

Rahway Environmental Commission

MINUTES

Thursday, May 12, 2022

7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:11 p.m.

ROLL CALL

On a call of the roll, the following Commissioners and Officials were present:

Mr. Jeffrey Robinson, Chairman
Mr. Joseph Paszek, Commissioner
Mr. James Keane, Commissioner
Ms. Denise Rolong, Commissioner
Ms. Michelle Gil, Commissioner
Mr. Alexander Parker, Commissioner
Mr. Jordan Parham, Second Alternate Commissioner
Ms. Gina Holmes, Clerk

Absent:

Ms. Clea Carchia, Commissioner
Mr. Eric Hausker, First Alternate Commissioner
Ms. Joanna Miles, Council Liaison

FLAG SALUTE

MINUTES

Approval of minutes of the Regular Meeting on Thursday, April 14, 2022

Motion: Commissioner Rolong

Seconded: Commissioner Keane

Plant sale date 5/15/22, noon – 4 p.m., Mountainside (change)

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SPEAKER

None

HEARING OF CITIZENS

Pranita Bijlani – 103 Princeton Ave., Rahway, NJ
Volunteers with Antinanco Earth Arts School in Holmdel, NJ which specializes in environmental conservation and education. Ms. Bijlani is looking to offer support to the Environmental Commission in reference to the design of the empty property located on Bramhall Road.

COMMUNICATIONS

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

UC Air Traffic Noise Advisory Board - (Chairman Robinson is the EC rep to this Board)
No Meeting

Bayway CAP – (Commissioner Paszek is the EC rep to this Board)
Meeting scheduled for May 10, 2022. Will supply list of all upcoming events being held in Rahway at meeting.

Letter to UC Chairman of Open Trust Fund Al Mirabella – Bazega Park – Still have not heard back from Ms. Durham however Mayor Giacobbe thinks that our request will happen.

Letter to UC Parks Director Ron Zuber – Bramhall Road County Park site – Chairman Robinson spoke with Mr. Zuber who stated that they are considering installing a community garden at this location. Ms. Bijlani spoke with Mr. Zuber who informed her that Councilman Brown has been hired full time to manage this property. Chairman Robinson spoke with Councilman Brown and suggested that there should be more than just a community garden at this location such as a rain garden or a butterfly garden.

Rain Garden – Chairman Robinson spoke with City Engineer, Daniel Lee who informed him that the request has been put into the DOT for the curb cuts and is waiting to hear back. Commissioner Keane stated that at the last Master Gardeners meeting, Rutgers does not feel that this garden will ever be successful due to planting mistakes by Rutgers. The rain garden maintenance schedule will be on Saturdays from now until 10/29/22.

Sustainability Jersey Application – City Engineer, Daniel Lee is working with the City of Rahway's grant writer, Millennium Group to complete the application.

LEED Requirements for redevelopers – Rahway Redevelopment agrees with our suggestions and will try to encourage all builders, but it is not practical to mandate. Mr. Landolfi asked us to supply him with information on how LEED will help developers have a higher occupancy and be able to charge a larger rent.

Opportunity to tour Waste Management food waste recycling facility in Elizabeth – Due to a fire the facility is closed.

N.J. Plastic bag ban and A2065 Bill – the bag ban became effective on 5/4/22 and the A2065 Bill allows all nonprofits to continue to use plastic bags for food distribution.

U.C. Hub – the next meeting is scheduled for 9/15/22 in Springfield

Protecting municipal stormwater rights – a copy of our Resolution will be given to Councilwoman Miles to submit to the City Council.

Free Salem Oak Seedling – the seedling now has leaves

Earth Day Events/Annual Rahway River Clean-up – There were many volunteers at the clean up including Chairman Robinson, Commissioner’s Carchia, Gil and Hausker.

NEW BUSINESS

The City of Summit opened a tiny forest which Chairman Robinson is going to take a tour of. <https://patch.com/new-jersey/summit/summit-open-tiny-forest-where-over-150-trees-will-be-planted>

Shade Tree Committee – Commissioner Parham gave update:

Commission wants to answer the question – “What is the street tree problem?”

- What trees to plant?
- Where are they needed?
- How to get people to want trees?
- Education on the importance of trees?
- How trees sustain people and wildlife.

The first few meetings have focused on meeting each other and to figure out each person’s purpose on the committee. Meetings are 2nd Thursday of each month at 4:30. Members include:

Assemblyman Kennedy	Bob Markey
Councilwoman Miles	Jordan Parham
Mike Smalling or designee	Mike Smanko
Dan Lee or designee	vacancy

Arbor Day was celebrated on 4/23/22 at St. Georges and Central Ave. and an American plum tree was planted.

Rahway Living Well Event is on 6/4/22 from 2-5 p.m. Environmental Commission will have a table that needs to be manned where we will hand out literature and reusable shopping bags.

Montclair's Native Plant Ordinance requires all plantings be native plants but it has not passed yet.

Sustainable Jersey Sustainability Summit will be held on 6/24/22. If anyone plans on going, please let Gina know ASAP so she can get a purchase order completed. (Flyer distributed)

Middlesex Water Co. lawsuit includes some Rahway residents.

NJ Electric Vehicle Ordinance mandates that every municipality have an ordinance (charging stations).

Commissioner Rolong brought in samples of products from Try Bite – website is: <https://bitetoothpastebits.com/>

SITE PLAN REVIEW/PLANNING & ZONING BOARD ITEMS

Planning Board has approved a 2-story apartment building with commercial on the first floor and a parking lot in the back at 382-386 W. Grand Ave., Rahway. Applicant is planting shrubs near parking lot and 2 new trees.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

ADJOURN

The next Regular meeting of the Environmental Commission will be held Thursday, June 9, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at 337 E. Milton Ave., Rahway, NJ. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Motion: Commissioner Parker
Seconded: Commissioner Rolong
Unanimously approved

At: 9:03 p.m.