

Englewood Environmental Commission Meeting --May 9, 2016

Meeting Called to Order by Jack Silberman, Acting Chair, at 7:06 pm

Roll call: Sara Stroman, Jack Silberman, Crystal Brown, Michael Passow. Guest: Kevin Lake

Excused: Ellen Forman, Stephen Wiessener; **Absent:** Anthony Davis

Approval of Minutes: from April 11, 2016 Meeting made by Crystal Brown, seconded by Sara Stroman – unanimous (with abstention by Crystal Brown who was absent from most of the meeting)

Correspondence/Reminders:

Commissioners were reminded about the ANJEC program to be held on May 19 at Bergen County Plaza and about the Clean Water Seminar at Flat Rock Brook Nature Center in June.

Open Business/Updates:

Arbor Day—Crystal, Jack, and Ellen represented the EEC during ceremonies. The City presented a plaque that will be posted in City Hall. Representatives from the DPW planted trees.

Meeting with Flat Rock Brook—On April 25, Jack, Crystal, Sara, and Michael met with the FRBNA Executive Committee and Mayor Frank Huttle for discussions about more effective ways in which the EEC and FRB will interact in the future. These include improved communication about events and issues of mutual interest. Michael will serve as the liaison between the two organizations.

Water Quality Issues—The City and County Boards of Health and Suez Water have plans to monitor the quality of water in drinking supplies. Because of the age of the pipes and mains, this is of concern, although to date no specific threats have been identified. FRB and others have submitted proposals to obtain field test kits to examine key parameters in streams and lakes. Have programs at Rutgers and Ramapo tested stream quality? Questions were raised about City liability should unacceptable levels be found.

Third Street Community Garden – Crystal reported that one bed remains unassigned. All beds must be cleared of debris and ready to plant by May 15, and fully planted by June 15. The spigot should be repaired by the coming weekend. Volunteers and donations, including plants, are welcomed. Questions should go to Crystal at 201-745-6940.

Proposed Draft of Amended and Restated Article II of Chapter 425 – Removal of Trees

Guest Kevin Lake submitted his April 19 draft for consideration by the EEC. He explained that existing regulations dating to about 1980 were revised in 2014 with EEC input. Kevin and others were concerned about various aspects and formed the Englewood Shade Tree Association to begin these revisions. They present one draft to the City Council on April 19. It was crafted through comparisons and adoptions of existing City regulations and those from neighboring communities.

Items discussed included: the expanded Purpose and Definitions statements, especially distinctions between “Major” and “Minor” trees; the proposed requirements for a Project Permit application, including an improved tracking process; the Tree Replacement Plan; Mitigation requirements ; Standards for the Application Review, Issuance, and Effective Date; proposed Restrictions, Appeal Process, and Time of Completion. Site plans if more removals than are currently allowable will be more complex. Special attention is paid to situations that would create serious problems with slopes and erosion. Notice must be given to neighbors within 300 feet and the EEC. The proposed ordinance establishes a Shade Tree Replacement Fund to be maintained by the EEC and used for the sole purpose of replanting trees within the City. Details of fees, escrow, and hardship appeals are included. New from previous versions are sections about protection of existing and landmark trees. Consequences for violations and penalties are stated. The final section identifies Exemptions for pruning within rights-of-way by utility companies and the City; removal of dead or diseased trees; and emergency removals.

Following EEC discussion, Crystal, seconded by Sara, proposed a “Motion to thank the Englewood Shade Tree for their efforts and to recommend to the City Council the proposed Article II of Chapter 425 with the recommended changes coming from this discussion.” The Motion was approved unanimously.

New Business:

Commissioners are still interested in consideration of the By-Laws, and suggested trying to find a date for examination and revision sometime in June or July.

Michael has been gathering information about the history of the Quarry on the FRB property which will be shared with the EEC.

Public Comment:

Kevin Lake reminded Commissioners that all communications about business decisions, including e-mails, are subject to Open Public Meeting Act disclosure.

Motion to adjourn: 9:05 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J Passow, Secretary