

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

PRESENT: Jeffrey Lamborn (Chair), Helene Venizelos (Vice Chair), Sandra Benscoter (Secretary), Geri De Sapio, Rebecca Reitman-Garofalo, Geoff Keiser, Glen Denys, Gina Stravic (Borough Council Liaison) and Larry Cleveland (Planning Board Liaison).

ABSENT: Roberta Harmon.

Green Team: Paige Greenfield.

VISITORS: Yug Acharya (Boy Scout - Troop 84), Sagor Acharya, and Shail Acharya.

Meeting is called to order at 7:37 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 2023 minutes. Minutes were approved on the motion made by Geoff, seconded by Helene, and carried unanimously.

Yug Acharya appeared before the commission to discuss ideas for his Eagle Scout project. The commission suggested rehabilitation of the tree information signs in Carol Pager Park. Also, suggested to contact Kathy Gerndt in the Recreation Department for permission or other ideas.

II. COMMUNICATIONS

- A.** Sande read a section from a letter by Paul Soltis, Interpretive Specialist of the Wallace House, commending the presentation of EC's seedling planting program.
- B.** Jeff advised members to check email for EC training.
- C.** Virtual webinar on food waste scheduled for March 29, 2023. A discussion on leftover food from restaurants followed.
- D.** Gina brought up ANJEC grants for purchasing land and smaller scale grants of \$1500.
- E.** Jeff called to attention the town clean-up with Jason Kraska on Saturday, March 18, 2023.
- F.** Helene mentioned Bridget posted info concerning the Community Garden and Earth Day Swap on our social media sites.

III. OLD BUSINESS

- A.** Discussion on additional Green Fair participants.
- B.** Helene updated EC on additional needed info to complete SNJ application.
- C.** Gina will take charge of seedling distribution at the Somerville YMCA on Friday, April 21, 2023.
- D.** Earth Day Green Fair and Town Clean-Up is Saturday, April 22, 2023. Tree seedling will be distributed, also.
- E.** Helene and Sande will create a new seedling poster for the Fair.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- A.** Geri met with Paul Soltis.
 - 1. Discussed EC installing an herb garden on site.
 - 2. He suggested having a 1st anniversary of the seedling planting celebration.
 - 3. Paul saved leaves from Oak seedling and a copy of Geri's poem to be include in a statewide scrap book.
 - 4. Wallace House receiving 2 large grants.
- B.** Discussion on the proposed flood hazard ordinance. EC members felt it should be stronger.
- C.** Gina suggested the town advise the company mowing our park areas to be more cautious of the 'no mow' zones along Peter's Brook.
- D.** To celebrate Read Across America Gina will read to 4th and 5th grade students or do an outdoor project with them at Van Derveer School.

V. REPORTS

- A.** Borough Council – Gina Stravic – Liaison
 - 1. Discussed the recently discovered needed remediation of the property where the new Police Station is to be built.
 - 2. Discussed the rezoning of the current Police Station and an RFP.
- B.** Planning Board – Larry Cleveland – Liaison
 - 1. Application for 109 W. Main, Middle Eastern Restaurant, approved.
 - 2. Fresh Restorations on E Main St., was advised to communicate with the fire department after the court case.
 - 3. Larry informed EC of the Bridgewater B of A meeting concerning the 2 buildings, lighting and insufficient parking for the proposed warehouses on Rt. 22 E. Their next meeting is May 2, 2023.
- C.** Green Team – Rebecca Reitman-Garofalo – Liaison
 - 1. Community Garden poster is at the Somerville Library and the YMCA.
 - 2. At this time there are 11 online responders for garden beds.
 - 3. Rebecca Scott's G.S. troop will create decorated tin can for the garden.
 - 4. Les Floyd offered to paint a mural at the garden. Members suggested the mural be painted on the shed doors.

Congratulations to Glen for being nominated as a candidate for Somerville Borough Council.

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Glen.

Seconded by Helene.

Meeting adjourned 9:10 p.m.