

City of Summit Environmental Commission Minutes, April 18, 2016

Present: Beth Lovejoy, Marian Glenn, Marjorie Fox, Judy Mandelbaum, John Kilby, Kelly Moughalian, Ruth Gais, Rick Bell

Green Team and Guests: Natasha Loeffler, Linda Seelbach

Beth Lovejoy called the meeting to order at 8:05 PM.

Action items in red.

The March meeting minutes were approved.

Committee/Project Updates:

Earth Day Clean-Up, 2016: Beth Lovejoy

Employees from the Summit business Trillion will be cleaning up the Morris Ave./Glenside triangle in the morning on Thursday, April 21.

For April 23, the site managers are: Ellen Purcell for Martin's Brook, Kelly for Briant Park, Marian for Passaic River Trails, Patti Schneider Smith for Risk Ave., and the PEP group will do Wilson Park. The PEP group comes with a number of adults so they do not need a separate manager. Beth will float between sites to take photos and provide any additional materials that might be needed.

Marjorie and Ruth are running the Clean-Up at Hidden Valley on May 1 in the afternoon.

Beth will email the mayor and Council members about the Clean-Up.

Passaic River Park Trails: Judy Mandelbaum

Judy, Jeff Hankinson and Beth walked the trails on March 23 to assess their condition. Jeff and Judy will work on a number of improvements including work on the stream stepping stones, and work on two stairways. Jeff Hankinson and the temple group (to put in a workday on May 22) will tackle several projects. The repair of one set of stairs may cost up to \$1000 so this might be a good grant possibility.

Judy also reported that the plants that were installed last fall are all in good shape after the winter. Jeff and Judy met with Dan Chomuck of Cording Landscape Design on April 13. Dan is going to arrange to have additional plants installed at the New Providence Ave. trailhead on May 3, in accordance with the landscape plan and funded by money from the Overlook grant.

Jeff has been diligently working on eradicating the knotweed at the trailhead. He is making great progress!

Community Outreach: Beth Lovejoy, Marian Glenn

Marjorie Fox will receive the Union County Environmental Hero award at the Union County EarthFest at Watchung Reservation on April 24. Thanks to Marian Glenn for submitting Marjorie's name and a list of all her accomplishments over the years.

The EC will have an educational table at Celgene's Earth Day events on its two campuses on April 21 and 22 between about 11 AM and 2 PM. Patti Schneider Smith and Beth will attend on Thursday, and Beth, Patti and John

will attend on Friday. The EC will have an educational table at the June 12 Farmers Market and at the annual Community Night on Tuesday, July 26.

There will be an EC table at the GoGreen event at the Transfer Station on May 1, 11 AM-2 PM, although no one is available to man it. **Marian, who will be working a table for the Community Garden, will keep an eye on it. Beth will deliver the display board to Anna Tinker for her to use.**

Biking: Beth Lovejoy

The second group bike plan meeting will take place on April 20 with representatives from the EC, City administration, engineering, public relations, Dept. of Community Programs, downtown businesses, Summit schools, and resident Ted Tolles. The group will review a draft document with the bike plan vision, goals and objectives, and action plan.

It was suggested that a specific notation for more commuter bike parking at the train station be added to the action plan.

Rain Gardens: Marian Glenn

Council has approved the installation of a rain garden at City Hall. Marian is following up with Rutgers.

Marian got a tour of the green infrastructure at Kent Place school. They are putting in a new parking lot with porous asphalt. And they have a great spot for a rain garden. **Marian will follow up with the Rutgers group.**

Other Business:

Peregrine Falcons: Judy Mandelbaum

Judy reported that Betty Ann Kelly (Union County Park staff) told her that peregrine falcons have been nesting on the roof of the Union County Courthouse for years, and that a webcam has been installed. **When it goes live, Judy will send around a link.**

Master Plan: Judy Mandelbaum

Judy reported that the Planning Board had not yet met with Topology, who has been hired by the City to draft the plan with input from the community. She also said that it was her understanding that a storefront or pop-up booth would be put into place downtown for people to offer suggestions on the plan.

Backyard Hens: Marian Glenn

Following last week's Forum on Summit's Sustainable Future, Marian looked at Maplewood's ordinance about backyard hens. They ran a 2-year pilot, then in 2013 developed a comprehensive and well-thought out permitting system. Maplewood has 24,000 people in 4 sq miles and they permit up to 15 households to have up to 5 backyard hens, distributed across neighborhoods, with Board of Health involvement. <http://ecode360.com/15585924> . Training and inspections are required.

Judy will look into whether Summit's zoning laws would allow backyard hens. Marian will follow up with Maplewood to get more information.

Shade Tree Advisory Committee: John Kilby

John reported that the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is making its way across the country and will likely make it to Summit. The EAB destroys 97% of ash trees. There are currently 425 City-owned ash trees in Summit and the City Forester is looking into seeing which of them the City should try to save.

Education about the EAB is important. The main way it is transported is through the sale of firewood, so if anyone sees "Firewood for Sale" signs, they should report them to John so he can contact the owners to make sure they are aware of the EAB issue. John is looking for additional ways to get the word out. **Marian will contact SHS teacher Caitlyn Botti about the possibility of EAB education being a project for the AP Environmental Science classes to take on after their AP exam.**

For more information on the EAB, see https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/plant_health/2015/bro_eab.pdf

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Beth Lovejoy

Remaining Meeting dates for 2016:

All meetings will be held at 8 PM in the Whitman Room at City Hall.

5/16

6/20

No meetings in July and August

9/19

10/17

11/14 (second Monday due to conflicts)

12/12 (second Monday but better for most people)