

**BOROUGH OF OLD TAPPAN
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES
APRIL 20TH 2021**

VIRTUAL MEETING REGULAR MEETING: via ZOOM

The Open Public Meeting Notice: In compliance with the Open Public Meeting Law, notification of this meeting has been sent to our official newspapers and other publications circulated in the Borough of Old Tappan, and notice was posted on the bulletin board at Borough Hall.

ATTENDANCE:

	Melanie Rie	Vice-Chairperson
	Lawrence Weil	
	David Keil	Chairperson
	Bill Howe	
	Wendy King	
	Gary Mascolo	
	Nora Mann	Green Team
	William Boyce	Council Liaison
Absent:		
	Anna Haverilla	Borough Administrator
	Ryan Weaver	Alternate 2
	Gene Kosmark	Alternate 1

PRIOR MINUTES:

March 16th, 2021- A motion by Bill Howe, seconded by Nora Mann to approve the minutes of March 16th, 2021, all eligible voted yes and the motion carried.

OPEN MEETING TO THE PUBLIC:

Patches Magarro attended the meeting but had no comment at this time.

COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT:

Bill started off by addressing some questions that Larry had regarding the authority the Environmental commission has over the community garden. The mayor and council confirmed that the commission has the authority to make, enforce, and communicate their own rules to the public and also hold the public accountable for breaking any of those rules regarding the community garden. The commission will need a majority vote to create a rule for the garden and the vote will not have to go to the mayor and council for approval. The application for the garden will have a hold harmless component to it protecting both the town itself and the commission.

AGENDA ITEMS:

National Trial Day: June 5th is the new National trails day event. The ten-step guide to a successful trails event was sent out. Bill offered the option of participating in National Trails day with a hike through Bonnabel Park to be discussed more at the next meeting.

Tree Sapling Give-away: Jackson Township and the New Jersey Forest Service have offered any interested municipality with a historic oak tree that would have to be picked up with the possibility of planting it at Oaks Park. There was discussion between the Commission whether the drive for the tree in addition to finding a spot for the tree and approval for it will be worth it. Bill Howe offered the thought of buying a heritage tree for about \$40 which would be more energy efficient.

According to Bill Boyce, there are approximately 180 ash trees in decline in town. The mayor and council asked if the commission could inoculate them with some substance that could slow the decay. Bartlett tree informed us that the trees in Old Tappan are already declined and is too late to successfully inoculate them. The DPW is going to have to cut all the trees down and then there will be a new planting intuitive using the town's tree fund. Wendy mentioned that there are funds for reforestation that you can apply for that she will look into.

Bill brought up the idea of connecting Lindy Place to the network of sidewalks between Amelia Drive and Leason Parkway to the Mayor and council. He then suggested that the sidewalk fund can be used where streets in Old Tappan might need to be connected. Bill will ask the council at the next meeting about turning right on red at the corner of Washington Avenue and Old Tappan Road.

Capital Budget: It appears that the Capital Budget proposed by the Commission may be approved. The Mayor & Council will vote on this at the next meeting. .

Community Garden: there was discussion about changing the fee charged to participate in the Community Garden. Additional discussion is expected at the next meeting. Larry proposed a rule that whoever doesn't clean up their plot should lose their plot. Commission members will consider this at the next meeting.

Tree Sapling give away for CDW students: The commission is unable to do the tree sapling give away this year because the saplings are all sold out. Wendy signed up for an e-mail list so that she can find out when they have more for next year.

Photo Contest: Wendy said photo contest is up and running. The poster is out and they're starting to put emphasis on it at the middle school. The photo contest is only for the middle school.

Plastic Bag Collection: Collection ended on the April 15th. The town won with over a thousand pounds of plastic film. Wendy is just waiting for photo approval in order to post in the paper. Melanie and David will graft a letter to put in the paper as well.

Community Garden: The official budget will be released at the next council meeting. Bill Boyce suggests we finalize more specific things about the garden before an official announcement is made and will ask the council when we can announce it. Larry presented the rule that full plot assignments are the total responsibility of the individual assigned to it and for shared plots each member will be solely responsible for the specific half plot assigned. The rule will make it easier to pinpoint a problem if someone isn't taking care of their plot. Larry then

suggested giving elementary grades a contest to come up with interesting names for the gardens. Larry put together an announcement to possibly put in the Subarbanite about how the garden is expanding once it is officially announced. Commission should try to encourage people to sign up for their own plot and not to be sharing.

New Walking Trail at Cell Tower site: Bill Howe started laying out the trails and will start to map out the garden as well. Bill Howe will ask the boy scouts to clean up the area where the garden will be and if they don't want to then he will contact the Earth science teacher to do their group project to clean it up. Bill Howe proposed a wildflower/bee/butterfly garden behind the library. It could connect to the fourth-grade curriculum. Bill suggested using the commission as just directors of this garden and having two people take charge of it.

New Business: Bill Howe pointed out that he always heard that there is a ten foot right of way from the curb that the town owns, but there is no ordinance saying that. Bill Boyce offered the idea of adding a diagram of property lines for the ordinance and will talk to the council about the lack of ordinance.

Publics Opportunity to Speak: Patches talks about the borough getting energy from the same companies at the same price but being able to say that Old Tappan uses 100% renewable resources for energy. People would not notice anything change about their bills other than the fact that they might be cheaper. This is something that would have to go through the town council. Sam from food and water watch will come to a future meeting to answer any questions the commission may have. CCA is an opt out program where everyone is automatically enrolled, and you have to opt out if you don't want to be enrolled. If the mayor and council are not for the idea, then there is always the option of having a referendum.

UPCOMING MEETING DATES 2021:

May 18th

June 15th

July and August- No meetings

September 21st

October 19th

November 16th

December- No meeting

ADJOURNMENT:

Upon a motion by Bill Howe seconded by Wendy King and carried, the meeting was adjourned.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Kaitlin Mitchell

Recording Secretary