



Borough of Fanwood Environmental Commission

Monthly Meeting – Minutes

May 16, 2024 – 7:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT	Sandy Redder (Chairperson); Gary Szelc (Vice Chairperson); Suzanne Sanschagrin (Secretary); Patricia Walsh (Borough Council Liaison); Leslie Krone-Speck (Planning Board Liaison); Phyllis Sandrock; Dave Schwartzberg; MaryAnne StaRosa
MEMBERS ABSENT	Antonios Panagopoulos (Borough Engineer); Carol Chimento; Andrea Parra;
GUESTS	Paul Allen, Scouts BSA Troop 33
ANNOUNCEMENTS	Open Public Meetings Act The opening public meetings act was read and the meeting came to order at 7:01 PM. Minutes: April minutes approved

Nature Center

DISCUSSION
- Guest Paul Allen to discuss potential Eagle Scout project. Refurbishment of part of board-walk without footings. Will work with Dave and Phyllis on project. - Nature Center report (Phyllis) Update: No update yet for May. - Illegal Dumping - 1) New construction house - dumped debris. 2) Grass clippings - 3 occurrences so far. This has been reported. Another load was dumped this week. Significant odor is coming from this organic material. - Nature Center rules - Update (Patricia): NC signs- May 6 council meeting- we will discuss & propose ordinance to codify rules for NC. We will introduce ordinance on 5/20 & adopt at 2nd meeting in June. Signs will be ready for 50th Ann./ ribbon cutting in the summer. - Mr. Gutterman's sign needs to be evaluated for refurbishment; possibility to be done by Troop 33 once evaluation is complete. Update from Leslie: Mr. Gutterman has the sign for refurbishment. - Courtney Agnello and her daughter have agreed to update the current totem pole.

ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE

Environmental Commission Projects

- Eagle Scout Project – Invasive Species Brochure / Plant Markers – Eli Krantz, Troop 104 – (Sandy) - Sandy signed off on Eli's proposal in January. Project has been approved. No Update. - Girl Scout Project – Troop 40206 – Silver Award project - would like to build 6 bird boxes using cedar plywood (Dave) – Update: Boxes have been put up. Need to know locations of boxes. Dave will request map. - Eagle Scout Project – Bat Boxes for Nature Center – Matthew Mui, Troop 33 – Working with Gary. Will be putting up 3 new boxes + repair of the 4th Update: workbook is almost ready for FEC approval. - Borough Hall Gardens – (Leslie, Sandy) Update: Rain Garden: Infested with poison ivy; DPW removed invasives and re-excavated area for drainage; still likely roots in place. Leslie to work with Clint on solarization or use of herbicide; additional soil and layers needed to re-establish rain garden. Phyllis to provide photos to Leslie. Update: Plan exists to complete work. Pollinator and Monarch: Update: Lots of work over past month. May add plants and mulch butterfly garden shortly. - Need to schedule a garden tour/talk at the gardens (sustainable NJ) tentative date in late June/early July. - Nature Center Anniversary Year Celebration (1974) - 50 years! - Volunteers for Anniversary Committee (Phyllis / Sandy / Suzanne / Gary / Andrea / Leslie / Carol) - Andrea to get the group together to update plan – Discussion notes and action items are below from our last meeting on Saturday, May 11. Completed Events: - Great Backyard Bird Count (Feb. 16-19, 2024) event in the NC. Leslie, Sandy and Suzanne reported from the NC. There were 23 different species identified during the event. - Trail Clean Up (May 4, 2024). Well over 30 people attended. Signs, benches and trails were cleaned. Some invasive were removed. 7 different species of native plants were planted.		
ACTION ITEMS		DEADLINE

Old Business

DISCUSSION		
- Green Team Updates – (Andrea) No update. - Annual Report – Suzanne (2023) – Update: Completed and provided to Green Team as requested. - Transferring Old Minutes to eCode360 - Send Pat minutes from previous years that are missing from web site - (All) - Adopt a Storm Drain Project (Andrea) – Andrea to discuss with Antonios. Update: Patricia provided an update on Adopt A Drain: We feel that the boro is responsible to make sure drains are clear- especially during storms. This is part of DPWs job- if residents see drains that are clogged DPW should be called. Of course if any residents want to clear drains on their own that's up to them. - Master Plan update (Leslie) – Subcommittee meeting with Leslie and others; public meeting likely in June; revised goals have been provided (~4 pages) - Leslie to share with EC. Update: Revised goals and objectives have been issued. Dave provided comments. Recommend adding zoning option for conservation only. Zoning for Nature Center may be residential and not conservation; residential must be removed from property. (Trish)		
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	

New Business

DISCUSSION
- Update EC Website: https://www.fanwoodnj.org/departments/environmental-commission/ - Leslie to review with Pat. All to look at web site and provide feedback. Update: May be discrepancy with various versions of web page. Leslie to double check. - Fanwood Tree Ordinance - Review and provide comments by February 29 to Antonios. Comments provided and supported; provide additional comments after review. No update. - Landscaping plan for Carriage House once construction is finished – (Patricia) - Update: Landscaping at Carriage House- right now we are focused on getting the work finished. Discussions on plants/ landscaping can happen with DPW. FEC should be consulted prior to all additional plantings and prior to all plant removals. (Trish) - High School Senior Project (Leslie): Communications plan on gas leaf blowers, other ordinances, etc. Leslie is her mentor for this project. Senior projects begin week of 5/20/24.

ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE

Review of Plans

DISCUSSION		
Links to applications: https://www.fanwoodnj.org/departments/planning-board/	No plans to review.	

Meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM.

NC 50th Anniversary Committee Discussion / Notes 5/11/24 Meeting:

NC Ribbon Cutting - Pat, could you please help us reschedule to a date/time in August that works best for Mayor and Council?

Debrief on 5/4 Trail Clean-Up Day

- successful turnout of ~30 volunteers (incl. boy/girl scouts and their parents) to weed/plant native species, perform light general maintenance
- consider making this an annual event
- **ACTION:** Gary drafting up a blurb with pictures for town email blast; Paul writing an article on resident that built one of the original benches in the nature center as his Eagle Scout project

Keenan Porter/NC Restoration: Keenan attended our meeting to briefly introduce his proposal (attached) for a large restoration project within the NC to make site improvements including clearing invasive species/ giving a complete refresh with new native plantings; he works for a landscape architecture firm and is familiar with grants for projects like these

- this item will require a significantly more in-depth discussion but general idea of restoring the NC was well-received and clear there is huge potential for educational benefit; preliminary brainstorming included considering a partial deer fence (versus fully enclosing) to showcase/educate on native species within protected area. Could we draw inspiration from Summit's Tiny Forest project?
- **ACTION:** C to discuss attached plan during regular meeting, determine next steps

Birdhouse Competition (Carole) - as a potential anniversary activity, with winner to be announced at Fannywood Day; would need to get going soon to publicize/ allow participants time over the summer to work on their birdhouses

- **Sandy** was involved in running the last competition and can share outline/guidance **ACTION: Carole** to discuss with **Maryanne** about co-leading this project

Dhammakaya-led morning mediation at the NC (Leslie/Andrea) - one-time or series of summer meditation sessions in the NC - target date(s) July

- Leslie/Andrea visited meditation center on 5/14 and now have a contact (Pat) to coordinate a plan and date(s); Phyllis previously confirmed they are open to the idea
- We could aim to host this starting in July, potentially along the boardwalk - would likely be bring your own mat/water/EC provide insect repellent, need to understand from Dhammakaya what they envision/ require for the mediation session
- Could we potentially incorporate a voting button into our communications to get a rough estimate of attendance/ coordinate accordingly with Dhammakaya for how to break into groups, as needed
- **ACTION** as of 5/15 waiting to hear back on Pat's availability To discuss dates and logistics; then think how best to publicize - email blasts/ FB/ GT/ add to Recreation's event list

Scouts Day at the NC(Suzanne) - targeting mid-Sep to Early Oct, Sat or Sun

- **ACTION:** Suzanne check sports schedules for all ages and date for SP Scout Night to determine date/time for this activity
- Current ideas include:
 - Coordinate what girl and boy scout points can be satisfied in a few hours at the nature center/ what date works best for max. attendance
 - Activity: photo scavenger hunt (ID'ing plants/animals, etc.)
 - Bat box dedication assuming scouts will have them up by the time of this event
 - Peace pole dedication if girl scouts can refurbish by the time of this event
 - DIY bird feeders to take home

Other: Leslie reaching out to Mr. Ritter to explore opportunities to involve HS Environmental Club in EC activities in general/ understand their current projects

Open Items not covered at 5/11 meeting:

Nature Center Map (Phyllis) - need an update on status of updated map upload/ QR code

Edibles Walk (Gary) - to provide timing updates based on guide's schedule