

## **Environmental Commission**

February 9, 2023 7:30 pm via Zoom  
Minutes

### **Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairwoman Lockhart called the meeting to order at 7:31 pm with the public meeting announcement followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Attendance**

The Roll Call was taken and the following members were present: Cinnie Cole; Scott Devlin, Council Liaison; Modi Feibish; Miriam Lockhart, Chairwoman; Krishna Rege; Conway Wong, Planning Board Liaison; Paul Yarin.

### **Approval of Minutes: January 12, 2023**

The meetings have not yet been prepared. They will be presented at the March meeting.

### **Open Meeting to Public Comments**

Zoning Board Chair Joe Bianco (7 MacArthur Avenue, Closter) thanked the Environmental Commission for their reports to the Zoning Board and for their help and support. Discussion of role and responsibility of the Zoning Board.

Steven Isaacson (97 Columbus) stated that Interstate Waste was increasing their tonnage and was changing their route to Herbert Avenue and toward Hillside School. He asked that the Environmental Commission state their opposition.

### **Executive & Treasurer's Report**

An admin has been hired to do the minutes for the meetings with Leslie Weatherly serving as EC Administrator for additional tasks.

Buzzoni Farm Park was not listed on Google Maps. Chairwoman Lockhart and Ms. Cole arranged to have it added.

There is \$2,000 in the temporary budget.

### **Unfinished Business**

**Closter OSTF 2023 request:** The Environmental Commission has been encouraged to request funds beyond the irrigation system for the pollinator garden at Buzzoni Farm Park. Ms. Cole suggested seeking funds to refurbish or replace a pedestrian bridge on the Blue trail. Mr. Wong

suggested requesting funds to purchase electric vehicle chargers. Discussion. Mr. Yarin spoke concerning the EV chargers, there are incentives from the power companies and the government. The Library is interested in having one at the Library; however, the parking lot is owned by St. Mary's. Also, he spoke about solar chargers. Ms. Cole attended a webinar on the topic of charging stations. She sent the link to the members of the Commission. The administrator would like the request at the beginning of April.

**Cleanup Day:** Ms. Rege has headed this event for two years (three cleanups). There will be one in April this year that she will not be able to head. She asked if someone could take it over, but she will be available to consult. The date and location need to be chosen and requested. No one was able to spearhead it alone, but Mr. Yarin was willing to help. Discussion tabled; whether a spring cleanup can take place remains to be seen.

**Sustainable Jersey Working Group Report:** Mr. Yarin reported that actions are underway. The ANJEC website is an interesting resource.

**Buzzoni Pollinator Garden Working Group Report:** The plan for the garden is being drawn and reviewed. Ms. Rege has contacted the County Audubon Society and will request funding for the garden. Also, new topsoil will be added to the existing land, instead of tilling or scooping out existing land. Perhaps an ANJEC grant can be pursued, although Ms. Rege did not see it on the website. The topsoil will take away some of the funds that had been earmarked for plants.

**Healthy Yards Working Group Report:** Ms. Cole reported that a goal for this year had been a display garden of sedge at MacBain Farm. However, right now sedges are very difficult to obtain. This may have to be on hold, but perhaps those funds could be used for the pollinator garden. MacBain is pretty dormant right now. There are no other concrete plans for Healthy Yards. Mr. Yarin stated that there are new tools coming on the market that would be good to promote. Chairwoman Lockhart spoke about companies that have buy-back programs. Mr. Yarin spoke about the possibility of creating incentives for landscapers to try electric tools.

**Closter Library: GreenBooks initiative:** The Environmental Commission plans to buy more books for this program. Perhaps a display can be created.

### **New Business**

**Mayor's newsletter** - topic for March 2023: The submission is due the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month.

### **Plan Review and Comment**

**38 Wilson Place (PB):** There was a lot of concern because the applicant wanted to cut down 22 trees. The Council Liaison to the Planning Board complimented the EC on their report. Because she was able to use the points in the report, the soil movement application was not approved, the builder will try to save trees on the west side of the house, they will present the tree plan, and the seepage pit will be moved.

### **Liaison Reports**

**Governing Body:** Councilman Devlin reported that the fire pit and benches near the Girl Scout cabin near Mollicone Park will be refurbished as an Eagle Scout project. The EC will oversee the project.

**Shade Tree Commission:** Councilman Devlin stated that the Council is considering an Ordinance to change the Commission to a Committee. A lot of the responsibility would transfer to the DPW. He stated his strong opposition to the plan. He also stated he moved to amend the Ordinance to include mandatory pruning of County roads. Chairwoman Lockhart reported that a part-time arborist would be hired to do work that is now done by volunteers. She voiced her concern that this action could have a chilling effect on volunteerism. Discussion. Also, the Finance Committee will only be meeting directly with the top-spending groups.

**Planning Board:** Mr. Wong reported that there are no new properties on the docket. There was a delay in the receipt of the tree report for 38 Wilson Place, so a condition had to be put on the decision.

**Announcement:** Chairwoman Lockhart announced that she will resign from the Environmental Commission as of March 1. It is now time for her to allocate her resources to other areas. She voiced her pleasure in working with the Commission.

**Adjournment:** Chairwoman Lockhart moved to adjourn. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Francis  
Recording Secretary