

**BOROUGH OF SOMERVILLE  
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION  
MEETING MUNUTES – MARCH 12, 2024**

**PRESENT:** Jeffrey Lamborn (Chair), Helene Venizelos (Vic Chair), Sandra Benscoter (Secretary), Geoff Keiser, Timarie Diehl, Rebecca Reitman-Garofalo, Jefry Tineo, Laurence Cleveland (Planning Board Liaison), and Glen Denys (Borough Council Liaison).  
Green Team: Gina Stravic and John Guarino.

**ABSENT:** Geraldine DeSapio.

**GUESTS:** Michael Skomba, (Somerville High School teacher of Social Studies and the Environmental Club), Rosemary King (SHS Curriculum Supervisor), Mateo Aguriie and classmates from the SHS Environmental Club.

Mateo Aguriie shared the Environmental Club's proposed plans for a Rain Garden at Somerville High School. Michael Skomba and Rosemary King discussed the sustainability curriculum at Somerville High School.

The meeting is called to order at 7:36 p.m. by Jeff. This meeting is called to order in accordance with the open public meeting law. Notice of this meeting is posted on the Somerville website. A copy of this statement will be included in the minutes.

**I. MINUTES:** February 13, 2024. Minutes were approved on a motion made by Timarie, seconded by Glen, and carried unanimously.

**II. COMMUNICATIONS**

- A.** Sande reported no EC mail at Borough Hall this month.
- B.** Sustainable NJ posted an article regarding EC's community garden.
- C.** Social Media – Timarie Diehl
  - 1.** Posted request for volunteers to work at community garden cleanup.
  - 2.** 71 Likes and 473 views on our media sites.
  - 3.** EC info posted on Borough website.
- D.** Jefry will update the EC kiosk.
- E.** A follow up is needed with Leann at PSE&G.

**III. OLD BUSINESS**

- A.** Tree ordinance subcommittee: Jeff, Geoff, Gina, Larry, Glen and Jefry discussed 3 areas of focus.
  - 1.** Current ordinance.
  - 2.** Integration of current ordinance with basic state suggested ordinance.
  - 3.** Consider a more substantial ordinance. Look into Princeton and Mt. Holly.

- B. Wallace House and Old Dutch Parsonage – Geraldine DeSapio.**
  - 1. Will meet with Paul and Barbara Beckley, a volunteer with special interest in historical gardens to visualize and plan a garden at the Old Dutch Parsonage.
  - 2. EC will participate in the Journey Through History weekend in the fall.
- C. Earth Day Cleanup, Green Fair and Town Swap April 20, 2024 – Timarie.**
  - 1. Town Swap – Friday to Sunday.
  - 2. Town Cleanup – SHS parking lot – 9:00 a.m.
  - 3. Green Fair – Division Street – 11 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
  - 4. Geoff will provide music.
  - 5. Members viewed media banner designed by John and Timarie.
  - 6. Suggestions made by members of additional people to invite to participate.
- D. Parkview Playground.**
  - 1. Colin Driver advised the original people involved from the DEP are no longer employed at the DEP. Representatives going through old records.

### **III. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Community street tree planting – Geoff.**
  - 1. Saturday, 3/16/2024, flyers will be distributed throughout town and notification will be on EC social media sites.
- B. EC needs to choose a date to plant the trees purchased with the grant money.**
- C. ANJEC in person session – Saturday, April 13, 2024.**
  - 1. Fundamentals for Effective Environmental Commissions.
  - 2. Somerville Civic Center - 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

### **IV. REPORTS**

- A. Green Team – Rebecca Reitman-Garofalo – Laison**
  - 1. March 15<sup>th</sup> - applications going out for garden beds.
  - 2. April 20<sup>th</sup> – drawing at Green Fair.
  - 3. May 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> – planting can begin.
  - 4. Gina wrote a letter for GT to seek local donations for the garden.
- B. Planning Board – Larry Cleveland – Laison**
  - 1. Received application for an apartment building – Foundry – located on the corner of Fairview Ave. and James Street.
- C. Borough Council – Glen Denys – Laison**
  - 1. Borough is targeting grants for Somerville.

The motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Geoff.  
Seconded by Helene.  
Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

