

**BOROUGH OF SOMERVILLE
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES – AUGUST 9,2022**

PRESENT: Jeffrey Lamborn (Chair), Helene Venizelos (Vice Chair), Sandra Bencoter (Secretary), Roberta Harmon, Geoff Keiser, Janet Perantoni, Gina Stravic (Borough Council Liaison) and Larry Cleveland (Planning Board Liaison).

ABSENT: Glen Denys and Rebecca Reitman-Garofalo.

Green Team: Geri DeSapi, Bridget Lacerda, and James Luque.

Meeting was 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: July 2022 minutes. The minutes were approved on the motion made by Geoff, seconded by Helene, and carried unanimously.

II. COMMUNICATIONS

- A. No EC mail this month.
- B. Jeff and James sent letters to prospective new Green Team members.
- C. Bridget posted current photos on Instagram and Facebook.
- D. Geoff updated EC website.

III. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Larry reported the Rezoning Advisory Commission will consult with Land Use and Borough attorneys concerning spot zoning, which is still under review. Commission will look forward and submit report.
- B. Self-Assessment review. Jeff found responses to be mostly proficient and several super star. He made several suggestions to go forward.
 - 1. Approach Borough Council requesting a budget for EC.
 - 2. Research implementing a Shade Tree Commission.
- C. Urban Community Forestry and SNJ deadlines: end of 2023.
- D. NRI – refer to Master Plan – Larry will research but wait until we work on SNJ.
- E. Nation Night Out review: Roberta reported a good response from community.
- F. Jeff arranging for September Street Tree Walk. UCF training.
- G. Larry is on a Planning Board off shoot committee to walk the town sidewalks with a yard stick to confirm tables, etc. for restaurants are within the required setbacks.
 - 1. Grates around trees are to be removed and the area repaired.

- H. Street Tree plantings: Geoff is calling and sending emails to the 13 residents who requested trees. Plantings will be on Cadillac, Hamilton, and Walnut Streets and a few other local streets.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Tabled date for planting of the donated trees by MetLife at Arthur Chambers Park. Location may change, also.
- B. Sande requested preferred date for the Salem Oak seedling planting at the Wallace House. **Sunday, October 9 at 1:00 pm** was chosen by members. The planting will coincide with Somerset County's Weekend Journey Through the Past. The theme at the Wallace House is King Trees and Queen Bees.
- C. Gina discussed leaf pick up in the borough, suggesting composting is a way for residents to put the unwanted leaves to a beneficial use.
- D. Jeff stated we need to gather pictures and record the trees in Somerville.
 - 1. Jay Kelly, professor at RVCC, offered the help of his students to record the trees.
- E. Roberta demonstrated a small tabletop composting bin. Waste can then be dumped in the Community Garden compost bin.

V. REPORTS

- A. Borough Council – Gina Stravic – Liaison
 - 1. PCB's found in the Kirby Avenue site is now cleaned up.
 - 2. SNJ Gold Star Standard in Water – 30 points
 - a. Suggested Gina tell Somerville water story and apply for grant.
- B. Planning Board – Larry Cleveland – Liaison
 - 1. Cottage Industry – Cottage Food operator use – state requirements lax.
 - a. Discuss and provide draft of recommendations.
 - 2. Warehouse in Bridgewater.
 - a. Somerville Council adopted truck weight restrictions on certain streets in the borough.
- C. Green Team - Geri reporting.
 - 1. Rebecca ordered 4 planting beds, a bird bath and wind chimes.
 - 2. Rodney will contact Rebecca concerning wood chips for the garden.
 - 3. Janet wrote a Community Garden contract. Next meeting **August 30, 2022**.
 - 4. Firemen assembled shed. Discussion on thank you gift.

Motion to adjourn meeting was made by Janet.

Seconded by Helene.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.