

Minutes of the Franklin Township Environmental Commission virtual meeting March 1, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM, and the Sunshine Law Notice read. The roll was called. Present were: W. Andrews, S. Jaracz, D. Pydeski, M. Santiago, A. Schmidt, R. Suydam, and P. Walitsky; and Council liaison T. Chase. J. Johnson joined at 7:48 PM (delayed by work).

Chair's report: he suggested that at Franklin Day the police department should have a Community Affairs booth. He called for members to be present at the stream clean-up event April 17.

The minutes of the meeting of Feb. 15 were approved as submitted.

The meeting was opened to the public. Teresa Corl had no questions; Councilman Wright had nothing to say.

Web site/e-mail: this item was delayed until J. Johnson joined.

Plans: P. Walitsky reported. Nothing immediate for the Planning Board (March 3 meeting canceled). The proposed Dada Bhagwan Institute temple has submitted revised plans, which seem to respond to concern for the scenic corridor; it is to be heard by the Board of Zoning Adjustment March 18. A branch of the Franklin Township Library is proposed for Eden/Clover St., Franklin Park. A builder proposes to build at 40 Suydam Rd. Several other small applications were without environmental significance. A. Schmidt would like to see the full revised plans for the temple; R. Suydam wondered how many trees are to be cut down in the new plan.

New business: R. Suydam wondered who would be responsible for writing the newly required Climate Change Impact element for the Master Plan. She asked about progress on the stormwater management ordinance, pointing out that every week it is delayed is a week when new plans without the newly required green infrastructure can be submitted.

W. Andrews spoke about incinerators in the Meadowlands which pay for their pollution by buying SRECs, thus being subsidized by taxpayers.

A. Schmidt reported on his proposal for a joint subcommittee between the EC and the Shade Tree Commission; he, being a member of both, would serve as liaison. R. Suydam volunteered for the subcommittee.

R. Suydam reported on contacting ANJEC to speak before Council on measures to combat climate change. They would be happy to speak.

S. Jaracz suggested a municipal ordinance requiring new developments to reduce climate change effects. T. Chase suggested that the most straightforward way to do this would be to improve insulation, thus requiring less heating in winter, less air conditioning in summer.

At this point J. Johnson joined the meeting. The document on EC organization was discussed, mainly the words "delegate and supervise" which seemed inappropriate for a volunteer commission. "Accountability" for tasks undertaken would be a better term. D. Pydeski commented that meetings seemed more chaotic than in her previous experience, and lasted longer, but no more seemed to be accomplished. The revised Environmental Resource Inventory has not been made available. Subcommittees could attract non-EC members to help on particular projects. The problem is that the EC is not responded to by higher levels of township government, even going through the Council liaison. Written proposals from subcommittees, approved by the full Commission, might have greater effect.

J. Johnson reported on a couple of e-mails received by the Commission, including one from Ron Russo of Olcott St., who was attending the meeting. The meeting was opened to the public to

allow him to speak, but S. Jaracz could not find a button to unmute him. He did not put any questions into the chat box. The meeting was then closed to the public.

Another e-mail requested that the EC pass a resolution opposing the proposed natural gas shipping terminal at Gibbstown in Gloucester Co. The EC's response was to request a model resolution that we might use.

Old business: S. Jaracz reported on a shorter version of the flyer announcing the stream clean-up. M. Santiago has translated it into Spanish. W. Andrews suggested that the flyers could be printed up through Mark Healey's office.

W. Andrews surveyed other standing Old Business topics on which nothing has happened.

A. Schmidt called for another member of the subcommittee to meet with members of the Shade Tree Commission. J. Johnson will consider it.

A. Schmidt sent out two documents concerning the web page, on the navigation bar and on what the EC does. He asked for comments on both. The EC is the only township committee posting biographical material; and do we need pictures of members?

At this point the meeting was opened to the public to allow the Franklin *Reporter* to ask a question. He asked whether the EC chose its own members. T. Chase explained that the EC recommends members when there is a vacancy and an applicant, and he as Council liaison nominates the candidate to the Council. The meeting was then closed to the public.

A. Schmidt moved to go into executive session to discuss personnel. This was approved at 8:48 PM. The Commission came out of executive session at 9:00 PM, and adjourned at 9:02 PM.