



Borough of Fanwood Environmental Commission

Monthly Meeting – Minutes

March 21, 2024 – 7:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT	Sandy Redder (Chairperson); Gary Szalc (Vice Chairperson); Suzanne Sanschagrín (Secretary); Patricia Walsh (Borough Council Liaison); Leslie Krone-Speck (Planning Board Liaison); Phyllis Sandrock; Carol Chimento
MEMBERS ABSENT	Dave Schwartzberg, Andrea Parra; Antonios Panagopoulos (Borough Engineer);
GUESTS	MaryAnne StaRosa; Clint Dixon; Kathy Mitchell; Jesse Muhlman;
ANNOUNCEMENTS	<p><u>Open Public Meetings Act</u></p> <p>The opening public meetings act was read and the meeting came to order at 7:03 PM.</p> <p><u>Minutes:</u> February minutes updated and approved</p> <p>Patricia Walsh swore in Carol Chimento for a 3-year term.</p>

Nature Center

DISCUSSION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature Center report for February (Phyllis) Update: 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): New signs being made and must be placed at all 4 entrances, option to put up smaller signs indicating area under surveillance in meantime Mr. Gutterman's sign needs to be evaluated for refurbishment; possibility to be done by Troop 33 once evaluation is complete. Stone Dust Trail Wash out update – No update from Antonios.

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. No update since January. • 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; • 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: • 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 for o Pollinator and Monarch: 16 hours of weeding have been completed; some plants relocated; planning to add additional plants as needed • Nature Center Anniversary Year Celebration (1974) - 50 years! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Volunteers for <u>Anniversary Committee</u> (Phyllis / Sandy / Suzanne / Gary / Andrea / Leslie / Carol) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Great Backyard Bird Count (Feb. 16-19, 2024) event in the NC. Leslie, Sandy and Suzanne reported form the NC. There were 23 different species identified during the event. ▪ Other celebratory activities: Ribbon Cutting, Bird Houses, Clean Up, Tours, etc. ▪ Andrea got the group to meet on Sunday, March 10 – Discussion notes and action items are below 		
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE

Old Business

DISCUSSION		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Team Updates – Andrea - big focus is Sustainable Jersey action items/plans. Update: Annual Report – Gary (2022), Suzanne (2023) – 2023 draft available for review 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: Master Plan update (Leslie) – Update: Meeting with Leslie and others in 3 weeks; public meeting likely in May 		
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE

New Business

DISCUSSION		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update EC Website: https://www.fanwoodnj.org/departments/environmental-commission/ - Leslie to review with Pat. All to look at web site and provide feedback. Rain Barrel Workshop. Need commitment from Borough. Barrels are available on Marketplace ~\$20, Diverter kits ~ \$20 and Spigots ~ \$12. Sandy to send info to Patricia. Update: Postponing until after anniversary. February 21, 2024 get together with the Planning Board and other Commissions: Sandy, Suzanne and Andrea attended for the FEC, Leslie attended for Planning Board. Next meeting is scheduled on March 20th. 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. 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) Keenan Porter – Landscape architect with non-profit arm of company; willing to search for 		
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE

Review of Plans

DISCUSSION		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 102 Willoughby – Applicant did not submit documents • 60 Carsam St. – asking for 41% coverage, only 35% allowed; Leslie to write up comments & send to board. 		

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
- Bible Chapel contact re usage of their parking lot for NC events

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
- Possible dates are 5/4, 5/11, or 5/18 at this time. Tentatively scheduled for 5/4, rain date 5/18.

Update (3/21): 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 (TBD).

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
- Could take place near the northeast (power line) entrance/ would need to be mowed (DPW?) and "bring your own mat"

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 8:45 PM.