



## Environmental Commission

March 9, 2023 7:30pm via Zoom

### Minutes

**Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance:** New Chair Paul Yarin called the meeting to order at 7:32 pm with the Open Public Meetings announcement.

**Attendance:** The Roll Call was taken, and the following members were present: Cinnie Cole; Krishna Rege; Jim Oettinger; Conway Wong, Planning Board Liaison; Paul Yarin, chairman.

**Approval of Minutes (postponed):** Due to a change in personnel the minutes are not yet available. They will be available soon and will be circulated.

**Open Meeting to Public Comments:** There is no public in attendance.

**Executive & Treasurer's Report:** This report will be tabled until the next meeting.

### Unfinished Business

**Healthy Yards working group report:** Ms. Cole and Ms. Rege met last week. The display garden at MacBain will not be expanded this year. There has been discussion about a “no-mow May” this year. Ms. Cole will compile information for the newsletter and will circulate it.

**Buzzoni pollinator garden working group report:** Ms. Rege and Ms. Cole created a plant list to submit to the nurseries for prices. The nurseries are not ready yet. The Audubon small grant has been approved. Sometime this month the application for the ANJEC grant will be submitted. The deadline is 4/22. MS. Cole will create the application. Jean Stella will line up volunteers to help plant; Ms. Rege will reach out to the Scouts as possible volunteers as well. Discussion about sedges that are difficult to locate. Mr. Oettinger asked about the status of a possible sprinkler system. He will be meeting with the owner of the company that the Borough uses. Mr. Yarin will check in with Ms. Lambert about sprinklers and the Open Space funds. Mr. Oettinger also offered to round up volunteers.

**Sustainable Jersey working group report:** Mr. Yarin stated that the group would welcome more help. The fleet report needs help with odometer readings.



NJDEP Green Acres Acquisition Grants Program 2023: Mr. Yarin will check in on this item.

### **New Business**

**2023 Goals:** Mr. Yarin shared a slide from ANJEC. He spoke about creating a natural resources inventory and communication. He felt that it is urgent that ECs do a good job as the advisory body they are set up to be. He wants members to individually and together meet residents and have ideas that help people move in the right direction. The Commission's mission is threefold: advise government; educate the public on sustainable living; address climate change through mitigation and adaptation. Discussion. He highlighted the accomplishments of 2022. Projects in keeping with the mission: Create a **website** for the Commission (Mayor Glidden is supportive of this initiative). There is a designer and a domain name. Content needs to be discussed and created. It would be great to launch it in the next couple of months. Discussion. Ms. Rege suggested holding a meeting to brainstorm topics. **GreenBooks:** There are new books that would be good to purchase. Also, the books already in the Library could be displayed in a nice, catchy way. Other projects: **Electrification** of landscaping tools to reduce noise and pollution; purchasing electric vehicle charging stations; electrification of homes—moving from oil or gas heat to electricity to reduce carbon emissions. Ms. Cole suggested getting information to residents about home audits. Mr. Yarin met with Vincent McHale, Closter School Superintendent, who told him that the schools in Closter are going to have a boiler upgrade. Mr. Yarin suggested they have an energy audit. Mr. McHale plans to get the GreenBooks for the school library. Another area of work can be educating people in food waste and composting. Mr. Yarin suggested a green design checklist be added to EC plan reviews. He would also like to look into creating an environmental resources inventory. **Green Development:** Closter is looking into creating a new Police Department building. Is it possible that it could be a sustainable building? Advising on this could fit into the EC mission. Also, perhaps there are places in Closter that could be used for solar. Perhaps there can be a composting project. Opportunities for addressing climate change would be good to capitalize on. He asked the members to bring ideas and energies. Discussion.

### **Plan Review and Comment**

614 Closter Dock Road (PB) Mr. Wong stated that the engineer had more comments than usual. The plan has been returned to the applicant for changes. The hearing was pushed back a month. Mr. Yarin stated that he would like to understand the process.



## **Liaison Reports**

Governing Body: Councilman Devlin is not present.

Shade Tree Commission: No actual report.

Planning Board: The start time of the meeting has changed from 8:00 to 7:30. When Planning Board members visit a site they are supposed to ask for permission to be on the property. The Planning Board will speak with the Mayor and Council to try to secure permission for members to be on the properties of applicants so that permission does not have to be secured on each occasion.

Mr. Yarin looks forward to working with the Commission. He will contact all members to discuss the best way to move forward. He thanked everyone for the opportunity.

**Adjournment:** Mr. Conway moved to adjourn the meeting, second Ms. Rege. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Francis  
Recording Secretary