



Borough of Fanwood Environmental Commission

Monthly Meeting – Minutes

June 20, 2024 – 7:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT	Sandy Redder (Chairperson); Suzanne Sanschagrin (Secretary);; Leslie Krone-Speck (Planning Board Liaison); Phyllis Sandrock; Dave Schwartzberg; Andrea Parra
MEMBERS ABSENT	MaryAnne StaRosa, Gary Szalc, Patricia Walsh (Borough Council Liaison), Antonios Panagopoulos (Borough Engineer)
GUESTS	
ANNOUNCEMENTS	Open Public Meetings Act The opening public meetings act was read and the meeting came to order at 7:05 PM. Minutes: May minutes approved

Nature Center

DISCUSSION		
- Nature Center report (Phyllis) Update: Looks good except for dirt bikes/electric bikes which have been reported to the police twice; need barrier to prevent bikes from entering - Illegal Dumping - Update: 1) New construction house - dumped debris. 2) Grass clippings – grass has been removed and lots of the garbage is gone - Nature Center rules - Update: Need 4 signs, 1 for each entrance. Presently no signs at entrances near church. Prefer sign similar to one at tennis courts with logos including Welcome to the Fanwood Nature Center followed by rules. Need to add separate signs indicating no bikes, etc. with graphic. Signs must be thick enough to prevent people from bending sign around posts. Should also be as resistant to carving/scratching as possible. - Mr. Gutterman's sign Update from Leslie: Oil based paint was used to keep sign in good shape for longer. Sign has been replaced in NC. Fencing should be moved to make sure sign is more visible.		
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE

Environmental Commission Projects

- Eagle Scout Project – Invasive Species Brochure / Plant Markers – Eli Krantz, Troop 104 – (Sandy) – **Update:** Project approved. Sandy met with Eli this week.
- 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:** Actively being worked on presently.
- **NEW** Eagle Scout Project - replace about 75ft of the wooden walkway at the Fanwood Nature Center, replacing the bench and clearing the area of invasive plants - Paul Allen (Dave) – project may triple in size as Chris & James will be doing their workbooks as well this summer for project approval
- **NEW** Eagle Scout Project – Patrick Korner – bikes racks for Cray Ter and Bible Chapel entrances, improvement of bench, stone under bench at Cray Ter, possibly clear area around bike rack at LaGrande entrance as well; ensure 4 useable bike racks are in place. Include signs indicating no bikes, etc.
- Other Scout Projects (Dave): Small deer fenced area,
- Borough Hall Gardens – (Leslie, Sandy) **Update:** Volunteers may be available from SPFHS Environmental Club for summer.
 - o **Rain Garden:** No update
 - o **Pollinator and Monarch:** **Update:** weeding and planting is complete, need mulching session on Saturday to spread
 - o Need to schedule a garden tour/talk at the gardens (sustainable NJ) – being scheduled for Saturday 6/22.
- Nature Center Anniversary Year Celebration (1974) - **50 years!**
 - o Volunteers for Anniversary Committee (Phyllis / Sandy / Suzanne / Gary / Andrea / Leslie / Carol)
 - **Completed Events:**
 - Great Backyard Bird Count (Feb. 16-19, 2024) event in the NC. Leslie, Sandy and Suzanne reported form 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.
 - **Updates: See attached document**

ACTION ITEMS		DEADLINE

Old Business

DISCUSSION

- Green Team Updates – (Andrea) Last meeting was canceled. Sneaker collection is ongoing. - Transferring Old Minutes to eCode360 - Send Pat minutes from previous years that are missing from web site - Update: Sandy provided Pat H the 2022 minutes. - EC Website: https://www.fanwoodnj.org/departments/environmental-commission/ Update with NC 50th Anniversary? Anything else? - Master Plan update (Leslie) – Update: No activity until 6/19. Draft goals and objectives unchanged. Land use plan partially complete.		
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	
Dates for ribbon cutting from Pat Contact Paul on bench story	Sandy Sandy	

New Business

DISCUSSION		
- Geocache at the Nature Center - Herbert Ave residents (Steudtner-Colabraro) would like to place and maintain at the NC. (Dave) Geocache Info: https://www.geocaching.com/sites/education/en/ Decision: Agreed to place geocache in NC. Must be located on a trail for safety. Dave to reach back out to resident who suggested it. - Budget? (Trish): \$4,650.00 in total. No funds for Scout projects in 2024.		
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE

Review of Plans

DISCUSSION		
Links to applications: https://www.fanwoodnj.org/departments/planning-		

board/		
Block 42, Lot 5, 188 Pleasant Avenue		
Comments: As if often the case the justification for expanding building and/or overall impervious cover is that "it is only a little increase." Problem is when you get a couple of hundred applications over the years the "little increases" add up to be a significant problem. Recommend that the applicant look to reduce some of the existing and proposed impervious cover by removing pavement, walkways, patios, and similar. Also, some of the impervious surfaces could be converted to pervious surfaces with grass pavers, open spaced patio block, and so forth. Adding a small drainage control system (dry well, stone trenches, etc.) would be helpful. Other measures could include converting some lawn area into a rain garden or simply replacing grass with native shrubs and ground cover.		

Meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

50th Anniversary Discussion:

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

- Pat, could you please help us reschedule to a date/time in August that works best 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 (at- tached) 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 brain- storming 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

NC Ribbon Cutting for Mayor and Council

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 – Should be published on 6/21 in weekly blast. Two classes (age 0-13 and 14 and up).

⌚ 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 – Need to provide dates for Saturday mornings. Two instructors available. Consider 7/20, 7/27, and 8/3.

- ⌚ 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 either Sunday Oct 13 or Oct 20 ⌚
⌚

⌚ 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

⌚ ⌚ ⌚ ⌚

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