



# Borough of Fanwood Environmental Commission

## Monthly Meeting – Minutes

September 19, 2024 – 7:00 PM

|                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MEMBERS<br>PRESENT | Sandy Redder (Chairperson); Gary Szalc (Vice Chairperson); Suzanne Sanschagrin (Secretary); Leslie Krone-Speck (Planning Board Liaison); Dave Schwartzberg; MaryAnne StaRosa; Carol Chimento                                                            |
| MEMBERS<br>ABSENT  | Patricia Walsh (Borough Council Liaison); Phyllis Sandrock; ; Andrea Parra                                                                                                                                                                              |
| GUESTS             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| ANNOUNCEMENTS      | <p><b>Open Public Meetings Act</b></p> <p>The opening public meetings act was read and the meeting came to order at 7:05 PM.</p> <p><b>Minutes:</b></p> <p><b>June</b> minutes approved as written</p> <p><b>August</b> minutes approved as written</p> |

### Nature Center

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| DISCUSSION                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Nature Center report (Phyllis) <b>Update:</b></li><li>Nature Center rules - <b>Update:</b> Pat Hoynes reported the signs are done and DPW will get them up before the ribbon cutting.</li></ul> |

## DISCUSSION

### Environmental Commission Projects

- Eagle Scout Project – Invasive Species Brochure / Plant Markers – Eli Krantz, Troop 104 – (Sandy) - **Update: The project is complete.**
- Eagle Scout Project – Bat Boxes for Nature Center – Matthew Mui, Troop 33 – (Gary) - **Update: Project is complete. Gary to notify Paul to create communications on this.**
- 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)  
**Update:**
- Eagle Scout Project - NC Bike racks (Dave): **Update: meeting with Scout next week**
- Eagle Scout Project – Borough Hall Demonstration Garden – Alex H. will visit next month to discuss
- Borough Hall Gardens – (Leslie, Sandy) **Update:**
  - o **Rain Garden: laying fallow for next year**
  - o **Pollinator and Monarch: Update: in good shape, most past bloom time**
- 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 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.
      - Guided Meditation (July 20, 2024) at the Nature Center. The Guided Meditation session held at the Nature Center was a success. Approximately 30 people attended and 8-10 people had never been to the Nature Center before.
      - Birdhouse Build (September 15). **Update: 9 entries completed**
    - **Need to schedule the Scout's Day (10/12/24) and Ribbon Cuttings (Pat working on date).**

### Old Business

## DISCUSSION

- Green Team Updates – (Andrea)
- EC Website: <https://www.fanwoodnj.org/departments/environmental-commission/> Bird house building pictures and videos, etc., Sandy to prepare write up of borough hall gardens.
- Master Plan update (Leslie) – **Update: plan has been delayed due to new state requirements for affordable housing, likely not until next year.**
- Fannywood Day Recap (MaryAnne) - Update: Amazing event; 9 bird houses; prizes have been distributed; coloring and activity books given away along with T-shirts and native plant info.

## New Business

| DISCUSSION                                                                                                                                                                                |  |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ANJEC Environmental Congress is Friday, September 27th (9:00 AM - 4:00 PM).</li> <li>• Tree ordinance update – need update from Trish</li> </ul> |  |  |

## Review of Plans

| DISCUSSION                                                                                                                                          |  |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|
| Links to applications:<br><a href="https://www.fanwoodnj.org/departments/planning-board/">https://www.fanwoodnj.org/departments/planning-board/</a> |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Plans</li> </ul>                                                                                        |  |  |

Meeting was adjourned at 8:16 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

- Sandy was involved in running the last competition and can share outline/guidance
- ACTION:** Ca- role 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 ·
- 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.