

City of Summit Environmental Commission Minutes, February 28, 2022  
(VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE)

Participating: Donna Goggin Patel, Rick Bell, Dan Crisafulli, Jeff Hankinson, Chris Sprague, Mimi Zukoff

Guests: Anne Berman, Fred Blau, Marian Glenn, Marwa Kamel, Lauren Nelson, Scott Ryan

Donna Goggin Patel called the meeting to order at 8:02 PM. The January minutes were approved.

“Tiny Forest” Reforestation: Donna Goggin Patel/Marian Glenn

The Tiny Forest is fenced and dormant for the winter. Marian Glenn and Anne Berman have been designing the planting grid and pathway (marked with orange flags and branches). We will be holding a public ribbon-cutting event on Saturday, April 2, at 9 am. There will be an initial round of tree and shrub plantings from the NJ Forestry Nursery on April 2, followed by plantings from Pinelands Nursery on April 23.

Earth Day Clean-Up: Donna Goggin Patel

Common Council approved Saturday, April 2, 2022, for the next city-wide Earth Day Clean-Up, with Sunday, April 3, as the rain date and alternate date for those who cannot work on Saturday. We plan to hold the clean-up from 10:00 am until 12 noon on April 2 to allow those who want to attend the Tiny Forest event to do so before heading out to the clean-up sites. Donna and Kelly Moughalian will reach out to Heather Miara from Union County for approval of the Union County sites.

Sustainable Jersey and School Administration Meeting: Donna Goggin Patel

Donna continues to meet with Dan Crisafulli, Chris Sprague, Melissa Spurr and Mimi Zukoff to discuss and plan the Sustainable Jersey certification that is due May 22.

Donna, Dr. Frederick Blau, and Scott Clark-Schoeb spoke to Derek Jess, the Business Administrator for Summit schools, on February 17. We discussed the various city and community groups, such as the Green Schools parents, that can serve as a resource for sustainability projects in the schools and at the District. Mr. Jess has had past experiences with Sustainable Jersey and its grants from a prior job. Donna shared sample recycling decals she created in early 2020 with the Franklin School principal that could be rolled out across the schools to help ensure consistent and correct recycling practices. We also discussed that Summit

High School is a heat island in Summit and how the SHS site is ideal for solar. Dr. Blau explained the role SHS would play in a microgrid should the city pursue creating one. Mr. Clark-Schoeb provided general information about solar panel arrays.

#### Recycling Advisory Committee: Mimi Zukoff

The Department of Community Services has received proposals from five companies for pilots of food waste composting at the Transfer Station. The five are from Community Compost, Green Bucket, Java's Compost, Trenton Renewables, and Waste Management CoRE. It is not clear if a pilot would be for curbside pick-up or if residents would need to drive their food scraps to the Transfer Station. Karen Raihofer also is looking for other municipalities that have been able to ramp up the program successfully following their pilot.

RAC and Summit Downtown, Inc. continue to explore the possibility of a reusable takeout container initiative. Over 600 people responded to the survey created by Lena Schulz. Adam Fabiarz, the owner of Deliver Zero, spoke to Karen Raihofer and confirmed that he is ready to move into NJ and just needs 6 – 8 restaurants to commit to try it. Nancy Adams emailed all the Summit Downtown restaurants introducing the program and asking if they would be interested in attending a call or zoom with the owner to learn about the program. There has been minimal response so far, so RAC members will be approaching restaurants directly to explain the program and ask for their participation in an informational Zoom.

Amy Sweeney (an LCJSMS teacher and RAC member) is bringing some ideas to Green Schools about adapting Essex County's school education program on recycling to further extend schools' participation and enthusiasm.

#### Shade Tree Advisory Committee: John Kilby

STAC is moving ahead with work on a revised tree ordinance for Summit. The city plans to plant 125 shade trees this Spring. STAC is working with The Summit Conservancy on a project to highlight the Landmark Trees throughout town. STAC's forestry intern is working on the street tree inventory. STAC met with Reeves-Reed Arboretum to begin planning the Fall in Love with Trees lecture series for the Fall.

#### Multi-Town Environmental Commission Meetings: Donna Goggin Patel

The NJSMA working group topics are energy aggregation; stormwater; climate action plans; green transportation/green fleets; green building and energy efficiency; pollinators/pesticides; environmental justice and zero waste initiatives. The Great Swamp Watershed Association will host the Native Plant sale, and the group expects to sell 21,000 plants this year. More info is

available at <https://www.greatswamp.org/native-plant-sale/garden-resources/>. Summit will need many volunteers to assist in preparing, transporting, and handing out orders. The sale will be live from April 1-22. Assembling the orders will take place the last week in April and the pick-up day for Summit will be on Saturday, April 30.

Donna Goggin Patel participated in a call of the Energy Aggregation Working Group on January 28. The group is interested in microgrid technology, and Donna forwarded the various presentations Dr. Frederick Blau has done for Summit's Environmental Commission. Mimi Zukoff participated in a call for the Pollinator Working Group on February 17. There are a series of Zoom lectures leading up to the plant sale. You can receive links to the recordings by emailing [plantsale@greatswamp.org](mailto:plantsale@greatswamp.org). The next one will be a kick-off webinar on April 1 at noon. Madison hosted an eco-garden tour last September of different residents' gardens containing native plants. Donna and Mimi participated in a forum on Environmental Justice for Union County on Feb. 24.

#### Union County Hub: Donna Goggin Patel

Donna Goggin Patel attended the Union County Hub meeting on Tuesday, February 8. The Hub decided to return to the pre-pandemic structure with different Union County towns taking the lead and hosting targeted discussions on topics of interest to the Hub. Rahway offered to host the next meeting as it was scheduled to do so when COVID hit. This meeting is likely going to be held in April or May.

#### GreenFaith: Mimi Zukoff

Summit Area GreenFaith Circle is hosting a webinar on Green Investing on April 5 at 7 pm through the Summit Public Library. The speaker is Peter Krull, CEO of Earth Equity Advisors, Asheville NC. (<https://www.earthequityadvisors.com>.) You can register at <https://summitlibrary.libcal.com/event/8709337?hs=a>.

At a GreenFaith meeting, Mimi Zukoff heard a presentation by Stan Jaracz from Central Jersey Electric Vehicle Association, which is part of Plug In America. He spoke about how members of his organization are available to present EV Car Shows in various locales. Residents with EVs bring their vehicles for others to examine. The website for their Earth Day initiative is <https://driveelectricearthday.org>.

#### Green Schools: Donna Goggin Patel

If you would like to join the green parent group, please contact [karin.pittle.gale@gmail.com](mailto:karin.pittle.gale@gmail.com). The next meeting will be via Zoom on Friday, March 4, at 9 AM. Washington School currently has collection bins outside the front entrance for discarded sneakers and printer cartridges. Franklin School and LCJSMS have collection bins to recycle used disposable face masks.

Brayton School is collecting stretched plastic for a Trex collection on a DIY basis. Weigh your plastics, drop them off at a store and then complete this Google form to record their total weight. (<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfWl8Llc5tTmwXb8SmOFzy5oBa5YwU9IeNALw9GBHoc7Q8xkw/viewform?gxids=7628>) You do not need to be a Brayton School family to participate. The schools rotate to receive benches. When they have an active collection, the following stores participate in the Trex program: ACME; Home Depot; Kohl's; King's; Stop & Shop; Wegmans; and Whole Foods. COVID has halted collections at many of these. From recent experience, Home Depot (Vauxhaul) and Stop & Shop (Madison) are the most receptive to taking collections of these plastics.

Mimi Zukoff wanted to mention a new book, the "Green Actioneers Family Action Book," by Dave Finnigan, that may be of interest to parents. The website is <https://greenactioneers.com/>.

Repair Café: Courtney Cordaro

The next Repair Café will be held on Saturday, March 26, from 11 am - 3 pm, at Christ Church (561 Springfield Ave.). Repairs available include lamps/lighting, electronics, sewing/textiles, jewelry, wooden/furniture and knife sharpening. If you are available to help with set-up around 9:30 am, please email Courtney Cordaro at [summit@repaircafes.org](mailto:summit@repaircafes.org).

New Business: Everyone

Rick Bell mentioned that the next Green Cities lecture will be held on Thursday, March 3 at 12 noon. The featured speaker is Samuel Assefa, the Director of the Governor's Office of Planning and Research for the State of California. Register at: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_3XwUWTOFRlePkKLInkjFXw](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_3XwUWTOFRlePkKLInkjFXw).

Rick Bell also discussed the project proposed for 557-565 Morris Avenue (at the corner of River Road) and the revised plans he reviewed. He reviews the plans for the sustainability aspects, such as native plantings on the landscape plan or looking for solar panels on the roof. Because of the fact they designated areas of this roof for resident amenities, there is only about 10-15% of the roof designated for "future solar." Rick suggested that the project use permeable paving, which would assist with stormwater runoff with the project's proximity to the river. There will be bike storage. This project will be discussed at the Zoning Board meeting on March 7. Lauren Nelson described her perspective as a resident in the area and the concerns near the Passaic River.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Donna Goggin Patel.

2022 Meeting Dates. For the present time, these meetings will be held via Zoom. These are typically the 3rd Monday of the month. Any changes to that schedule are noted:

3/21

4/18

5/16

6/20

No meetings in July and August

9/19

10/17

11/21

12/19