

SLH ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
August 5, 2019
7:00 P.M.

1.) Call to Order, Flag Salute, and Open Public Meetings Notification

Meeting started at 7:05 PM

In attendance: Co-Chairs Lisa Ball-O'Brien and Nancy Maclearie Hayduk, Lucie Dickenson, and Derek Noah. Danielle Hughes arrived late and remained in the gallery.

2.) Approval of the Agenda

Motion/second: Motioned by Gaylen Nolan and seconded by Nancy Maclearie Hayduk

3.) Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting: July 8, 2019

Motion/second: Anna Kuntz of 2005 Parkview Terrace objected to the minutes. She stated she felt the minutes were incorrect and did not reflect a motion taken by the commission regarding making a formal request to Mayor O'Brien to add additional members to the Tree Committee. Also, the matter of doing the OPRA request regarding the arborists reports was missing. After a brief discussion the approval of the minutes was tabled until the September 9th meeting allowing members of the Commission to review their notes. Motioned from Nancy Maclearie Hayduk, seconded Gaylen Nolan.

4.) Communications

a.) **ANJEC Letter regard the plastic bag ban** – Lisa Ball-O'Brien presented a letter regarding ANJEC's recommendation that boroughs pursue their own plastic bag ban ordinances and not to wait for state wide legislation.

b.) **Letter from Leon Avakian regarding a construction and variance application on 7th Avenue dated July 3, 2019** – Nancy Maclearie Hayduk indicated this was just a letter of notification indicating that the applicant was pursuing recommendations through the Board of Adjustment.

5.) Old Business

a.) **Upcoming Events**

1.) **Allaire Community Farm** – Sandy Denison not present. No date set. Informed public that the Commission is looking to do a joint event with the Allaire Community Farm. Lucie Dickenson, Sandy Denison and Lisa Ball-O'Brien will talk to firm up a date.

b.) **Proposed Ordinances (Nancy)**

1.) **Plastic Bag Ban** – Nancy Maclearie Hayduk indicated the plan would be institute the ban over time. That several towns in the area have already begun to institute a ban. She suggested we should present options to council regarding the ban. It was determined further discussion regarding this would be post poned until October, 2019 meeting.

2.) **Tree ordinance** – Gaylen Nolan motioned to write a letter to council to formally request Tree Ordinance. Derek Noah second. All voting yes.

c.) **Parks Update (Lisa)**

1.) 183 trees were taken down at Joseph Robertson/Allaire Road park in the Grove area as well as behind the baseball field. The majority of the trees were

white pines. The tree removal was paid for through the open space fund with an approximate cost of \$140,000. The intention is to use current and future open space funds to pay for further work on the project. Also, other avenues are being discussed including additional grants, an adopt a tree type program and a possible tree conservation ordinance but nothing has been decided in this regard.

- 2.) DPW is currently finishing the initial phase at the park. DPW Superintendent Joe May has informed us that there will be mulch placed around the pines left in the grove area. The rest of the area will be covered in topsoil and grass seed will be planted to stabilize the area. DPW will be responsible for watering the area through spigots attached to the gazebo and bathroom facilities.
- 3.) The Mayor's Park/Tree Committee has met on 2 occasions so far with the purpose to discuss the framework for moving forward at the park including potential avenues for future funding, discussion of timeline and resources. The members include: Mayor Tom O'Brien, Borough Administrator John Barrett, DPW Superintendent Joe May, Councilwoman Sara King, Public Member Margaret Melchione and Environment Commission Representative Lisa Ball-O'Brien. Anthony Spinosa, DPW worker came to the first meeting and will be asked to return if needed to answer landscape/planting questions. The Committee is intending on meeting later this week to discuss tonight's proceedings and to discuss about what was suggested.

6.) Voice of the Public

Anna Kuntz, 2005 Parkview Terrace. Anna suggested the DMV and Shade Commission collect money from the purchase of license plates and that money will be distributed to towns. She wanted the Commission to be aware. She expressed concern regarding buffers at the apartments surrounding the park.

Maria Naughton, 1901 Old Mill Road. Spoke twice. Maria questioned about the funding of the park project. (Nancy Maclearie Hayduk responded explaining about open space funding. She further encouraged people to ask for what they wanted, passive recreation) Maria added she wanted trees. (Mayor O'Brien provided further clarification about open space funding; the exact numbers will be provided at a council meeting. There is \$25,000 initially to finish stabilizing the park. A further plan will be formulated over the winter.)

Andrea Patterson, 110 9th Avenue. Andrea indicated she was for the trees. She suggested a Community Garden. She referenced her daughter's Community Garden in Shark River Hills. She said they have maybe 20 plots. Surplus produce is donated to the Rescue Mission. Further the Rescue Mission was given 2 larger plots at the Garden. The Community Garden is good for apartments and Fairway Mews. The SRH supplies the water, tied it into Rutgers University – Cook College and Master Gardeners run classes. Everyone is learning from each other and they developed comradery.

Sharon Batteau, 1710 Beverly Avenue. 183 trees are a lot. Sharon indicated there should be a tree planted for every tree removed. Trees are the lungs of the earth and get rid of carbon dioxide. Trees help provide drought. She feels there are enough playing fields. Town already gave money to the schools for fields. and that the parks are for everyone, kids and seniors. She suggested planting live oaks. She is concerned about more impervious surface. Lots of trees, same amount as we lost, reading space, benches. Offered holly trees from her yard. Concerned about adding more impervious surface.

Gretchen Maccanico, 1123 Holly Place. Gretchen thought the park was beautiful. Parks can be manhandled today. She would like a more natural, native park with shady places. She is concerned about runoff from more impervious surface. She described the water issues starting up at the new strip mall on 35 and going over Old Mill and going down Crosby Avenue. Trees should go back. She would like it returned to a more natural area for wildlife.

Finn O'Brien, 916 Woodcrest Drive. Finn thinks there should really be more trees. He would like to replace the trees. He feels the open space feels wrong. He doesn't think we should replace with the same kind of tree. There should be different kinds of trees, a variety.

Katie Reynolds, 304 8th Avenue. Katie would like to see the trees staged, so that they aren't all gone at the same time. Get different varieties. She questioned the house that was acquired about the town do we have access to that. (Gaylen Nolan informed her the house purchased was removed. The 2 houses that remain are owned by her and her mother. And the family does not have plans to leave.) Katie would like a community garden. She suggested rain barrels at the little league shack. There could be classes at the Community Garden. (Gaylen Nolan confirmed that the Community Garden had been discussed previously.)

Mary Conway, 21 Jason Drive. Mary stated she can see straight through to Allaire Road since the trees are down. It looks barren. She indicated it is loud and trees give sound proofing. Trees also help with erosion and oxygen. Trees give shade. Her family has not been able to use the playground because it is too hot. She loves the idea of the Community Garden. She suggested composting of food waste at the park. It is a good point to plant a variety of trees. She is concerned about tree maintenance. Budget should include maintenance. It is worth it. She would like to see paths and trees.

Ann Marie Callahan, 4 Nadine Drive. It is incredibly sad. Ann Marie feels its important to have a plan. She does not want to see additional asphalt or impervious surfaces. It is important to replace the trees. There are enough fields with schools and everywhere. We should look to the future, having trees. Creating a bike path or walking path should be the only asphalt added. Important to have landscape architect and a maintenance plan.

Scott Stark, 1202 Crosby Road. Scott likes all the ideas and would like to implement a little of everything. Important to have a plan with native trees, ones that can stand-up to future storms. In addition, he suggests pollinator gardens, plants that will attract bees and butterflies, maybe start a beehive community. The Co-Operative Extension can be a resource.

Loula Passes, Homestead Apartments, 7 Garden Place #11. Loula would like to replace the trees. In Haddonfield where she used to live, they had a Community Garden but they ran into problems with weeds. A Community Garden needs a plan to deal with weeds. In July and August, the climbing equipment is hot. There are no shade trees. Kids can burn themselves on the equipment. Trees should be planted wisely to provide shade.

Dennis Pearsall, 817 Central Avenue. Dennis agrees with most things suggested. He would like us to plant trees. As many as we can. Trees seem to be losing their value in town. There is no shade at the Community Center. The new playground is too hot. There is a beautiful garden there, but no trees were planted. The Trees should be planted there as well to provide shade. The town should not consider trees as dangerous. With regards to a Community Garden it may be a good idea, but gardening is hard work. He is concerned about individual's commitment to a garden for a whole season. There should be a certain spot for the Community Garden. He would like a lot of trees with a variety and native. The town should be planting more trees throughout town. He suggests tree memorials.

Susan Lalji, 559 Atlantic Avenue. Susan would like to replace the trees. She likes the idea of a memory garden. She described a memory garden she saw. It is a place to sit, reflect, beautiful, peaceful. She also would like walking paths. She enjoys the trees, loves trees. Trees are valuable; provide shade, oxygen, life – helps with bugs and insects. She recommends a variety of trees. She recommends a pollinator garden.

Maria Naughton, 1901 Old Mill Road. Maria spoke a second time and expressed concern about memory gardens. It becomes very personal. It is not as community as you think, it becomes

personal. It has the potential of becoming a cemetery feel. She expressed concern about putting one's names on everything is not good for the community as a whole. (Nancy Maclearie Hayduk stated the Environmental Commission had thought of doing this as a fundraiser, but was concerned about specific memorials. There is concern that if a certain tree dies, someone will be upset.) Maria reflected about the lost benches after Sandy. And that it is not the right vibe.

Anna Kuntz, 2005 Parkview Terrace. Anna stood again to discuss the Community Garden idea. She brought up Shrewsbury as a good example of a Community Garden. And it is well maintained. Freehold Soil and Conservation helps with Community Gardens. (Lisa Ball-O'Brien added information regarding her research regarding Shrewsbury Community Garden. It is well run but there are rules, a mayoral committee, a fee attached)

Carol Maccanico, 557 Ocean Road. Carol wants to see trees. She would like to see big trees. Understory trees, bushes and shrubs all different sizes. She would like to see predominantly native species – native plants help with pollinators. Foreign plants do not work well in pollinator gardens.

Kara Matunas, 812 Central Avenue. Kara wants to see trees but does not want a grove, but wants useable space. She would like to see trees of heights and stages that bloom at different times of the year. She would like to see walking paths. She added that Allaire Road Park is where her children learned to ride a bike, on the basketball court in the back. She does not want a field, pool, all asphalt. She would like nice shady trails. Regarding the bee hive community idea, she did express concern regarding children with allergies and that kids are at the park. They might knock one over. Maybe in the back of the Fletcher property it might work. Pollinator gardens are a natural way to address this.

Kathy Byron, 1906 Old Mill Road. Kathy is devastated about what happened at the park, she took pictures and put them on Facebook. She has lived there since 1985. Trees are being taken down in a lot of places, she would like the trees restored. She has deer on her yard, and has lost all her flowers due to the deer population. Neighbor has deer grazing in her back yard. The deer have no place to go. They do not have any refuge. It is a great sadness to her.

Carol Morris, Homestead Gardens, 6 Garden Place #11. Carol states she represents Homestead Gardens. She wants to know why they took down all the trees. While walking around her complex with the petition people want to know. She stated that many people are devastated. She is concerned how she can see right through the park to Allaire Road. She would like to see the trees replaced. And she would like to get things going.

Margaret Melchione, 2 Jeanette Court. Margaret expressed concern about how we are going to put this together. She would like the Environmental Commission to request more members on the planning Committee to address what the community wants. She would like this request in writing. She would like to hear about this at the next council meeting.

(Nancy Maclearie Hayduk requested a show of hands to see who is for the replanting of trees)

Scott Stark, 1202 Crosby Road. Scott suggested the importance to have a well-documented plan. This could take 5,7, 10 years. He would like future administrations to adhere to the plan and agreement. We know things do change over the course of time. This is very important to everyone in the community. There should be a solid plan to pass on to future administrations. Town should contact a landscape architect so the plan is on paper and on file. So that plans can be referred back to. It would benefit everyone.

Pete McHugh, Crosby Road. Pete thinks the plan should be done legislatively, so that a law is enacted that can't be changed as new administrations move in or out. We should make the plan into a law, to designate how to maintain the park.

(Mayor O'Brien spoke about how to codify the decisions. This would make them permanent in a sense. They would have to vote to change the ordinance through public hearings. Future councils would have to talk to the public before changing an ordinance. However, any law can be undone.)

Nance Maclearie Hayduk discussed tree trust fund and how it can be a way to protect the trees moving forward as well as provide funding for future plantings.)

Gaylen Nolan, 1010 Allaire Road. Gaylen has lived adjacent to the park since she was 6 years old. She said the situation at the park has made her physically ill. She just went to walk through the park the other day in preparation for the meeting. She is so happy to see the support. She expressed concern about the loss of the owls. Deer are still there. She offered to help anyone interested in pollinators. She discussed ways on how she has helped with the pollinators and offered we can help the wildlife. She reports the hawks are gone as well. She did report on the osprey that have decided to nests on the lights at the baseball field. She stated she is coming to terms with it. She wanted to say thank you to all on behalf of those adjacent to the park and added this caught the park's neighbors off guard. They were not formally notified. Healthy trees were taken out of the park.

Dennis Pearsall, 817 Central Avenue. Dennis thinks we should fast track a plan. The idea of it taking 5 or 6 years is way too long to wait. He would like the project to move along at an accelerated rate in 1 year or 2 years. It takes a long time for a tree to grow. We cannot just plant seedlings. Some trees should be older, suggested 10 years old.

(Nancy Maclearie Hayduk discussed a plan that would include trees of different ages so that grow at different rates. It is important to put in an understory and shrubbery. It is a big project. She suggests we put a million dollars into the park. She feels the work done this evening; the voices tonight will help the council make the decision to go forward to find the right landscape architect to put in everything we want. Nancy encouraged everyone to come back next month to the follow-up hearing on September 9th. She also encouraged people to go to council meetings to push the park plan forward.)

(Mayor O'Brien discussed the committee size. He stated it started out as a small committee to figure out what do we want to do right now, to discuss preliminary budget questions. It was a small committee to form a structure of what it is we are talking about. The idea is a small committee will give structure to the ideas that come out of the forums. Plans would be presented to the council. As the plan is being executed additional members will be added to the committee that can help us build out that plan. He does not think a plan will be in place by October 1st so that plantings can be in done in time so that the trees survive the winter. He does not think that will happen. We want basic structure, may be even plant a couple of trees that do not affect the overall plan. We would then take the winter and be ready to go in the Spring. That would be his goal. He does not want to wait 5 five years; he would like to get things going as soon as possible. He wants to start next with a real budget and real town commitment and go from there. He feels we have to go through this public hearing process. Hopefully we take the time, have people's voices heard and have a plan by Spring. Mayor did not want to hire someone until he heard what people wanted. Until we have some structure to give that person: cost, plan. He thinks we will be there in a couple of months.)

A dialogue ensued between several members of the audience and the Commission. The process to get the information to council was discussed. The Commission will provide a report to the Council. Timing of the report was left open, unsure about the protocol. There was also a request from several members of the public that additional members be placed on the tree committee.

Nancy Maclearie Hayduk stated the make-up of the committee should be all citizens and no paid employees. She encouraged individuals to express their opinions directly to council.

The Mayor was asked if the town is seeking out support from the county, the Co-Operative Extension before we would go a landscape architect. Mayor O'Brien indicated the Shade Tree Commission was contacted.

Lastly, the Commission was encouraged to have a greater voice on the committee and to keep the public informed every step of the way.

7.) Adjournment

Motion/second: Nancy Maclearie Hayduk motioned and Gaylen Nolan seconded. All in favor, meeting adjourned at 8:24 PM

Gaylen Nolan
APPROVED 9/9/19