

Town of Clinton Environmental Commission

Minutes

Online, June 8, 2020, 7:30 pm

Attendance: Christine Adornetto, Véronique Lambert, Jendayi Jones, Tammy Healy, Mike Humphrey.

Guest - John Kaswick - Shade Tree Commission.

Guest - Denise Birmingham - Clinton Conservancy.

Acceptance of minutes of last meeting – May 11, 2020.

Shade Tree Commission (STC) - Chair person, John Kashwick.

John introduced himself. He has been the Chair since November 2019. He has been on the commission for 3 years and has experience before that in other towns.

John noted that there is not a Shade Tree Commission liaison with the Environmental Commission and he is trying to bridge the gap. First issue discussed affects both commissions. The STC 5 year Management Plan was approved by state in December 2019. STC started to work on Tree preservation ordinance. He hopes the commissions can work together to preserve tree cover in the municipality. He stated this is pertinent as a number of developments are to be built in near future. He hopes we can work together and bring to mayor and council in future.

Currently, the STC is looking into what other municipalities are doing and seeing what they want to do. They are in the research phase.

The second item discussed was to determine how the two commissions should work together. In the past, we had a liaison from STC which was Deena Roberts. Veronique Lambert stated that EC has been having conversation about working to certify with Sustainable Jersey. Working with STC would help achieve Points toward the Sustainable Jersey certification.

Mike Humphrey stated SJ has a number of areas related to tree preservation. Mike Humphrey will send John Kashwick the URLs for pertinent sections.

Véronique Lambert will check with Mayor about STC liaison process. STC needs a member, they have 4 and need 5. EC has 4 current members. 1 member is council and 1 is land use and 1 STC and 4 other. So we need STC liaison.

Old Business

Property Maintenance Ordinance. Previously, EC reviewed the proposed list of environmental concerns that should be covered by ordinance. Mike Humphrey talked with the attorney (Tara St, Angelou) for the Town of Clinton. The attorney is refining the language for the ordinance. Members of council support our efforts, environmental and safety impact and harm to wildlife impact. Toxic chemicals, things that blow on to other people's property, anything that is a danger to people or wildlife.

The attorney is putting together a best practice ordinance. We will have for our next meeting to review. Once we have reviewed, we can introduce to council. They have 1 month to review and then vote the following month.

Tammy Healy asked if we can get draft before our meeting, so we can review. Mike Humphrey stated this will give town some teeth with people who are leaving trash etc. on properties.

New Business

Update from Town Council – Michael Humphrey

Roads committee presented recurring issue. In years past, the Town maintained sidewalks on Main Street (weed removal). But because of conflict with private property owners, the decision was made that property owners should maintain sidewalks. Town council is wondering if the EC would take on the role of overseeing the maintenance through promoting environmental friendly options to store and property owners. The EC declined.

Veronique Lambert asked for the AARP grant update. Mike Humphrey stated that the application process has been delayed until next year.

June 15th will be reopening of limited retail and outdoor service of restaurants. Maybe shutdown of south side of Main Street, or shut the entire Main Street - that would allow for more separation in foot traffic and store owners can move to sidewalk. Primary consideration for shut down will be safety.

Update from Land Use Board – Tamara Healy

Nothing to report. Last meeting canceled without explanation.

Status of Clinton Conservancy projects - Denise Birmingham

Denise stated that this year's goals are to maintain existing gardens and to seek additional volunteers to help with maintenance. The Conservancy currently maintains 5 gardens: two at Hunt's Mill and three other smaller gardens in town. One of the purposes of the gardens is to attract butterflies and other wildlife. Denise showed a butterfly that just hatched. Moving forward, the Conservancy is not sure of their direction, but wanted to ask EC about potential enrollment with potential future projects at Hunt's Mill and Mill View Park improvements. Specifically, making new trails/ extending existing trails and reducing mowing to preserve wildlife habitat. John Kashwick stated that he moved to Clinton 3 years ago and the park at the end of Water Street was hardly mowed. Now, it is mowed often and now fireflies are not as prevalent. He stated that nationwide there has been a 60-70% decline in fireflies. It would be nice to have non-mowed paths and would be nice to have fireflies reproduce. Conservancy wants to create habitats to support natural wildlife.

Denise will provide maps of gardens to EC and information for volunteer recruitment to Mike for the newsletter. EC would like a tour of locations in the future.

Next meeting will be scheduled after Mike has sent draft property maintenance ordinance for the EC's review.