

**BOROUGH OF SOMERVILLE
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES – MAY 14, 2014**

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

ABSENT: Jeffrey Lamborn.

GUESTS: David Devorn (Somerset County. Energy Commission volunteer), Isabella Scricco (RVCC Environmental Club), and Mel Quesada (RVCC Environmental Club).

The meeting is called to order at 7:06 p.m. by Helene. 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.

David Devorn shared his involvement as a volunteer in Somerset County's Energy Commission and their involvement in renewal energy.

I. MINUTES: April 9, 2024. Minutes were approved on a motion made by Geoff, seconded by Geri, and carried unanimously.

II. COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Sande reported no mail for EC this month.
- B. Timarie announced approximately 899 followers on the EC social media sites and an outreach of 3,200 prior to our Earth Day events.

III. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Gina reported approximately 150 trees from a state grant were planted throughout areas in Somerville including the Middle school, the High School, Carol Pager Park, Lepp Park and the World War 1 Memorial on Culver Street.
- B. Timarie shared the planning group's recommendations after the 3 very successful Earth Day events.
- C. An additional tree planting was held with SHS students and Somerville Girl Scouts. Glen led the Girl Scouts on a Tree Walk afterwards.
- D. Tree Ordinance: Removal and replacement – Jeff and Geoff reported to EC.
 - 1. Discussion concerning enforcement, application process, size of tree the program falls under, definition of hazard tree and penalties.
 - 2. EC members will be emailed the corrected version to vote on.

- E. Street Tree Program – Geoff**
 - 1. Program successful.
 - 2. Planted 16 trees. Spent approximately \$10,000.
 - 3. Watering bags given.
 - 4. Geoff will send letters to the residents on the waiting list.
- F. Jeff reported there is no new update from the DSA concerning the removal and planting of trees on Main Street.**

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Gina will apply for the Board of Public Utilities \$10,000 Community Grant.**
- B. Parcview Playground – Glen and Geoff**
 - 1. During the second meeting Mayor Gallagher requested EC viewpoint.
 - 2. EC discussed options:
 - a. Need permission from developer for Borough to test soil. Results made public.
 - b. Remove 6 inches of soil. Put down barrier. Replace it with clean soil.
 - c. Do not accept property as is.
 - 3. Glen will take the discussed options back to Mayor Gallagher.

V. REPORTS

- A. Green Team – Rebecca Reitman-Garofalo - Liaison**
 - 1. Opening Day went well.
 - 2. 16 beds planted.
 - 3. Somerville Brownie Troops painting rocks for the community garden.
- B. Planning Board – Larry Cleveland – Liaison**
 - 1. State of NJ sent letter advising the installation of two speed humps.
 - a. One on West End Avenue, near the Immaculate Conception driveway and one on Main Street, near the Giardina Walkway.
 - 2. The developer for a proposed apartment building on Fairview Ave. agreed to move the building back a short distance and was given approval by the Planning Board.
- C. Borough Council – Glen Denys – Liaison**
 - 1. Discussion on removal of overgrowth of bamboo located on the Greenway behind the electrical business on South Bridge Street.
 - 2. Borough applied to Somerset County for a loan to match Green Acres money to purchase 165 Mountain Ave. to complete the Greenway in Somerville.

The motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Geoff.

Seconded by Timarie.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

