Environmental Commission

April 10, 2025 7:30pm – at Boro Hall and via Zoom

Minutes

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance Mr. Yarin called the meeting to order at 7:36 pm

2. Attendance

Paul Yarin-present
Krishna Rege-present
Shelagh McCaffrey-present
Council Liaison Cho-present
Conway Wong-present

Also present: resident Flynn Wiley, Steve Marcella, Robert Di Dio (Closter Planning Board)

3. Approval of Minutes (March 13, 2025) Ms. McCaffrey moved to approve the minutes, second Mr. Wong. All in favor. Carried.

4. Open Meeting to Public Comments There were no comments.

5. Executive & Treasurer's Report

a. Budget update-the temporary budget is still in place. Funds for the ERI will be sought from the Open Space Fund.

b. Rutgers Enviro Stewards update-Mr. Yarin is currently taking this class and recommended it to others. He shared slides from the recent class on climate change including the concept of mitigation vs. adaptation, as well as information on tracking climate change and tree species selection. Discussion of ways to share information with the public.

c. Sustainable Jersey Bergen County Hub meeting-Mr. Yarin introduced this concept and asked that someone step forward to attend this meeting on Monday April 28. Twenty Bergen County municipalities are involved in these quarterly meetings. The current topic is food waste management.

6. Unfinished Business

a. Cleanup Day planning (K. Rege) This event is to be held May 3. There are electronic signs out. There will be two meeting points: Senior Center and Nature Center. Most town groups have been informed. The EC should arrive an hour early to set up. Volunteers have been asked to be there 10:00-2:00. The pickers

will need to be picked up from the Nature Center (the DPW will drop them off there). PABA have their own pickers. Bags and gloves will be picked up from the County by Mr. Wong. Ms. Rege will pick up the pickers from the Nature Center. It would be good to have a couple of people taking pictures. The event will be posted on Closter Black Book. The DPW made vests and t-shirts with money from Clean Communities. The vests should be returned to the DPW. The t-shirts are giveaways. Ms. Rege cleared the Senior Center location with the Senior Center president. This is not the optimal event for vendors such as composter companies. The Police will put up a sign for the event. Stickers have been put on pickers for return. As the pickers are given out, people will be reminded to return them.

b. Website/social media update-Resident Flint has gained administrative access to the website; two updates have been made to the site and are now live. If there are local MacBain pictures they could be used instead of the stock photos that are there now.

Flynn's husband Steve joined the meeting and spoke about the plight of the bees and the possibility of supporting them. He suggested looking toward Harrington Park as an example. He suggested both community-driven projects and allowing individuals to own hives. Closter Ordinances currently prohibit home beekeeping. Discussion.

7. New Business

a. ANJEC 2025 grant (K. Rege) A grant was received in 2024. $2,000 need to be spent this year. Mr. Yarin's course culminates in a 60-hour project that has to be funded by an outside agency. People can look at the ANJEC website for ideas. The Bergen County Audubon Society grant was approved for $350 to build birdhouses. The money will be used to buy wood. The hope is that it can be an educational project. The bird houses should not be painted. Children could nail the houses together, and the EC could provide the pieces. This will be sometime in the summer. Mr. Yarin suggested incorporating the merit bad coordinator for carpentry if this is to be a Scout project. Also, maintenance needs to be taken into account.

8. Plan Review and Comment

a. 91 Mac Arthur Ave. (C. Wong) Mr. Wong shared a slide. This is a knockdown house. Six or seven trees will be removed. The test pit was put in the front. A pool will be built. Closter has zero-runoff ordinances. Seepage pits accept runoff. Discussion of maximum coverage. The Shade Tree Commission makes recommendations for tree-replacement species.

Robert DeDio (former Councilman and former EC chair) joined the call. He shared that he is on the Planning Board. Mr. Yarin shared that there is currently no Planning Board liaison on the Environmental Commission and asked if anyone is available to join.

Mr. Wong shared that the Blood Drive at the Senior Center is on May 15 1:00 to 7:00, not May 3.

9. Liaison Reports

a. Governing Body (C. Cho) Concerning the bees, Councilman Cho asked for an email about the bees and he would bring this up at the next Ordinance Committee meeting. Mr. Yarin would like to understand the situation a little better before there is much movement. Mr. Yarin said that he had been asked by the administrator to wait before making the Open Space funding request for the ERI. He asked Councilman Cho to keep this in mind.

b. ~~Shade Tree Commission~~ (postponed pending new appointment)

c. ~~Planning Board~~ (postponed pending new appointment)

10. Adjournment The meeting adjourned at 8:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Marti Francis
Recording Secretary