

Glen Rock Environmental Commission Meeting of March 18th 2014

Minutes of the Meeting:

Housekeeping:– the February 2014 minutes not having been seen by all Commissioners will not be approved until the April meeting at which time both the February and March 2014 minutes of the meetings will be presented for approval.

Attendees: Andy Curshen, Lesley Elton, Scott King, Charles Nebbia, Sylvia Rabacchi, Mary-Jane Surrago, Mark McCullough, Jonathan Pereira, Kristen Thompson.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm

Items From the Agenda

- **Liaison With Schools:**
Sylvia Rabacchi outlined developments to date indicating the three important areas; i.e. water station installation in the Cafeteria, replacing Styrofoam trays with a biodegradable substitute, educating staff and students about correct recycling practice, were all underway with the active participation of the two Honor society students McGara DeWan and Jennifer McMahan working with MS teacher Mrs Urmston Sylvia also indicated that Elaine Howe of Hamilton School was independently pursuing the elimination of the Styrofoam trays effort Also present was a H.S. junior Kristen Thompson who has offered her time and energies to assist with one or more of the various programs currently underway or being considered by the Commission. She will work on the plastic bag effort.
- **Energy Outreach:** (see also extensive minutes from the Feb 18th meeting covering this subject)
This program is worth ~~10~~ 20 points (at least? Paul please check) points on the sustainable Jersey program for re-certification. Re HEA program, Mike Mullholland of Ciel Power advised that he plans to send out promotional mailings to homeowners around March 24th. All told 4000 homeowners will receive the mailing, to be sent out in lots of 500 at a time. He advised that 14 homeowners had already requested energy, audits which he felt was most encouraging. It was agreed that articles needed to be written and sent to the G.R. Gazette as well as other areas of promotion to ensure that all homeowners are aware of the program and its importance. Sylvia advised that the 'Kickoff' meeting for homeowners will be held at the main Borough Hall council room on April 24th. This room holds about 250 people and is deemed far superior to the basement room at the Library.
- **Shade Tree Committee:**

It was agreed that Naomi Gamorra should be contacted to ensure that she does want to be the liaison person between the STC and the GREC. Lesley Elton will contact Naomi.

- **Anti-Idling:**
Some commissioners felt that the present signs were not being noticed by drivers. A suggestion was made to discuss the matter with Chief Stahman to determine how to educate drivers about the NJ State law that forbids idling beyond 3 minutes. It was suggested that parents and students be encouraged to walk to school at least once a week, or establish a 'Walk to School Day'. All agreed the necessity to educate students who would then remind parents of the no idling law. Commissioners also learned that high end cars now shut off automatically after 3 minutes and restart when the brake is touched.
- **BYO Bag/Shop the Rock:**
Commissioners felt this was an area that students including Kristen Thompson could get involved with by placing the 'Bring Your Own Bag' signs and others we have available in stores and other suitable areas. Lesley Elton, aided by Mark McCullough, had indicated they would continue with the program and that ultimately an ordinance needs to be written that includes at the least the support of the contiguous towns. It was agreed that the town's merchants needed to be approached and their approval obtained before such an ordinance should be presented to the Council. Mary Jane informed the commissioners that our recycling contractor would no longer accept recyclables packed in plastic bags nor plastic bags included with recyclables.
- **Arboretum:**
Sylvia advised that plans were moving ahead to prepare for Earth Day on April 26th. This is a requirement for a grant for botanical signs from ANJEC.
- **Water Ambassador – Jonathan Pereira**
Jonathan discussed Rain Gardens, Rain Barrels and Stream Sampling. Suitable sites were needed for rain gardens plus people to maintain them. These can be installed by a contractor for \$400 to \$1000 each. Training for rain barrel usage is about 1 hour. Rutgers will give barrels free of charge. Training is planned for early May and 15-20 people are needed. Stream sampling is important as it shows the volume of macroinvertebrates, which are at the bottom of the food pyramid, in the water. It was suggested that Diamond Brook could be sampled, that this would be an excellent item to include in Water Day and that Carol Thielke might be interested to participate.
- **Update on rules of the Open Public Meeting Act:**
Councilor Mary Jane Surrago informed the commissioners that all meetings and communications must conform to the Act which is also known as 'the Sunshine Law.' Full details are available at the following website: <http://www.nfoic.org/new-jersey-foia-laws>. Essentially, any meeting any electronic or telephone communication that

involves 50% or more of members must be open to the public. Rolling email communications are to be avoided when more than 50% of members are included. When a member sends an email to all members or more than 50% of members, replies must be sent only to the person originating the email. Note also that Agendas must be sent 5 days in advance to the Borough Clerk.

- Facebook 'Green Up Glen Rock'
Sylvia asked commissioners to note that the Green Up Glen Rock Facebook page is available for members to post items of environmental interest and to promote programs that the Commission is operating.
- Plan for Sustainable Jersey Recertification:
We have bronze certification as of 2012. This level requires a minimum of 150 pts. Certifications are good for 3 years. Commissioners agree to review the news Actions included by Sustainable Jersey and a plan must be developed to ensure maintenance of our certification. This item will be considered at next meeting April 15th.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20pm.