of the recommended 12x2 boards. The Council had reserved \$4K in the budget for the Garden. So, there is money to replace the boards. The next step is for Ron (from the DPW) to look at the site and arrange for the boards to be replaced.

Zina and Dorothy provided a composting update:

- Dorothy presented at the Council about a \$1500 ANJEC grant for composting. Julie praised Dorothy's work and presentation and stated that the Council had been very interested in learning about composting but had not had enough time to consider whether to apply for the grant before its deadline. The Council has requested a subcommittee be formed. This will be comprised of the Borough Administrator (Jimmy Homs), Olga, Zina, Dorothy, and Mike. They will be scheduling a Zoom call. Julie will be attending to listen in.
- Zina presented on a program that dehydrates organics. This has been piloted by Google and was so successful, it is now being deployed throughout their offices. Tacoma, WA is starting a pilot as well. Participants in the program put the dehydrated matter in a box for USPS delivery back to the company. It is ultimately turned into chicken feed. There is no decontamination fee. It is anticipated to cost about \$33 family/month. This may be a preferred option to the Neighborhood Compost program discussed at a prior EC meeting, in which residents bring their scraps to collection bins at drop off locations. While that has an anticipated cost about \$64 family/6 months, the dehydration program might be simpler for participants.
- Dorothy mentioned that incorporating teaching about composting in the schools has been shown to substantially increase family buy-in to composting. She is currently pursuing a Master Composting Certificate. Julie noted that, once Dorothy receives this certificate, we could explore having Dorothy present at schools.

Old Business:

- Dan is waiting on the town attorney to finalize the donation form, for plaques and benches.
- Eve provided an update on the current promotion activities for the Tenafly Trash-a-Thon, scheduled for May 7 (12-4pm):
 - The HS Green Team has put up posters around town.
 - The Superintendent's office has sent out a second mailing to the schools to encourage participation.
 - Mayor's message encouraged registration.
 - The town LED sign has posted about the T-A-T.

Joie will be publishing a newsletter for the HS on Friday, April 21. She also noted that the HS Green Team will be visiting Mackay School and will teach about the T-A-T. Abby had reached out to Eve and Deb Davidson (Tenafly Nature Center) to confirm

that we may tell the Mackay Principal that students signing up for the T-A-T will be posted to pick up trash near the school, so that they can see how their actions have impacted their own environs.

Dan confirmed that he has arranged for 60 tongs for the day. Eve asked him to see if he can obtain more since, last year, we used all tongs and we are hoping to have an even greater participation this year.

Miscellaneous:

- Olga reported that the property owner wishing to build above the old movie theater sent the EC a notice requesting a flood hazard hardship exception to permit it to build although there's an underground stream by the property. The notice requests a response for public comment. The notice was apparently being sent in connection with the April 26 public hearing. Dan will compose a response for Olga to send on behalf of the EC stating that we're concerned about building on a floodway.
- Jon obtained a copy of a Vienna, CA ordinance banning balloons. He will forward to Julie to see if the Council may wish to propose something similar. At the moment, Tenaflly only has a "policy".
- The Tenaflly Nature Center Annual Dinner is being held next Friday, April 28. Jon Warms is being honored (Founders' Award for Conservation). Eve and Abby will also receive recognition (Community Partner Award).

There is no New Business.

Next meeting is May 18, 2023 at 7:30pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50pm.

Respectfully submitted by Eve Bolkin.