

**BOROUGH OF SOMERVILLE
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES – FEBRUARY 14, 2023**

PRESENT: Jeffrey Lamborn (Chair), Helene Venizelos (Vice Chair), Sandra Benscoter (Secretary), Roberta Harmon, Geri DeSapio, Rebecca Reitman-Garofalo, Geoff Keiser, Glen Denys, Gina Stravic (Borough Council Liaison) and Larry Cleveland (Planning Board Liaison).
Green team: Tanya Althoff.

Visitors: Michelle Hatfield (Americorp – NJ Watershed Ambassador), Neil Hendrickson (Licensed Tree Expert), Frank McAleavy and George Wentz.

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: January 2023 minutes. Minutes were approved on the motion made by Helene, seconded by Geoff, and carried unanimously.

II. COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Sande reported no EC mail received.
- B. Request from Somerville Middle School for EC to be involved in the school garden.
- C. Email from ANJEC: Effective EC programs offered virtually in 4 sessions.

III. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Helene posted on EC social media site info on plastics ban and the zoning meeting in Bridgewater concerning the proposed building of a warehouse on east lane of Rt. 22. We currently have 418 followers on Facebook.
- B. Roberta reported the kiosk is up to date.
- C. Jeff is in communication with Sahel Abraham concerning his Eagle Scout requirement. Sahel suggested doing a project on the Spotted Lantern Flies. Communication will continue.
 - 1. Neil Hendrickson stated the Spotted Lantern Fly numbers are diminishing and are less bothersome to trees.
- D. Sande reported on Bridgewater warehouse meeting. No public comment. Next meeting is March 7 in Bridgewater. Somerville's main concern is truck access.
- E. Helene updated our progress on SNJ. Date for submission is February 26, 2023.
 - 1. Roberta questioned points for medical drop boxes. We will also lose points for participation in shredding events. The county is assuming all responsibility.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- A.** Frank McAleavy (borough resident) asked for solutions for the fallen/dead trees in and along Peters Brook. The silt and the dead trees in the brook are diverting the water causing a hazard and flooding situation.
- B.** Jeff conducted review of 2023 partial work plan.
 - 1. April 3rd – Green team fruit tree planting and lottery party for the garden.
 - 2. April 21st – Arbor Day – Distribute tree seeding at the Somerville YMCA lot. Four people needed to help.
 - 3. April 22nd – EC Green Fair and town wide clean-up.
 - a. Contact John Knox to sponsor booth.
 - b. Bridget – town swap.
 - c. Distribution of tree seedlings by EC members.
 - d. Contact American Water for participation.
 - e. Somerville H.S. parking lot -Set up 8 a.m. - Public: 9:00 a.m.
 - f. Paige Greenfield – community seed bank display.
 - 4. June 3 – Community Tree Trek
 - 5. September 12 – Glen will lead Tree Walk.

V. REPORTS

- A.** Borough Council – Gina Stravic – Liaison
 - 1. Tree upheaval at 4 Walnut Drive.
 - 2. Came up for a vote: change property into a redevelopment zone from Police Station to Veterans Memorial Drive.
 - 3. Investigate county’s green infrastructure plans.
 - 4. Suggested our representatives to the Flood Advisory Commission push green infrastructure in the upcoming meetings.
- B.** Planning Board – Larry Cleveland – Liaison
 - 1. Approved a Middle Eastern Restaurant with a change of façade, new venting, etc. at 109 West Main Street, the old Melting Pot Restaurant.
 - 2. Approved a subdivision of property at 254 Altamont place where it intersects With Summit St.
 - 3. Approved a hybrid sprinkler system for 50 Kirby Street (old Baker & Taylor site).
 - 4. A promised park needs to be completed prior to an occupancy permit for 40 Haynes Street.
 - 5. Borough owned building and land at 52 Fairview Ave. is up for auction.
- C.** Green Team- Rebecca Reitman-Garofalo – Liaison
 - 1. Jay Scott Memorial Garden.
 - a. Garden lottery sign up deadline is March 30, 2023.
 - b. April 3rd - lottery party at the garden where winners are announced.
 - c. April 29th – Garden orientation for winners at 10:00 a.m. at the garden.
 - d. Fee is \$10 per garden bed. One bed will be kept for Green Team use.
 - e. May 1st – official opening of the garden – planting will start.

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Geri.

Seconded by Helene.

Meeting adjourned 9:20 p.m.