



Environmental Commission

May 11, 2023 7:30pm via Zoom Minutes

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance Chair Yarin opened the meeting at 7:33 pm with the Open Public Meeting announcement.

Attendance

Present: Chair Paul Yarin, Council Liaison Scott Devlin, Krishna Rege, Modi Feibish. From the public, Closter residents Rachel Suter, Marnie Alon, and Adriana Petrocelli were present.

Absent: Jim Oettinger

Approval of Minutes (April 13, 2023) Ms. Rege moved to approve the minutes, second Mr. Feibish. Carried.

Open Meeting to Public Comments No comments from the public at this time.

Executive & Treasurer's Report

Chair Yarin spoke about the Environmental Commission's oversight of the Borough passive parks. He asked the members what exactly was entailed in managing the parks. Ms. Rege remembered that in the past it was keeping the trails and signs in good order. Discussion of what parks are involved. Councilman Devlin felt that observation and reporting on concerns was what was desired. He will send a list to Chair Yarin. Some parks are managed by Recreation; the Closter Improvement Commission handles others. MacBain Farm has its own committee.

Chair Yarin has discovered new goals of the Commission: maintaining facilities, including passive parks and gardens. He asked members if there are other goals.

Unfinished Business

- a. *Healthy Yards working group report*
No Mow May will be handled separately.
- b. *Buzzoni pollinator garden working group report*
Chair Yarin shared concerns about being able to successfully manage both this and the garden at MacBain. Ms. Rege shared in this concern. Discussion about the



fact that an irrigation system for Buzzoni has been requested but is not yet a reality. Photographs of work with Girl Scouts at the garden were shared.

Councilman Devlin moved to open the meeting to Marnie, who suggested having classes to teach people about what to plant at home, which might also foster volunteerism. Ms. Rege asked Marnie to speak about the bug hotel the Girl Scouts are interested in building. Marnie explained that the Scouts would bring the supplies and build it. They would also maintain it. Ms. Rege suggested speaking to Marc Gussen at the Closter Nature Center about pros and cons and locations. She and Marnie will do that.

c. *Native grasses and groundcovers garden report*

This is an installation at MacBain Farm. Cinnie Cole and Miriam Lambert wrote a report. Several plants and a descriptive sign were installed. Six of the plants were successful. The information will be posted on the website. Members were asked to share information. Photographs were shared. Ms. Rege wondered whether the MacBain Farm volunteers could water it. Chair Yarin suggested perhaps Scout troops and other groups could help.

d. *Sustainable Jersey working group report*

There was a summit that Mr. Yarin was unable to attend. Several of the actions have been revised. The fleet inventory action can be started, as the initial data is now available. Councilman Devlin reported that the EC is on track to earn 150 points, but some points may not be available until the fall. Chair Yarin and Councilman Devlin will meet.

e. *Open Space Trust Fund application*

\$2500 have been requested for the irrigation system. Perhaps more money can be requested for trail maintenance. The grant has already been applied for.

f. *ANJEC Grant request*

No update.

g. *Closter Cleanup Day (May 6)*

There was a good turnout. A couple of grippers disappeared. Photos of the successful cleanup will be on the website.



7. New Business

a. *No Mow May campaign*

Galvanized steel signs were made and are now up in people's gardens. They are to be returned. This has been successful. The resolution passed easily.

b. *"Trees for Schools" grant program*

Offered by NJ DEP and Sustainable Jersey. It is to help overburdened communities plant trees near schools. Closter may not qualify, but it's possible. Chair Yarin suggested spots that could benefit. Farrell Woods might be best. A creative idea might help secure the grant. Councilman Devlin suggested speaking with Todd Bradbury as a tree expert. Councilman Devlin will connect the two. The school board is discussing this application at tonight's meeting.

c. *Scouting projects:*

Perhaps a list could be created every year. It would be good to discuss when the Recreation Director is able to attend the meeting.

d. *Launch of EC website (www.SustainableCloster.org):*

The meeting was open to Rachel Suter, who created the website. She described and gave a tour of the site. Chair Yarin credited Miriam Lockhart, who began the project to create the site.

EC members have the opportunity to have an email at the EC Website.

8. Plan Review and Comment

10 Railroad Ave. (PB) followup discussion

This is the single largest warehouse building in Closter. Chair Yarin found the owner and discovered that solar panels have already been installed on the roof.

9. Liaison Reports

a. *Governing Body*

Chairman Devlin announced that the Budget was introduced last night. The Open Space Ordinance was introduced. The Cleanup was a success.

b. *Shade Tree Commission*

The Arbor Day poster contest awards were distributed at the Mayor and Council meeting last night.



c. Planning Board

10 Railroad Avenue is being discussed. A lot of paving that should not have been done was done. Runoff could go into the stream. This is under discussion. Chair Yarin asked whether the EC should get involved in any way.

10. Adjournment Councilman Devlin moved to adjourn, second Ms. Rege. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:54 pm.