

**BOROUGH OF SOMERVILLE
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES – JANUARY 11, 2022**

PRESENT: Gina Stravic (Chair), Sandra Bencoter (Secretary), Janet Perantoni, Geoff Keiser, Glen Denys, Rebecca Reitman Garofalo, Larry Cleveland (Planning Board Liaison), and Thompson Mitchell (Borough Council Liaison).

TELEPHONE: Jeffrey Lamborn (Vice Chair) and Helene Venizelos.

Green Team: Colleen Reh Sweeney

Meeting was called to order at 7:42 p.m. by Gina. 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.

Welcome to a new Green Team member, Colleen Reh Sweeney and congratulations to Rebecca Reitman Garofalo as a new Commission member.

I. MINUTES: November and December, 2021 minutes. The minutes were approved on a motion made by Janet, seconded by Glen and carried unanimously.

II. COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Reminder of ANJEC renewal for 2022. Sande will complete the form and forward to Borough Clerk Administrator.

III. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Roberta installed 1st quarter information in the kiosk at Exchange Field.
- B. Geoff is now able to add contents to EC page on the Borough website.
- C. Jeff requested EC members volunteer hours and will summarize for 2021.
- D. Sande received an email from Paul Soltis stating he was waiting for permission to plant the Salem Oak seedling on the Wallace House property in our combined event.
- E. Sande received an email from Ms. Pressey, NJT to inform EC the NJ Train Station Beautification program was on hold due to current Covid conditions.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Goals for 2022: Communication
 1. Invite Patty Hunt, Somerville's new Communication Director, to our next meeting.
 2. EC will do a clean-up of the rain garden across from the "Y" before our April meeting.
 3. By February meeting, target date for the Community Garden.
 4. Plan program with children from the "Y".
 5. Saturday, April 23, 2022 Earth Day: community clean-up and education.
 6. April 30 or May 1, 2022 Arbor Day: program with Wallace House-seedling planting.
 7. Tree Trek – education and community involvement or Tree ID with scouts
- B. Community Forestry Tree Plan Rewrite.

1. Geoff suggested looking at plan and dividing into sections for members to help with update.
- C. Peters Brook
1. Geoff discussed clean-up.
 2. Janet asked Tom to approach Borough/Rodney if able to remove downed trees in brook area.
 3. Gina suggested planting wildflowers in the no-mow zone when planting tree seedlings along the brook behind the G.S. tree arbor. Also, in the rain gardens.
 4. Coordinate with Jason and his group to remove debris in the Culver Street area between Cliff St. and High St., then plant with trees and wildflowers.

V. REPORTS

- A. Green Team
1. QR code used during Turkey Trot advertised our Community Garden.
 2. Suggestion made to invite Fire chief and Kevin to next meeting.
- B. Borough Council – Thompson Mitchell (Borough Council Liaison)
1. Rezoning for the garden apartments (Brookside properties) did not pass.
 2. Green Seam Solar Farm amended the redevelopment plan. State rejected as Community Solar. Amended to Grid Project sold to PSE&G. Had to negotiate contract.
- C. Planning Board – Larry Cleveland (Planning Board Liaison)
1. Last meeting of 2021 approval was granted to Edgewood Properties for an overhead walkway from Starbucks to the new building (Health Center).
 2. There will be a second walkway from the Health Center to the parking garage.

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Glen.

Seconded by Janet.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.