

**BOROUGH OF SOMERVILLE  
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES – JULY 12, 2022**

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

**ABSENT:** Rebecca Reitman-Garofalo  
Green Team: Geri DeSapio

**GUEST:** Dolores Holmes

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 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:** June 2022 minutes. The minutes were approved on the motion made by Geoff, seconded by Helene, and carried unanimously.

**II. COMMUNICATIONS**

- A.** Letter to the DEP from Eileen Sartori concerning the application of a permit for a mega warehouse near Canal Walk in Somerset, NJ. She shared her environmental concerns.
  - 1.** Jeff will follow up with Dini Checko at ANJEC regarding the building of warehouses in sensitive areas. Requesting all NJEC'S members be made aware.
- B.** Jay Kelly, RVCC professor, volunteered students from the college to collect rain garden samples for Somerset County Stormwater Utility.
- C.** EC applied for a grant from NJ Urban and Community Forestry to plant 150 trees along Peters Brook where the area was eroded from a recent storm.
- D.** ANJAC – webinar offering tools for dealing with climate change.
- E.** Helene will forward to Patty Hunt photos of the Community Garden dedication. Photo's will also be posted on EC website.

**III. OLD BUSINESS**

- A.** Roberta updated the EC kiosk for July and August. Received permission to also use other side of kiosk from Kathy Gerndt of the Recreation Dept.
- B.** Somerville Direct App – residents submit problem sites. Submission goes directly to Borough for a work order to be completed.
- C.** Geoff discussed the June meeting of Flood and Advisory Committee. Update to follow.
- D.** Jeff collected the members assessment reviews. Will review results next meeting.

#### **IV. NEW BUSINESS**

- A.** Sande read the EC mission statement: The Somerville Environmental Commission's mission is to educate, advocate, and promote best policies and practices for the Borough's environment and the health and safety of its residents.
  - 1.** Larry made a motion to accept the mission statement. Seconded by Geoff, and carried unanimously.
- B.** Geoff will lead the Street Tree Plantings. He will continue to collect names of residents who wish to participate in the tree program.
- C.** New Jersey Tree Foundation will plant trees in the fall at Arthur Chambers Park.
- D.** Gina forwarded an email to members concerning Flood Resilient Communities info.
- E.** Jeff will investigate a street tree training program during September for our Urban Community Forestry requirement.

#### **V. REPORTS**

- A.** Borough Council – Gina Stravic – Liaison
  - 1.** To curb traffic the borough installed rumble strips on local streets.
- B.** Planning Board – Larry Cleveland – Liaison
  - 1.** Subdivision of property on North Richards Avenue passed.
  - 2.** Members speaking with an attorney prior to confronting Bridgewater concerning the approval of a large warehouse to be built on Rt. 22.
- C.** Green Team – Geri reported.
  - 1.** Ribbon cutting at the Community Garden was a success.
  - 2.** Bridget presented ideas to involve the SHS Environmental Group.

Motion to adjourn meeting was made by Helene.

Seconded by Roberta.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.