

City of Summit Environmental Commission Minutes, April 17, 2023

Participating: Donna Goggin Patel, Rick Bell, Dan Crisafulli, Jeff Hankinson, John Kilby, Lara Mendenhall, Kelly Moughalian, Chris Sprague, Mimi Zukoff

Guests: Fred Blau, George Drossinos, Kathy Head, Sofia Mendenhall

Donna Goggin Patel called the meeting to order at 8:04 PM. The March minutes were approved.

Earth Day Clean-Up Planning: Donna Goggin Patel

The Earth Day Clean-Up will be held on Saturday, April 22, from 9 am – 12 noon (with Sunday, April 23, as a rain date or alternate date for those who do not wish to work on Saturday). Kelly and Donna have been actively assigning groups and coordinating the supplies. Kelly has noticed a lot of poison ivy while scoping sites. She suggested laying cardboard and wood chips for Hidden Valley. We will figure out how to allocate the wheelbarrows we have. In the afternoon of April 22 from 3-4:40 pm, there will be an event celebrating the Park Line's pedestrian bridge. The ribbon cutting is scheduled for 3:30.

"Tiny Forest" Reforestation: Donna Goggin Patel

Donna is working with Amy Cairns and Megan Trindell on the design of the larger, educational signage for the Tiny Forest. At 10 am on May 13, Shade Tree and the city will celebrate Arbor Day at the Tiny Forest. All are welcome.

Recycling Advisory Committee: Mimi Zukoff

With regards to the food waste program, RAC intends to do a number of tabling events over the spring and summer (including June 4 and July 23 at the Farmer's Market), and EC volunteers are welcome. The food waste collected in March 2023 weighed 3,661 lbs. (The capacity is 6,900 lbs/month.) The city communications office is posting about composting and recycling in general. Karen Venturella has collected over 30 5-gallon buckets that RAC can give away to residents to encourage composting. DPW is discussing the program with the schools, too.

The Summit Tennis Association is managing the tennis ball collection bins at Memorial Field and Tatlock. RAC is overseeing the Cellphones for Soldiers and LEGO collections. The High School student members of RAC are working to organize and maintain the Book Barn on a weekly basis. Books in excellent condition will be donated to charitable organizations when there are simply too many to be contained in the Book Barn. They are also working to organize the Book Barn into distinct categories to encourage residents to shelve their donations

appropriately and make it easier for people to find books that interest them. The goal is to keep perfectly good books from going into recycling.

There is a collection bin for stretched plastics at the Transfer Station for Summit residents with a permit (as part of a Union County effort). The bin is located next to the comingled plastics dumpster to keep people from placing plastic bags in that dumpster. More info can be found at <https://ucnj.org/recycling/plastic-film/>. Since this is going to Trex, please continue to log any stretched plastics dropped off there for Brayton School's collection toward its Trex bench: [Google form](#). (You do not need to have children in the schools to contribute to Brayton's collection numbers.)

#### Update on Grants: Donna Goggin Patel

The Environmental Commission applied for the ANJEC Open Spaces grant in the amount of \$1,500 to complete fencing and provide signage for the Butterfly Garden at the Park Line. For the Community Energy Plan grant, Sustainable Jersey released the template plan on its site this month, so Donna Goggin Patel and Dan Crisafulli are drafting Summit's Plan. Sustainable Jersey sent an email that its grant decisions are delayed until late April.

#### Shade Tree Advisory Committee: John Kilby

STAC is moving ahead with the revised tree ordinance for Summit. The next round of shade tree plantings will be approximately 80 trees in Fall 2023. John has been removing the metal wire from the recently-planted Union County trees. STAC is meeting with Reeves-Reed Arboretum to plan the Fall in Love with Trees speaker series. The city received its Tree City USA letter.

#### Summit Free Market: Mimi Zukoff

The Free Market held its Saturday event on April 15 from 8AM-3PM and will hold a weekday event on April 28 from 12-2PM. The rest of the 2023 dates for the weekday events have been posted. They are May 26, June 23, July 21, August 25, September 22, October 27, and December 1 (there is none in November). The rest of the weekend Free Markets will be held on the typical second Saturday of each month from 8AM-3PM.)

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

The NJSMA is working with the Great Swamp Watershed Association again to host a Native Plant sale. The sale is open through April 28 at <https://www.greatswamp.org/native-plant-sale/garden-resources/>. Summit needs volunteers to assist in preparing orders at the GSWA Headquarters from May 1-5; please sign up at this [SignUp Genius](#). The pick-up day for Summit

is Saturday, May 6, from 12:30-2:30 pm. We need people to pick up the Summit orders at the GSWA headquarters in Harding on Saturday morning, May 6, and bring them to Summit. Also, we need volunteers to organize the orders and give them out from 11:30 am-2:30 pm on May 6. Please email Mimi Zukoff at [morahzukoff@gmail.com](mailto:morahzukoff@gmail.com) if you can help on May 6.

#### Repair Café: Courtney Cordaro

The March 25 Repair Café was a success with 124 repair requests from 79 patrons (106 of the items were fully repaired). The event diverted approximately 385 pounds from the landfill.

#### GreenFaith: Mimi Zukoff

Summit Area GreenFaith Circle has developed a community education seminar on residential solar and partnered with the Environmental Commission and Summit Public Library to present it in a hybrid format on May 11 at 7 pm at the Library. Frank Curran of Green House Solar will present information on costs and payback periods, federal and NJ tax credits, and battery backup for energy independence—and how it compares to a traditional generator. Register at <https://summitlibrary.libcal.com/event/10332703>.

#### Green Schools: Donna Goggin Patel

The Green Schools parents created lesson plans for each elementary school grade to be taught by parent volunteers on Friday, April 21. The lessons are as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> grade (growing food from seeds); 2<sup>nd</sup> grade (reduce, reuse, recycle); 3<sup>rd</sup> grade (renewable energy); 4<sup>th</sup> grade (climate change) and 5<sup>th</sup> grade (composting).

The next meeting will be on Friday, May 12, at 9:30 am. If you would like to join the green parent group, please contact Donna Goggin Patel at [dgp212@gmail.com](mailto:dgp212@gmail.com).

#### New Business: Everyone

The Commission reviewed the draft letter regarding the Keasbey natural gas power plant in Woodbridge and decided to send it.

Lara Mendenhall and Dan Crisafulli both attended some of the ANJEC Environmental Commission fundamentals sessions. Lara found the one on stormwater management most useful. Dan thought that the Land Use and Natural Resource Planning ones were informative.

Donna mentioned the May 5 Sustainability Jersey Summit at Bell Labs. As of now, Donna, Mimi and George are registered and carpooling. Please let Donna know if you want to join.

Sofia Mendenhall reported that after a conversation with SHS administration, Principal Grimaldi and one of the Vice Principals are scheduling a meeting with the District's Business Administrator to discuss a District Sustainability Policy and solar panels for SHS.

Rick Bell informed us that the next Green Cities talk will discuss Miami. The webinar is at noon on Wednesday, April 19. You can register [here](#). The speaker will discuss resilience and the integrity of flood resistance for existing infrastructure (including the politics, financing and engineering associated with that). Rick accompanied his students to Miami over their recent Spring Break. The existing degree of growth and fatalism about hurricanes and sea-level rise surprised the group. Donna mentioned a new book she borrowed electronically from the Summit Library: "The Great Displacement: Climate Change and the Next American Migration" by Jake Bittle.

Rick also asked about the status of pesticide and herbicide applications on the public playing fields and playgrounds around town. Donna will check in with Aaron Schrager to determine the status of the planned pilot on the Village Green. And she will redistribute Beth Lovejoy's memo detailing the practices at the time in Summit and any information from Chatham which stopped applying pesticides.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Donna Goggin Patel.

### **Dates for the 2023 Environmental Commission Meetings**

All meetings will be held in the Whitman Room in City Hall. These are typically the 3rd Monday of the month. Any changes to that schedule are noted:

5/15

6/12 (2nd Monday)

There are no meetings in July and August.

9/18

10/16

11/20

12/18