



Borough of Fanwood Environmental Commission

Monthly Meeting – Minutes

April 18, 2024 – 7:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT	Sandy Redder (Chairperson); Gary Szelc (Vice Chairperson); Suzanne Sanschagrín (Secretary); Patricia Walsh (Borough Council Liaison); Leslie Krone-Speck (Planning Board Liaison); Phyllis Sandroek; Carol Chimento; Dave Schwartzberg, Andrea Parra; MaryAnne StaRosa
MEMBERS ABSENT	Antonios Panagopoulos (Borough Engineer);
GUESTS	
ANNOUNCEMENTS	<p>Open Public Meetings Act</p> <p>The opening public meetings act was read and the meeting came to order at 7:02 PM.</p> <p>Minutes: March minutes approved.</p>

Nature Center

DISCUSSION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature Center report for March (Phyllis) Update: Limbs may need to be cut before cleanup on Saturday. Will contact DPW. • Bridge Replacement / Trail Bedding / Green Acres – general discussion, ribbon cutting (see anniversary discussion) • Nature Center rules - Draft of rules are being reviewed by BA & attorney. Plan is to amend Parks Rules ordinance to include Nature Center Rules. To be discussed at 1st council meeting in March and voted on at 2nd meeting in March. Update (Patricia): Ordinance listed on current sign does not exist. Looking to move rules into ordinance covering similar items . Next meeting May 2nd when it will be approved. • Mr. Gutterman’s sign needs to be evaluated for refurbishment; possibility to be done by Troop 33 once evaluation is complete. Update from Leslie: Mr. Gutterman will refurbish sign after it is removed by DPW.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girl Scout Troop ??? (Courtney Agnello) has agreed to update the current totem pole. They were wondering if we would allow a second totem pole? If time and volunteers allow, would be interested. • Stone Dust Trail Wash out update – No change since previous meeting. 		
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE

Environmental Commission Projects

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eagle Scout Project – Invasive Species Brochure / Plant Markers – Eli Krantz, Troop 104 – (Sandy) - Sandy signed off on Eli’s proposal in January. Project has been approved. • Girl Scout Project – Troop 40206 – Silver Award project - would like to build 6 bird boxes using cedar plywood (Dave) – Owl boxes weigh a lot and need to be placed 15-20’ high; other boxes need to be placed in SE direction and strategically; needs maintenance agreement; reviewed with Rich Elliott of Wild Birds Unlimited on locations of bird houses including owl box locations • Eagle Scout Project – Bat Boxes for Nature Center – Matthew Mui, Troop 33 – Working with Gary. Will be putting up 3 new boxes + repair of the 4th Update: workbook is almost ready for troop review & FEC approval. • Borough Hall Gardens – (Leslie, Sandy) Update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Rain Garden: Infested with poison ivy; DPW removed invasives and re-excavated area for drainage; still likely roots in place. Leslie to work with Clint on solarization or use of herbicide; additional soil and layers needed to re-establish rain garden. Phyllis to provide photos to Leslie. o Pollinator and Monarch: 16 hours of weeding have been completed; some plants relocated; planning to add additional plants as needed – additional plants being obtained; lots of growth of cultivated species; o Need to schedule a garden tour/talk at the gardens (sustainable NJ) • Nature Center Anniversary Year Celebration (1974) - 50 years! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Volunteers for Anniversary Committee (Phyllis / Sandy / Suzanne / Gary / Andrea / Leslie / Carol) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Andrea to get the group together to update plan – Discussion notes and action items are below ▪ Completed Events: Great Backyard Bird Count (Feb. 16-19, 2024) event in the NC. Leslie, Sandy and Suzanne reported from the NC. There were 23 different species identified during the event. 		
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPON-	DEADLINE

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Old Business

DISCUSSION		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Team Updates – Andrea - big focus is Sustainable Jersey action items/plans. Update: 4/20 will have table with info; next town wide collection likely to be sneakers; FEC minutes to be copied to Green Team Annual Report – Suzanne (2023) – 2023 draft available for review – to be finalized with any comments provided on 4/25 and sent to council. Transferring Old Minutes to eCode360 - Send Pat minutes from previous years that are missing from web site - (All) Adopt a Storm Drain Project (Andrea) – Patricia to review with council; Andrea to discuss with Antonios. Update: Pat to discuss with Antonios Master Plan update (Leslie) – Update: Subcommittee meeting with Leslie and others next week; public meeting likely in June; revised goals have been provided (~4 pages) - Leslie to share with EC. 		
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE

New Business

DISCUSSION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer Appreciation Month recognition for 10+ years on the EC: Dave, Phyllis, Gary and Sandy! Update EC Website: https://www.fanwoodnj.org/departments/environmental-commission/ - Leslie to review with Pat. All to look at web site and provide feedback. February 21, 2024 get together with the Planning Board and other Commissions: Sandy, Suzanne and Andrea attended for FEC, Leslie attended for Planning Board. Update: Angela Goldman is coordinating re-certification as a Sustainable Community. Green Team has action plan on points needed to meet this deadline. Fanwood Tree Ordinance - Review and provide comments by February 29 to Antonios. Comments provided and supported; provide additional comments after review. No update.

- ANJEC Grants - deadline is Friday, April 26. Ideas/suggestions.
- Keenan Porter – Landscape architect with non-profit arm of company; willing to search for grants to improve NC. A few years ago he put together a report that we could possibly use to show what is possible. The report is in his [public Google Drive folder](#) (Restore_Final Package) if anyone is interested in looking through it again. If anyone knows of any grants available that they could apply for?? He would like to help celebrate our 50th anniversary.
- Landscaping plan for Carriage House once construction is finished – (Patricia) - **update: No update.**
- High School Senior Project (Leslie): Communications plan on gas leaf blowers, other ordinances, etc. Leslie is her mentor for this project.
- **Clean Communities Day is April 20th, starting at 8:30 AM Train Station South parking lot.**
- Wild Earth Fest at Trailside - April 28 (11-5)

ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE

Review of Plans

DISCUSSION		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LaGrande Ave School – preserve natural surfaces under current playground equipment; should remain totally pervious; sensitivity to tree removal must be considered to assist the neighborhood in addressing current flooding issues; consider solar panels on roof of new gym; avoid folding tables from the wall to assist with student safety. • 22 Rainier Rd. , Block 71, Lot 4 – ok with Borough engineer’s plan 		

NC 50th Anniversary Committee Discussion / Notes:

Gary: Reach out to "NC founders" for historical insights to share on Fanwood site/town blast and Edibles Walk (timing TBD as guide's schedule allows)

Sandy: work with Trisha/council on budget and 50th anniversary banner/ municipal building lawn signage

Andrea: 4/20 Clean Communities Day - NC clean-up - work with Clint regarding:

- Include "Fanwood Nature Center 50th Anniversary" on the back of clean-up day shirts
- Call-out in Clean Communities communications that we'd like volunteers to specifically clean the NC stream/ requires appropriate rain boots/ gloves/ tick prevention

Phyllis: Nature Center Map and Bible Chapel Contacts

- By 4/20 (ideally): Update Nature Center map to be printed and posted at entrance/ generate QR code for visitors instead of printing more paper maps – map has been updated & needs to be hosted at a specific website location (to be placed on the FEC website) & then generate a QR code to be posted.
- Bible Chapel contact re usage of their parking lot for NC events – sharing church with a 2nd ministry, but with advanced notice, use of parking lot is ok.

Sandy/ Leslie: Second NC Clean-Up (spring)

- Primary activity: community volunteers to help plant native species; need to assess extent of preliminary clean-up to remove poison ivy, etc. beforehand
- Secondary idea if feasible: utilize church parking lot for TBD such as food truck/ scream truck/ italian ice
- Bird box dedication assuming scouts will have them up by the time of this event
- Scheduled for 5/4, rain date 5/5.
- Considering building bike racks for each entrance from used pallets. Need to locate people with proper tools.

Update (4/18): Sandy, Leslie and Phyllis toured the NC to review work. TRAIL MAINTENANCE DAY: Rake leaves and remove branches from trail, clean up benches, plant native plants, add footings on sagging part of boardwalk, replace boards, remove invasive plants hanging over trails, etc. Date - May 4 9:00 a.m. (rain date is May 5).

Leslie/ Andrea: Dhammakaya-led morning meditation at the NC (summer)

- Visit Dhammakaya to gauge interest in hosting a one-time morning meditation or a summer morning meditation series- confirmed interest.
- Could take place near the northeast (power line) entrance/ would need to be mowed (DPW?) and "bring your own mat"; could also use parking lot of Terrill Bible

Suzanne: "Scouts Day at the Nature Center" (fall)

- Coordinate what girl and boy scout points can be satisfied in a few hours at the nature center/ what date works best for max. attendance
- Activity: photo scavenger hunt (ID'ing plants/animals, etc.)
- Bat box dedication assuming scouts will have them up by the time of this event
- Peace pole dedication if girl scouts can refurbish by the time of this event

Open Items:

- Formalize calendar of NC events to share with town/ EC FB/ GT/ etc.
- Work ribbon cutting into one of the above events or reschedule separately for this year!

50th Anniversary Discussion

- Borough can help with press releases, flyers, advertisements, etc.

- Mayor Mahr wants to reintroduce residents to Nature Center
- Video has been sent to Paul & is posted online
- 50th anniversary logo will be put on the backs of the Clean Communities Day t-shirts
- Will be added to Clean Communities Day press releases
- Work with Pat Hoynes to get banner to advertise 50th anniversary (comes from Union County)

Meeting was adjourned at 8:38 PM.