

Environmental Commission Meeting
Monday March 20th 7:00 pm
Borough Hall

Minutes

Meeting Start Time: 7:10pm

In Attendance: Trent Levitt, Chris Runion, Melissa Goodenough, Jae Hoff, Mayor Karrow

Reading of OPMA clause

Election of Commission Officers

Trent Levitt was nominated and affirmed as Vice Chair.

Jae Hoff was nominated and affirmed as Secretary.

No other nominations were made.

Discussion of Spice Factory Application

Mayor Karrow recused herself from the discussion of the Spice Factory plans.

The commission discussed the timeline for the Spice Factory application. Trent Levitt confirmed the application will be under review at the next Planning Board meeting on Monday, 3/28/23.

The environmental commission discussed several requested variances, including minimum tree planting, downward focussed lighting, impermeable surfaces, runoff, and minimum parking spaces allowed. The following concerns with the Spice Factory application were noted:

Regarding tree planting, the commission noted that the application provides for native species to be planted. However, concerns were noted over the potential clearing of a wooded area and loss of habitat for native species. A small pocket park is included in the site plan, but the proposed site plans are unclear about the size of the park.

Regarding downward focussed lighting, the plan proposes using lighting that matches the historical lighting on site. The commission discussed making a suggestion for LED lighting and finding an alternate style of lighting that meets downward focussed lighting regulations and maintains the historical look of the site.

Regarding impermeable surfaces, the plans indicate that permeable pavements will be used in the pocket park, but that the parking surfaces will be impermeable. The commission also noted concerns over the soil quality report and questioned the change in the soil type designation proposed.

Regarding runoff, the group also discussed a recommendation to the Planning Board to add a green roof to the building to reduce runoff. The commission noted questions about the size of the existing stormwater basin on site and if the site plans noted any potential enlargement of the basins to catch increased runoff.

Regarding minimum parking spaces, the commission noted that the variance requests that the property have less than the required minimum number of parking spaces, which could allow for the property to maintain more unpaved surfaces.

Public Comment

Lois Stewart requested that the environmental commission consider running a project or event related to upcoming Earth and Arbor Days. She specifically noted the lack of shade trees in the Borough and suggested looking into grants for tree planting projects in the Borough. Additionally, Stewart introduced the idea of pavement paintings to reduce heat absorption/the urban heat island effect. More research and data is requested for consideration. Lastly, Stewart requested that the environmental commission suggest to council and the planning board that future development projects in the Borough be required to reduce or eliminate gas usage, referring to the principle of “electrification of development.” On the topic of the Spice Factory project, Lois specifically asked the commission to look into requiring that existing trees on the property not be cut down.

Meeting End Time: 8:10 pm