



Borough of Fanwood Environmental Commission

Monthly Meeting – Minutes

October 17, 2024 – 7:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT	Sandy Redder (Chairperson); Gary Szalc (Vice Chairperson); Suzanne Sanschagrin (Secretary); Leslie Krone-Speck (Planning Board Liaison); Phyllis Sandrock; Dave Schwartzberg; MaryAnne StaRosa; Andrea Parra;
MEMBERS ABSENT	Patricia Walsh (Borough Council Liaison); Carol Chimento
GUESTS	
ANNOUNCEMENTS	Open Public Meetings Act The opening public meetings act was read and the meeting came to order at 7:02 PM. Minutes: September minutes approved

Nature Center

DISCUSSION
- Nature Center report f(Phyllis) Update: Gravel is thin on paths in some areas; underlayer is showing in places. Is this a DPW responsibility? Request Trish's response. Phyllis will send details to Trish, Clint and the mayor. Also concerns about ruts from bike use. - Nature Center rules - Update: The new signs have been installed. - Police patrols need to be increased to ensure e-bikes and scooters are not being used.

Environmental Commission Projects

- 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: No update**
- Eagle Scout Project - NC Bike racks (Dave): **Update:** will be creating a plan, must include weed control
- Eagle Scout Project – Borough Hall Demonstration Garden (Suzanne) – Alex H. **Update: No update**
- Need to create checklist/guideline for FEC on projects
- Borough Hall Gardens – (Leslie, Sandy) **Update:** Sandy updated the Master Gardeners yearly description requirement. Still have to update the website with a general garden description.
 - o **Rain Garden:** possibly to be addressed by Alex H.;
 - o **Pollinator and Monarch: Update: Update:** work session planned for 10/23 at 1:30 PM
- 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). 9 entries were submitted. They are on display at the new library.
 - **Ribbon Cutting Ceremony - Update:** was held on October 7th. It was a rededication and a 50th anniversary celebration. The Mayor, EC and the community were represented.
 - **Youth Day** (October 12th) - **Update:** 25-30 kids attended with their parents; consider the possibility of having this on a regular basis. Paul wrote article for town website and TAP.

DISCUSSION

Old Business

DISCUSSION

- Green Team Updates – (Andrea) Presentation on EV incentives from PSE&G. Changing of roles at year end. Plan to create repository of green tips.
- EC Website: <https://www.fanwoodnj.org/departments/environmental-commission/> Bird house building pictures, Ribbon cutting, Youth Day, etc. **Sandy to prepare** write up of borough hall gardens.
- Master Plan update (Leslie) – Delayed until next year.

New Business

DISCUSSION

- **Env. Comm. Storage Bins:** We have two plastic bins and one green case that is the water table. Sandy went through them (list of items is attached) and condensed from three to two. They were also removed from the DPW building and are now at Borough Hall.
- **Shade Tree Commission:** Leslie attended last meeting, Dana is now chairing group. Have list of activities that are prioritized. Requests for 150 activities, pared down to ~ 50 for year. For best chance of activity on a particular property, best to attend meeting and speak in public portion of meeting.

Review of Plans

DISCUSSION

Links to applications:
<https://www.fanwoodnj.org/departments/planning-board/>

Comments:

- 383 South Ave. (Block 69, Lot 5)

Leslie to finalize FEC comments and submit in writing to Pat on 10/18 for hearing on 10/23.

Inventory (2024) of Environmental Commission Storage Boxes

Notebook of Events (ended in 2010)
Rain Garden Notebook (Library)
Laminated Information Sheets (Rain Barrels, etc.)
1976 Natural Resources Inventory (5 copies)
Business Cards
Milkweed Seeds
Native and Invasive Plant Brochures
Volunteer sheets
Box of Spotted Lanternfly cards
NC Maps, Map holders
Solution to Storm Water Pollution Sheets
Tape, markers
Energy Star Guides
Pictures in frames
Holders for sheets
Banner
Cart for carrying material
Green Sham cover

Meeting was adjourned at 8:25 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 meditation 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 meditation 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

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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.