

Rahway Environmental Commission

MINUTES

Thursday, October 13, 2022
7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m.

ROLL CALL

On a call of the roll, the following Commissioners and Officials were present:

Mr. Jeffrey Robinson, Chairman
Mr. Joseph Paszek, Commissioner
Ms. Clea Carchia, Commissioner
Ms. Denise Rolong, Commissioner
Mr. James Keane, Commissioner
Mr. Alexander Parker, Commissioner
Ms. Michelle Gil, Commissioner
Mr. Jordan Parham, Second Alternate Commissioner
Ms. Gina Holmes, Clerk

Absent:

Mr. Eric Hausker, First Alternate Commissioner
Ms. Joanna Miles, Council Liaison

FLAG SALUTE

MINUTES

Approval of minutes of the Regular Meeting on Thursday, September 9, 2022

Motion: Commissioner Carchia

Seconded: Commissioner Keane

SPEAKER

Dr. Emile D. Devito, PH.D of the NJ Conservation Foundation/RRWA Board Vice President

HEARING OF CITIZENS

Pranita Bijlani – 103 Princeton Ave., Rahway, NJ – pranita.bijlani@gmail.com

COMMUNICATIONS

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

UC Air Traffic Noise Advisory Board - (Chairman Robinson is the EC rep to this Board)
No Meeting

Bayway CAP – (Commissioner Paszek is the EC rep to this Board)
Had last meeting of the year. Half of the refinery will be closing for 1 month for equipment refurbishment and replacement.

Letter to UC Chairman of Open Trust Fund Al Mirabella – Bazega Park – Mayor Giacobbe sent a letter to Al Mirabella on 9/21/22 in support of having this house removed. The Animal Hospital that adjoins this property is closing.

Letter to UC Parks Director Ron Zuber – Bramhall Road County Park site – Meeting with Ron Zuber did not happen in early October. Ms. Bijlani put together a package for Councilman Brown from her organization with more detail about what could happen at this location. The co-owner at Wildridge Plants has designed open spaces/parks in Union County and there is a possibility we can work with him and reuse his design from other parks. Mr. Devito does not think a tiny forest will work at this location but suggested a pollinator garden/habitat; native plants; some trees/shrubs (meadow); butterfly garden with paths and the area needs to be fenced in. The upkeep would involve the County mowing the paths and mow the meadow once a year. Mr. Devito offered to be involved in all meetings and discussions. Chairman Robinson will set up a meeting with Mr. Zuber, Commissioner Baker, Mayor Giacobbe, Ms. Bijlani and the Environmental Commission to move forward with this project.

Rain Garden – No update on curb cuts

Sustainability Jersey Application – No update

Opportunity to tour Waste Management food waste recycling facility in Elizabeth – Tour date is scheduled for 10/26/22 at either 9:00 a.m. or 11:00 a.m.

Protecting municipal stormwater rights – No update

Proposed Keasbey Power Plant – The Rahway City Council adopted a Resolution Opposing the Keasbey Power Plant. We need to get Union County to do the same and put pressure on the State to not approve. The power plant still needs an air permit from the State.

Campaign to Release NJPACT rules – no update

Native Plant Ordinance – Rahway Library Plant areas – letter sent

NJ Electric Vehicle Ordinance – letter sent

Rahway day – successful

Spotted Lanterflies – There are grants available for NJ Counties to receive up to \$15,000 for chemical treatments in County Parks. Union County applied.

NEW BUSINESS

Shade Tree Committee – Update/Report from Commissioner Parham – There was no September meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for 10/27/22 at 5:00 p.m. in Administration at Rahway City Hall. Bob Markey will be attending the NJ Shade Tree Conference for Core Training. Commissioner Parham recommended the book by Erik Kiviat – Urban Biodiversity – The Natural History of the NJ Meadowlands.

Salem Oak Update – Need to find location for tree planting

PFOA/PFOS – On 8/22/22 the EPA released information stating that they found forever chemicals in NJ water. Scientists have been trying to destroy these chemicals.

Union County Hub – Attendance has declined after the COVID pandemic. Union County is looking to see if it is feasible to merge with Essex County Hub. Commissioner Keane suggested keeping the meetings online to boost attendance. Commissioner Keane also is interested in how the Township of Westfield watered their red bud trees.

Clark Environmental Commission will be holding their annual clean up on 10/15/22 from 8:30 – 12:00 p.m. at the Clark Reservoir but meeting at Clark Town Hall at 8:30 a.m.

The weekend of 10/15/22, Union County will host the “Four Centuries in a Weekend” with every historical house in Union County open.

SITE PLAN REVIEW/PLANNING & ZONING BOARD ITEMS

Corey & Ragan Building on Elm and Bryant – developer is revising their plans

1399 Lawrence St. – New owner wants to put new gas station in with offices on top. They got tentative approval but DEP has to approve the clean up.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

ADJOURN

The next Regular meeting of the Environmental Commission will be held Thursday, November 10, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at 1632 St. Georges Ave., Rahway, NJ. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Motion: Commissioner Paszek
Seconded: Commissioner Parker

At: 9:02 p.m.