

City of Summit Environmental Commission Minutes, April 22, 2019

Present: Donna Goggin Patel, Beth Lovejoy, Marian Glenn, Rick Bell, Kelly Moughalian, Jeff Hankinson, John Kilby

Guests: Fred Blau, Courtney Cordaro, Daniela Gioseffi, Patricia Palermo, Gio Sce

Donna Goggin Patel called the meeting to order at 8:00 PM.

The March meeting minutes were approved.

Earth Day Clean-Up: Beth Lovejoy, Kelly Moughalian, Donna Goggin Patel

We are in the final stages of preparing for the Earth Day Clean-Up on Saturday, April 27, from 9 am – 12 noon. The regular spots are Briant Park (a walk-in spot); Martin's Brook Park (a walk-in spot); a small area of Wilson Park (not a walk-in spot; always worked on by the PEP group); Passaic River trail off of New Providence Ave (not a walk-in spot; will be weeded by the Garden Club and Venture girls); and Passaic Ave near the RR bridge (not a walk-in spot; accessed via Risk Ave). We are adding the Chatham Rd. location (near the Department of Public Works building) that will be cleaned by members of Common Council and employees at Brennan Environmental. The Junior League also has a group of people who will be cleaning part of the Village Green. We are saving the Park Line work until a later date.

GreenFaith: Marian Glenn

The GreenFaith Trex collection has reached 1 ton of stretched plastics. The public collection bin for the Trex bench program is located at Christ Church (561 Springfield Ave). The blue collection bin is located to the right of the main entrance. Cars may pull into the handicapped spot in the circular driveway to drop off the plastics. Trex accepts these types of clean and dry stretched plastics: grocery bags, bread bags, case overwrap, dry cleaning bags, newspaper sleeves, ice bags, Ziploc baggies, produce bags, bubble wrap, salt and cereal bags.

Renewable Energy Subgroup: Donna Goggin Patel, Marian Glenn

Donna Goggin Patel attended the Union County EC Hub meeting on March 21. The main topic was the opportunity through Waste Management to convert organic food waste into energy through a waste-to-energy co-digester facility in Rahway. Also of note, Livingston sent a representative (even though it is Essex County) who reported that Livingston became a utility district. This allowed Livingston to negotiate directly with the energy providers. Livingston arranged for its residents with PSE&G to receive 100% renewable energy and its residents with JCP&L to get 40% renewable energy. This means that Livingston as a whole is at about 70% renewable energy. All the residents got an approx. 10% discount on cost. Marian also checked in with Tracey Woods about the Sustainable Essex Alliance which got responses to its RFP in early April. She reported that the PSE&G parts of the group got 41% PJM Class 1 RECs at about \$100 savings per year per household. But the JCP&L portion was not able to meet the request. Also, they built in a funding mechanism for an energy efficiency program which was a goal of their aggregation.

The BPU has released the application for NJ's Community Solar Program. There will be a webinar about community solar on Tuesday, April 30, at 12 noon. Interested individuals are welcome to join a group who will be watching the webinar at Marian's home. Email marian.glenn@shu.edu for the address.

Shade Tree Advisory Committee Updates: John Kilby

Shade Tree hosted a successful display at the Summit Free Public Library in March and attended the Local Government Open House on April 11. In celebration of Arbor Day, there will be a planting a cherry tree this Friday (4/26) at Lincoln School. John Linson, the City Forester, has drafted a revised Community Forestry Plan that is being reviewed by the Shade Tree Advisory Committee. JCP&L continues to remove trees around town to protect power sources. There is also now increased communications with residents whose trees are removed providing them a few choices for a replacement tree. The City's bids for tree plantings came back favorably. Shade Tree is also looking into ways to educate residents about trees and encourage the protection of trees in town at little-to-no cost.

Rick Bell noted that there is now a rule that there must be 1 tree per 8 spaces of surface parking in NYC. How could we incentivize greener parking in Summit? Would it be possible to plant trees at the existing surface parking lots?

Summit Schools: Donna Goggin Patel

The next meeting of parents from the Summit school green teams will be held on Friday, May 17, at 9:30 am. If you are interested in being part of this effort, please contact karin.pittle.gale@gmail.com. Franklin completed its Trex collection, and Washington is hosting a second round of Trex collections. There will be a two-week Walk, Bike or Carpool to School event held the weeks of May 13 and 20.

Green Summit: Courtney Cordaro

The second Repair Café was another success. There were 60 specific requests. 40 of these were successful. The others lacked the necessary tools or were items beyond repair. Maplewood is hosting a Repair Café in Maplewood at Morrow Church on May 4. Green Summit attended Community Day at the Primary Centers on April 11. They also will host a table at the May 5 Farmers Market with a reuseable basket giveaway.

Upcoming Events: Donna Goggin Patel, Marian Glenn

Donna and Marian represented the Environmental Commission at the Local Government Open House on April 11. Donna and Jeff represented the EC at the Earth Day Fair at Celgene on April 22. Donna and Beth will represent the EC at the Earth Day Fair at Celgene on April 23. The Summit Free Market takes place on the next two Saturdays, April 27 and May 4, from 8am-3pm.

If you would like to join Marian Glenn to plant trees in Springfield this Thursday (4/25) from 10-3, Friday (4/26) from 10-3; and Sunday (4/28) from 1-3; please contact her at marian.glenn@shu.edu.

The Summit Public Library is hosting a free series on water this Spring. Marian Glenn will be presenting “Green Infrastructure for Managing Storm Water: New Jersey’s New Rules” on Tuesday, May 21, from 6:30-8:00 pm.

New Business:

Daniela Gioseffi mentioned the work of Empower New Jersey (www.empowernewjersey.com), which is seeking to have Governor Murphy enact a moratorium on fossil fuel projects in New Jersey. She also noted a NJ Environment News article about NJ’s air quality, which is warming at the fastest rate in the United States (www.NJEnvironmentNews.com). Daniela also volunteered to research tips for homeowners looking to reduce pesticide use on their yards (either themselves or to share with their landscapers). And the group is looking to identify some public areas around town that might make good pilot spaces to not use pesticides for the land management.

Dr. Frederick P. Blau introduced himself to the group. He is a retired physicist who is interested in solar energy. In particular, Fred explained his interest in seeing Summit explore creating its own microgrid. A microgrid is a self-contained, smaller-scale electric grid with its own power generation. Fred envisions a solar powered microgrid with a battery. He provided these two reasons to suggest a microgrid for Summit: (1) microgrids are unaffected by power outages (e.g., Princeton University’s microgrid provided it with power during Superstorm Sandy); and (2) microgrids can withstand potential cyberattacks (currently the US, Russia, China, North Korea and Iran are all capable of conducting one of these). The microgrid is typically tied into the larger grid, but can flip a switch to separate itself. Some examples of microgrids beyond Princeton University include approximately 13 communities in New Jersey. Montclair is looking at building a \$12 million microgrid. Hoboken is also working on one that would cost approximately \$50 million. 11 other communities have received some money for pilot studies for microgrids. This concept is included in the 2015 NJ Power Plan. Sterling, Massachusetts (with about 7,000 residents) has a solar-powered microgrid with a \$2.1 million battery and use the battery to make money by selling electricity. Fred has created a PowerPoint regarding his microgrid proposal which we would like to schedule for an upcoming EC meeting in May or June depending on scheduling.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30.

Respectfully submitted by Donna Goggin Patel.

2019 EC meeting dates. All meetings take place on the 3rd Monday of the month except as noted.

5/13 (2nd Mon)

6/17

No meetings in July and August.

9/16

10/21

11/19 (Tues)

12/16