



**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMISSION
&
GREEN TEAM**

DATE/TIME/PLACE: **July 19, 2022 – Council Chambers**

	Present	Absent
ENVIRONMENTAL MEMBERS:		
Laura Hoogstrate	<u> X </u>	
Mary Daly	<u> X </u>	
Brian Mitchell	<u> X </u>	
Patty Almberg	<u> X </u>	
Pam Gould	<u> X </u>	
Chris Caslin	<u> X </u>	
David Kraft, Alternate		<u> X </u>
Jim Furrer, Alternate		<u> X </u>
Councilwoman Ellen Busteed	<u> X </u>	
Quinlan Kraft, Student Rep.		<u> X </u>

GREEN TEAM MEMBERS:

Sheli Danski-Danziger	_____ X _____
Marie Papaleo	_____ X _____
Liz Stewart	_____ X _____
Alicia Armental	_____ X _____
Chris Leishman	_____ X _____
Claudia O'Neill	_____ X _____
Donna Dapper	_____ X _____

LAURA HOOGSTRATE: Questioned if everyone had seen the entries for the storm drain contest. Advised the Roosevelt winner was Sofie Song, whose artwork will go on Continental by Memorial Park and the Cherry Hill winner was Victoria Koo whose art work will be on Howland Avenue, outside Van Saun Park. Indicated those areas were picked by Jason Milito. Stated the Garden Contest just started, and they received their first entry, which was a picture of sunflowers with a quote, and was chosen because they are the flowers of Ukraine. Stated the Garden Contest gets a lot of people talking about other people's gardens and hopefully inspires some people and brings traffic on to their social media pages.

MEMBER: Questioned if the gardener who was at the last meeting has reached out to Laura.

LAURA HOOGSTRATE: Stated she has not heard from her.

PATTY ALMBERG: Questioned what Laura wanted her to do.

LAURA HOOGSTRATE: Stated to send everyone the flyer that is on the list.

PATTY ALMBERG: Questioned if there was anything else besides that.

LAURA HOOGSTRATE: Stated just the garden contest for now. Advised they need to discuss Memorial Park and the proposed softball field. Stated as a Little League and REGAL mother, it has always been issue about the inequity among REGAL and Little League and the fields are different in their quality. Stated as a member of the Environmental Commission a new field is not something she could support, not only because it will impact the community around Memorial Park, but it will also impact everyone who uses the park and feels their stand should be the same as Shade Tree in that

the issues caused by removing the trees and creating a man-made structure for the drainage is not something environmentally, she could support. Stated she is glad the issue came up and it has been raised because it is something that needs to be dealt with. Questioned Ellen if they will be included as stake holders in the meeting proposed within 30 days should have some representatives from this Commission.

ELLEN BUSTEED: Advised the Recreation Commission is having their regular scheduled meeting tomorrow and she spoke with the chairwomen and after that meeting, they will be putting their together a meeting of stake holders and would recommend that Laura reach out to the Chairwoman of Recreation Anna Delia, and let her know that EPC wants a seat at that table.

PATTY ALMBERG: Advised she was at the Sunday meeting in the park and feels Memorial Park looks the best it looked in years and the trees look healthy and knows there is a draining issue. Feels they talked in circles.

PAM GOULD: Stated she watch the entire video but agrees with Laura. Stated they do not need to take any trees out of that park, as we lose many trees from storms, and they are not being replenished with shade trees.

MARY DALY: Stated before you disrupt the environment you should see what all your options are. Advised she agrees with Ellen to stop and get another option and have everybody voice their opinion. Believes it is more of a cooperation with seven fields in town but does not know what the issue is with the drainage as that is to be looked at by professionals.

PATTY ALMBERG: Stated she would like to see the enrollment numbers of the schools and little league, regal and lacrosse, as everything is data driven.

CHRIS CASLIN: Stated baseball and softball numbers have gone down consistently over the years.

LAURA HOOGSTRATE: Stated one reason is because of Lacrosse.

PATTY ALMBERG: Indicated you also need to look at the school numbers.

LAURA HOOGSTRATE: Advised she does not have the exact numbers, but Little League and REGAL numbers are fairly close and Little League does not own those fields at Memorial Park as those are town fields, and it seems like the Board of Education wants to work with the community on this.

PATTY ALMBERG: Advised the Superintendent of River Edge put out a 2–3-minute blurb and it was excellent.

PAM GOULD: Stated she sent Chapter 25 of the Environmental Commission to everyone, and it seems that they are supposed to have an overview of private and public spaces and provide input how things are used.

BRIAN MITCHELL: Stated he believes once the Mayor and Council hears it, it gets put out to the various boards as an advisory, which will end up at Land Use.

ELLEN BUSTEED: Advised that is why you need to have a seat at that table. Stated because it involves Open Space money from the County. Stated before the Application is submitted and presented to the Council there should be a conversation with people who have an interest. Recreation brings it forward, but the other Commissions and Committees should at least be informed what they are bringing forward.

LAURA HOOGSTRATE: Stated that is why they are having this discussion at this meeting so she can hear what individuals have to say.

PATTY ALMBERG: Questioned if people even know the Commission exists and believes that is something they need to talk about to figure out what ways they can get out what they do.

ELLEN BUSTEED: Stated Patty had a good point and believes participation in this conversation is going to elevate the Commission.

LAURA HOOGSTRATE: Advised the joint meetings with the Green Team was done to keep a robust body and both Commissions were working on many of the same projects. Stated they are 2 separate entities, but her first 3 years on the Commission there was not a single meeting that had a quorum and the river clean up was the only event, but since then they have always had a quorum, but the issue now is to step up and have their voices heard.

PAM GOULD: Stated Laura has done a great job as the Commission has done a lot under her leadership, but it would be nice to let the town know that they should talk to the Commission periodically regarding important issues.

LAURA HOOGSTRATE: Stated she will reach out to the Recreation Commission regarding Memorial Park.

ELLEN BUSTEED: Advised the Recreation Commission is having a meeting, which is an open meeting, that you can attend.

LAURA HOOGSTRATE: Advised they had a subcommittee meeting regarding Sustainable New Jersey and asked Patty to give an overview of the meeting.

PATTY ALMBERG: Advised there is a 2-page document on Sustainable New Jersey, and they looked at what they can do to gain points, such as working with the police department to collect drugs, which also would require an Ordinance. Stated Lissette and

Tybe will help with the Ordinance, which will need to be submitted to Sustainable New Jersey, along with meeting minutes. There are a lot of other items on the list, which they will look at again.

ELLEN BUSTEED: Questioned if there is a way to articulate in a few sentences the value of being a Sustainable New Jersey town, whether it is for Grant money or not, it would be helpful for promoting it.

LAURA HOOGSTRATE: Stated there is a small paragraph on their website, which states why you should be a Sustainable New Jersey.

ELLEN BUSTEED: Advised they are embarking on a Borough Hall renovation, and if there is a Sustainable NJ piece they want to let the engineer know about, that would be something the EPC could bring forward, by saying we could earn NJ Sustainable points by doing x, y and z when the building is being renovated. Stated they have challenged the Engineer to think about those things, so if there are specific things that a Sustainable NJ municipality would want to champion or accomplish, the Borough should know about those and maybe someone from the Commission should go to a Council meeting and talk about those things.

PATTY ALMBERG: Questioned if the building renovation would be on the Agenda.

ELLEN BUSTEED: Stated it would and she could state in her Council comments in August that the EPC is working on Sustainable NJ and would like some consideration during the project so they can move along with the Sustainable NJ, whether it is bronze, silver or gold.

LAURA HOOGSTRATE: Stated points or no points, that is a worthwhile endeavor, but that is where Sustainable NJ gives you a check list you can be working towards.

ELLEN BUSTEED: Stated if there is something on the checklist regarding buildings, lighting, etc., you can share that with her, and she can get it to the Engineer or Borough Administrator.

LAURA HOOGSTRATE: Stated they have already identified somethings that would be Commission items and one item they have been working on, and is also on the list, is improve public engagement in municipal government. Advised the data that has been collected at various events and having an email distribution list are items that move them in that direction, as well as what was discussed tonight. Stated part of the work is identifying what they are already doing and writing it up and putting it into Sustainable NJ. Advised the deadline for Sustainable NJ is December 31, 2023. Indicated there was something on the list about no idling, which was as simple as running a contest in the schools and Mary has been asking for a campaign since she first started on the Commission, as idling is an issue, and the schools are the best place to start and that is where most of the idling happens. Stated if the school kids are participating in anti-idling contest, signs can be made, like the storm drain art.

MARY DALY: Stated DEP have signs, as it is a law that you cannot idle more than 3 minutes, which she would like to see posted in front of Roosevelt School.

ELLEN BUSTEED: Suggested referring that to Traffic & Safety and see if the Police would consider putting them up.

MARY DALY: Stated they have the official one at the High School.

LAURA HOOGSTRATE: Stated work was being done with the fire hydrants and the first thing she noticed was a police vehicle idling and she understands in some cases there is a necessary component, but maybe they should push for electric vehicles.

ELLEN BUSTEED: Advised they participated in a Grant, and the Prosecutor's Office received several vehicles they were going to share on a test basis, but she is not sure when River Edge will be getting them. Advised if the Commission likes she can refer the posting of the no idling signs to Traffic & Safety and see if they can be posted for the beginning of the school year.

PAM GOULD: Stated you indicated we should start with the schools, which is the biggest item, and you mentioned the Police Dept., however she noticed a town truck that was idling, so she believes the Commission needs to put the word out to the Borough employees and tell them they should not be idling their vehicles.

BRIAN MITCHELL: Stated he believes if the vehicle that was idling had a pump or lift you need to use, that is an exception to the idling rule.

LAURA HOOGSTRATE: Questioned Patty if there was anything else she wanted to discuss.

PATTY ALMBERG: Advised there was some enthusiasm for community gardens, but it would have to be a plan to get started in the fall, so it could begin in May or June.

ELLEN BUSTEED: Advised there is the garden at the Middle School, but it takes a lot of work for someone to maintain it.

PATTY ALMBERG: Advised there is another option where you get a plot, so you use that plot, and not sure if the park by Cherry Hill has potential with raised beds.

ELLEN BUSTEED: Stated the back end has raised beds.

PATTY ALMBERG: Advised as a community, you either sign up to join the community garden or it's a lottery system, in order to get a spot in a community garden.

LAURA HOOGSTRATE: Stated you need to find out if there is interest and maybe start a few events at a time. Advised she is in contact with an Eagle Scout, Ryan Tu, who

went to Cherry Hill, who is looking to do an environmental project, and she mentioned the idea of a community garden. Stated she advised him to look at different towns in Bergen County with community gardens to see how its working in those towns.

ELLEN BUSTEED: Questioned if you are waiting to hear from Ryan if he is interested in doing a community garden or whether you are looking to see if Cherry Blossom is a viable candidate to have the community garden.

LAURA HOOGSTRATE: Stated if Ellen could find out if it is a viable candidate, and she would also like to know if Ryan will be doing the community garden or if someone else would take it on.

PAM GOULD: Questioned who makes the decision if Cherry Blossom is viable.

ELLEN BUSTEED: Advised the Council would make that decision, as it is a green acres plot of land, which comes with rules and regulations and there would be a lot of questions as to who would maintain it.

LAURA HOOGSTRATE: Stated there are a lot of questions that would have to be answered, but that land would be under utilized if it is not used.

MEETING ENDED