

Rahway Environmental Commission

MINUTES

Thursday, February 10, 2022

7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m.

ROLL CALL

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

Mr. Jeffrey Robinson, Chairman
Ms. Clea Carchia, Commissioner
Mr. Joseph Paszek, Commissioner
Mr. James Keane, Commissioner
Ms. Denise Rolong, Commissioner
Ms. Michelle Gil, Commissioner
Mr. Eric Hausker, First Alternate Commissioner
Mr. Jordan Parham, Second Alternate Commissioner
Ms. Joanna Miles, Council Liaison
Ms. Gina Holmes, Clerk

Absent: Mr. Alexander Parker, Commissioner

FLAG SALUTE

MINUTES

Approval of minutes of the Regular Meeting on Thursday, January 13, 2022

Motion: Commissioner Keane

Seconded: Commissioner Gil

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SPEAKER

Allen Swanson, Chairman of Loantake Chapter of the Sierra Club

Discussed Sierra Club's endorsement for Tom Malinowski rather than Tom Keane.

Malinowski is scheduled to have a meet and greet with Mayor Giacobbe on 2/26/22.

Discussed the Cumulative Impact Bill

Discussed lawsuit filed in United States District Court: East Yard Communities For Environmental Justice; Ironbound Community Corporation; Sierra Club vs. United States Environmental Protection Agency; S. Regan, in his official capacity as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency – Re: Large Municipal Solid Waste Incinerators and Their Public Health Impacts. One chemical of concern is foam insulation that is being burned (Union County Utility Authority in Rahway)

EPA delayed implementation of Clean Air Act – working to get rules implemented.

HEARING OF CITIZENS

Michael Dury, resident of Roselle Park, Volunteer with Rahway River Watershed in attendance

COMMUNICATIONS

Merck Sharp & Dohme Corp. – Remedial Action Protectiveness/2 Year Certification

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)
Meeting held on 2/9/22 virtually. There have been some changes within the six companies. There is a desperate need for people in the Process Technology field and the companies have reached out to high schools to let their students know that there is training available. Starting pay is \$60,000 and over three years can reach \$100,000. There are scholarships available to cover a two year degree from Middlesex County College in this field. Issues relating to Covid and Storm Ida were discussed.

Letter to UC Chairman of Open Trust Fund Al Mirabella – Bazega Park – Victoria Durham will be speaking with Al Mirabella soon and will let us know when their meeting is.

Letter to UC Parks Director Ron Zuber – Bramhall Road County Park site – Director told Chairman Robinson that he will be putting money into the next budget to address this site. Environmental Commission should make recommendations. Councilman Brown wants this area to be a Community Garden location.

Tree Inventory – should take up to 9 months

Rain Garden – letter sent

Sustainability Jersey Application – the Grant Application has been assigned to Dan Lee, City Engineer

LEED Requirements for redevelopers – letter sent

Recycle Content Bill – plastic containers to be manufactured using 50% plastic once bill is implemented

Smoke detector recycling update – handout which includes list of companies to mail old detectors back

Rahway Park – The County is waiting on approval from DEP to hydro rake pond. They plan on putting up a shed to hold equipment. Similar project going on in Bryant Park in Summit.

NEW BUSINESS

UC Hub – Commissioner Keane attended last meeting. Hub is trying to stay afloat after COVID - 2 chairs stepped down. They are asking each town to host a meeting, Rahway will host on 4/27/22 at Merchants & Drivers Tavern. We need a topic and a speaker (suggestion for Commissioner Carchia and RRWA or Friends of RR Parkway). Kim Diamond will contact Commissioner Keane in reference to the TREX program. There have been lots of problems with the benches. Cranford has renewed their Sustainable NJ after not having it for years.

Environmental Commission letter to National Fish & Wildlife Foundation on behalf of the Rahway River Watershed Association was sent.

Protecting municipal stormwater rights – ANJEC has requested help. DCA lobbyists do not want Cities to have stronger stormwater regulations. ANJEC has asked that we adopt a Resolution and bring to Council.

1/20/22 – ANJEC Webinar – no one attended

2/10/22 – ANJEC Webinar – Chairman Robinson attended - Countdown to Plastic Law – distribution of flyers and bags.

5/1/22 – Wild Earth Fest at Trailside Nature & Science Center

2/12/22 – Food & Water Watch Group will be hosting a virtual meeting to oppose a gas powered power plant in Keasbey

2/24/22 – 6:00 p.m. – Peterstown Community Center in Elizabeth or virtual – Environmental Justice Engagement Session

10/8/22 – Rahway Day

2/8/22 – Special meeting of the Rahway Planning Board in reference to the Rahway Downtown Strategic Plan which is an update to the City’s Master Plan. The meeting was 2 hours 45 minutes. The Plan can be reviewed on the City of Rahway website.

SITE PLAN REVIEW/PLANNING & ZONING BOARD ITEMS

Empty lot on Witherspoon – 2 family lot – EC had no concerns.

DEP has approved API Foils plan to put a new warehouse behind their existing building with many restrictions including the forested area can never be touched and deed restrictions.

The Pine St. Development project by Barnett St. (now a 15 townhouse project - instead of 10 townhouses) still has not been approved by the DEP.

Merck – expand parking lot next to building – pervious pavement on 117 spots – EC had no concerns.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

ANJEC membership

ADJOURN

The next Regular meeting of the Environmental Commission will be held Thursday, March 10, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at Merchant & Drovers Tavern, Rahway, NJ. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Motion: Commissioner Rolong
Seconded: Commissioner Gil
Unanimously approved

At: 9:45 p.m.