

Pennington Borough Environmental Commission
Minutes for January 25th, 2021 7:30 pm
Zoom Virtual

Attending: Bill Alexander, Nick Angarone, Kit Chandler, Brian Friedlich, Eileen Heinzl, Joann Held, Karl Muessig, Gregg Rackin, Nadine Stern

Absent: Peter Betaneli, Hailey Grillo, Chloe Hulsizer

1. Public comment: No public Comment

2. Review of past minutes

December 2020 minutes reviewed, no edits. Motion to approve by Joann, second by Bill.

3. Pennington Carbon Neutral by 2035 (Mayor Joe Lawver)

Mayor Joe Lawver attended this part of the meeting. He discussed the idea that carbon neutral behavior might be best driven from the local level. The Borough can alter its use of energy even though it cannot directly influence utilities in their mix of renewable energy resources. The Mayor requested the support of the Environmental Commission in proposing a resolution to Council to achieve carbon neutral operations in the Borough by 2035.

- Kit asked about the roll of the Environmental Commission in this initiative. Mayor Lawver suggested three rolls: 1) provide an initial evaluation of carbon use as a baseline and track changes over time, 2) advise Public Works on changes moving forward and 3) translate Borough activities to the public in an effort to lead residential and businesses in changed energy use
- Brian asked about information on the current carbon baseline. Joann noted that the Environmental Commission prepared a spreadsheet of Borough carbon use for the Sustainable NJ initiative in 2016 and updated it in 2019.
- Nick noted that there is a recent NJDEP report addressing an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas by 2050 (<https://www.nj.gov/dep/climatechange/docs/nj-gwra-80x50-report-2020.pdf>). It outlines a number of approaches to reduce carbon emissions including promoting electric vehicle use by providing charging stations. The Shade Tree Commission in the Borough might have interest in promoting trees as a carbon sequestration mechanism.
- Bill suggested that the carbon neutral initiative should be a focus of activities by a subcommittee of the Commission. Mayor Lawver

indicated that he viewed this as a “moon shot” type goal and that once approved, the Environmental Commission would be key in figuring out details and programs to meet the goal. He also noted that Public Works has already started to switch from internal combustion to electrical equipment, e.g. blowers and trimmers.

- Joann pointed out that a public outreach initiative might be good to get Borough residents and businesses on board.
- The Environmental Commission passed a motion proposed by Joann and seconded by Nick to support Mayor Lawver in the goal of making Pennington Borough carbon neutral by 2035. The Mayor will share a draft resolution with the Environmental Commission for input by February 12th with the intent of presentation to Council on March 1st.

4. Administrative Issues

- a) ERI Update / Mapping:
Brian will send the latest draft of the ERI to be reviewed by the Commission members to get feedback before sharing with outside groups (Watershed and DVRPC).
- b) Website/ List of EC Projects:
Peter is compiling a list of Environmental Commission projects/initiatives, for the Borough website. The information will be shared with Commission members.

5. Borough Council Report

- a) Updates on Landfill property and Arboretum:
 - Additional work for the investigation of the ground water will be conducted by Excel Environmental Resources (install eight wells and evaluate water quality) over the next year.
 - Arboretum transfer was approved by the State Board of Education. The Borough needs to schedule the closing and transfer of the ownership. Another inventory of trees and trees that may need to be removed will need to be done after ownership is finalized.
- b) Deer Management: The program is in progress and has eliminated about 30 deer. Program will be active through February.

6. Planning/Zoning Board Report

- a) The Board met and set up a subcommittee to decide whether to reexamine the Master Plan due in 2023 or to completely update it. The plan was done in 1998 and has been reexamined twice.

7. Green Team and Sustainable Jersey Update

- a) Styrofoam collection will be on February 6th, at Toll Gate Grammar School. The flyer will be sent out in January.
- b) School District Green Team plans to host a Green Week April 18th-24th open to the entire Hopewell Valley Community. The theme is "An Environmentally Just and Sustainable Future". Planned activities will be at the school during the week and outside in the community on the weekend. The Pennington Environmental Commission is invited to participate. Ideas are a kickoff event for the arboretum and/or the Borough carbon neutral initiative.
- c) Mercer County is planning a Green Fest for April or May.

8. On-going Mission Topics

- a) Green Development checklist: No update
- b) Heritage at Pennington Rain Garden:
The build out of the development is almost complete. When American Properties turns over operations to a community association there is an interest in developing a pollinating garden for migratory birds and pollinators in the drainage basin at the complex. Mercer County might provide grants for this type of project. Gregg and Brian will walk the property to move forward with ideas
- c) Stormwater Ordinance: Borough engineers are working on the new draft ordinance.

9. New Business

The Open Space Committee met on January 20th.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:58 pm

Next Meeting February 22, 2021