

**BOROUGH OF SOMERVILLE
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES – APRIL 9, 2024**

PRESENT: Jeffrey Lamborn (Chair, Helene Venizelos (Vice Chair), Sandra Benscoter (Secretary), Geoff Keiser, Rebecca Reitman-Garofalo, Geraldine DeSapio, Laurence Cleveland (Planning Board Liaison), and Glen Denys (Borough Council Liaison).
Green Team: John Guarino.

ABSENT: Timarie Diehl and Jefry Tineo.

Guest: James Meiser.

The meeting is called to order at 7:41 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: March 12, 2024. Minutes were approved on a motion made by Helene, seconded by Glen, and carried unanimously.

II. COMMUNICATIONS

- A.** Letter received for wetland interpretation for Brookside Apt. entity.
 - 1. Glen inquired if permits were requested by Brookside at Somerville LLC.
- B.** Bridgewater's Green Fair on April 21, 2024, will be held on the municipal lawn.
 - 1. Info for our Sustainability Fair was posted on their website.

III. OLD BUSINESS

- A.** Sustainability Fair on Division Street – April 20, 2024.
 - 1. Jeff will create a Facebook event invitation.
 - 2. Parking passes discussed.
 - 3. Starting at noon until 2:00 p.m. music will be provided by Sweet Hollow (Geoff and Kristin Keiser).
 - 4. Geri and Rebecca reported several businesses on Main Street will participate.
 - 5. John will create signage to be placed in windows for participating businesses.
- B.** Town swap will begin on Friday (4/19) and continue through Sunday (4/21).
- C.** Earth Day Cleanup agenda was discussed.
- D.** Tree Ordinance Sub Committee is discussing and working on a new ordinance.
- E.** Colin Driver reported to Jeff the playground on Fairview Avenue was sent a Notice of Final Action.

- F. ANJEC training will be held in Somerville's Civic Center on April 13, 2024.
 - 1. Environmental Commission success strategies will be discussed.
- G. Geoff reported he had 64 responses for the Street Tree Program.
 - 1. Properties need to be evaluated.
 - 2. Letters will be sent to those accepted or are on a waiting list.
 - 3. Money was given to the borough by PSE&G for the trees they removed.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- A. DSA Infrastructure Committee- Jeff is currently a member.
 - 1. Discussion of street trees.
 - a. Applied for a grant to replace 2-3 downtown trees suggested by EC.
 - b. The approximate cost to replace a tree is \$30,000 to \$50,000.
 - c. DSA will start by removing the grates surrounding the trees.
- B. NJUFC grants.
 - 1. Applying for a Tree Inventory and Community Forestry Management Plan was suggested.

V. REPORTS

- A. Green Team – Rebecca Reitman- Garofalo – Laison
 - 1. Camera crew filmed the first dig on 3/16/24.
 - 2. Working on funding and donations.
 - 3. Geri raised \$800 – enough for 4 additional planting beds.
 - 4. Brenden suggested looking into Carol Pager Park for the next community garden.
 - 5. Name will be drawn from a lottery and announced at the Sustainability Fair.
- B. Planning Board – Larry Cleveland – Laison
 - No Report.
- C. Borough Council – Glen Denys – Laison
 - No Report.

The motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Geri.

Seconded by Helene.

Meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.