

City of Summit Environmental Commission Minutes, June 18, 2018

Present: Beth Lovejoy, Marian Glenn, John Kilby, Donna Patel, Rick Bell, Kelly Moughalian, Chris Sprague, Greg Vartan

Council liaison: Marjorie Fox

Guests: Courtney Cordaro, Daniela Gioseffi, Patricia Palermo, Susan Haig

Beth Lovejoy called the meeting to order at 8 PM.

The May meeting minutes were approved.

Action items in red.

Green Summit NJ: Donna Patel

Green Summit NJ co-sponsored (with Reeves-Reed Arboretum and Ciel Power), a Sustainable Fashion show at the Arboretum on Thursday, June 14 in the evening. Kudos to Melissa Spurr, who did a lot of work to coordinate the event. The event was a success with more than 200 people in attendance. Student designers from Montclair State University were highlighted as well as sustainable fashion brands and local consignment shop items.

Green Summit is selling Farmers Market reusable bags (\$3 for one or \$5 for two) each Sunday at the Farmers Market. The proceeds go to Green Summit.

Green Summit has collected over 340 responses to the 2-question survey. **Please take a minute to take the survey (www.greensummitnj.org/survey) if you have not already done so. Please send the link to the survey to your friends; the goal is to collect 500 completed surveys.**

Green Summit will be hosting a Repair Cafe on Saturday, September 22, in the afternoon at St. John's Lutheran Church. A Repair Cafe is a gathering of volunteers who are willing to donate their time (and sometimes their supplies) to help repair items (that can easily be carried in by one person) often of sentimental value owned by community members. **If you are available to assist in repairing items, please email greensummitnj@gmail.com.**

Plastic Straw Initiative: Donna Patel

Karen Raihofer, Carey Elias and Donna met with Mayor Radest, Marjorie Fox and Amy Cairns to discuss a campaign for reducing plastic straw use in Summit, and were given a green light to move forward in the next few months. The goal is not to require restaurants to eliminate plastic straws; rather the goal is educational and aspirational, hoping that restaurants will be willing to either give straws only upon request, or switch to straws made from other materials. The flyer to the businesses is being finalized after which a select group of restaurant managers will be contacted for feedback before officially launching. They also discussed the City's supporting a broader campaign against single use plastics beyond straws, such as plastic bags, cups, etc. This will need to be written up as a formal proposal and presented to one of the Council committees (probably Building & Grounds). These projects are a joint initiative among Summit's Recycling Advisory Committee, Green Summit NJ, and the EC.

Rain Gardens: Marian Glenn

Rutgers has a rain garden rebate program. Interested residents attend an educational program and then meet with a rain garden designer to select an appropriate design, all at no cost to the residents. If they choose to install a rain garden, there is a rebate of \$3/sq ft up to \$450. Residential rain gardens are usually about 150 sq ft in size.

The impediments to actually installing rain gardens seem to be related to getting the initial digging done and bioretention mix delivered and installed. Also, where to purchase the appropriate plants can be an issue. Marian would like to try to pilot a program in Summit for 10-12 residential gardens by making the process easier and more efficient.

This might include contracting to have a number of gardens dug in one day as well as having bioretention mix deliveries to a number of residents in one day. She'd also look into where to buy the appropriate plants or possibly work with the Master Gardeners Program to grow them.

Marian has also been in touch with the [NJ Water Supply Authority](#), which is a state organization, about applying for a grant for this pilot program. **Marian will follow up with Rutgers, the NJ Water Supply Authority, the Master Gardeners, and Aaron Schragger (City Engineer).**

Rahway River Watershed Association (RRWA): Marian Glenn

RRWA, with the Springfield Green Team and Union County Parks, planted 272 trees in Meisel Ave Park and is now almost done installing deer protection, so they can grow up.

GreenFaith --Bags to Benches: Marian Glenn

GreenFaith's Bags to Benches campaign will begin with a potluck lunch and lecture on Sept 16. The public is invited. NY-NJ Baykeeper monitors plastic pollution in our water and will talk about what they've found.

Sierra Club Ready for 100 Campaign: Daniela Gioseffi, Marian Glenn

Daniela and Marian attended a Sierra Club presentation on [its campaign](#) to encourage municipalities to move to 100% renewable energy by 2050. A discussion ensued about how best to: (1) encourage residents to choose a clean energy option for their own residences (which can be confusing given the many options); and (2) encourage a municipal approach to clean energy. Marian noted that the NJ state portfolio standards already require that, statewide, the renewable portfolio standard be 35 percent by 2025 and 50 percent by 2030.

<https://www.greentechmedia.com/articles/read/new-jersey-nuclear-subsidies-boosts-renewable-energy-target-50-percent#gs.Nh21kWw>. **Beth will send around an email to see who might be interested in working in a smaller group to look into boosting renewable energy selection on both an individual and municipal level.**

Big Belly Bins: Marjorie Fox

Marjorie announced that Summit had received a \$10,000 grant from Union County to put big belly solar-powered compacting trash and recycling bins at the Glenside field.

Community Night: Beth Lovejoy

Community Night will be held on the Village Green on Tuesday, July 24. The EC and other green groups will have educational tables. **Beth, John, Donna, Daniela and Chris offered to work at the EC table.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Beth Lovejoy

2018 EC meeting dates. All meetings take place in the Whitman Room at City Hall except as noted.

No meetings in July and August

9/17 **Employee lunch room**

10/15

11/12 Large Conference Room and a week early because of Thanksgiving.

12/17 Large Conference Room