

5.

Florence, New Jersey 08518
February 1, 2024

The regular meeting of the Florence Township Environmental Commission was held on the above date in the Municipal Complex, 711 Broad Street, Florence, New Jersey. The meeting was called to order at 7:02 P.M. followed by a salute to the flag. The following statement was read: "I would like to announce that this meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Adequate notice has been provided to the official newspapers and posted in the main hall of the Municipal Complex".

Upon roll call the following Commissioners were found to be present:

Melanie Mieczkowski

Saphan Pickett

David Mudge

Paul Ordog

Deepa Patel

ABSENT: Michelle Ryan-Krzykalski, Talaya Loftin, John Pagano, Dave Yansick

OLD BUSINESS

A. Tree Removal Replacement Ordinance.

Chairman Mudge stated he went over this ordinance with Ted Lovenduski, from the Shade Tree Commission. Under the section called Tree Replacement Requirements, Chairman Mudge wanted to point out that the Ordinance states "Any person, other than a resident, who removes one or more tree(s) with a DBH of 6" or more per acre, unless exempt under Section IV, shall subject to the requirements of the Tree Replacement Requirement Table." This is important because a resident is permitted to remove trees at the resident's discretion. But this still brings up the question of what is a resident; it doesn't specify if this means "primary resident" and this would need to be defined. The official definition is "an individual who resides on the property", this doesn't apply to people who own property but don't live there.

Regarding Section IV: Exemptions, item B states that tree farms in active operation, nurseries, fruit orchards and garden centers. Mr. Lovenduski is looking into getting that changed to "farms" and not "tree farms".

Ms. Patel asked how many people know about these rules and what trees are township trees and what are the property owner's trees. Ms. Patel also asked that if anything marked TBD on the sample ordinance will be filled in prior to the ordinance being approved. Chairman Mudge said that those items are filled in by the municipalities.

Ms. Patel suggested filling in some tree species in Appendix A, which is the approved list of Replacement Tree species and planting standards. Chairman Mudge suggested to keep it general by noting it as indigenous to New Jersey. Ms. Patel also said there should be a "do not plant" list. There is also a list on the Rutgers website, of trees that should not be planted. This ordinance is also beneficial when the Commission does plan reviews.

B. Sustainable New Jersey Grant Process & Sub-Committee

Ms. Patel started out by stating she met with Marty Eckert from the township to work on the draft of the \$20,000 and \$2,000 grant. The larger grant would go towards the Community

6.

Garden, and the smaller grant would go towards the pollinator garden. Everything is set to go with the draft and timeline. Ms. Patel got a phone call from Sustainable NJ, and the representative said the draft looks good and that the \$10,000 and \$20,000 grants are the most competitive. The representative made some suggestions to add to help the application such as mentioning that we already received Bronze Certification-that gives us a better chance to receive the grant.. The application is due on February 9.

By March 15, there needs to be a resolution passed in order to apply for the Grant. Mr. Eckert, Ms. Pickett and Ms. Patel all plan to meet with a master gardener who wants to hear about the project and ideas. If the gardener is willing to, he can provide a letter of support. Ms Patel also added that this is going to take participation and support from the whole township.

Chairman Mudge asked how the community garden will be set up if each participant gets their own space to garden or if everyone tends the garden together. The garden is set up for everyone to get their own plot-this was one of the items we received points for through the Bronze Certification.

Ms. Pickett mentioned that she met today with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and they have a device that is meant to test the soil for heavy metals and contaminants. There is some concern about using pressure treated wood in the community garden as that can leak into the soil. She is going to arrange for the gentleman who runs the device, an XRS machine, to come to Florence to test the soil. He would also be willing to write a letter of support.

Ms. Pickett also talked to Blake Dimon regarding a plant sale and Mr. Dimon told her to contact a woman named Susan to talk about donating plants to a plant sale to do some fundraising and community outreach.

Ms. Patel asked if we do not get the \$20,000 grant, but receive the \$2,000 grant for the pollinator garden, what would we do with all these additional ideas for the existing community garden? Could we get funding from the township? Chairman Mudge mentioned that would be a good time to reach out to the high school, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts..etc for volunteers.

Ms Pickett said that the Organic Farming Association emailed her today. They are accepting applications for a mini grant for community gardens and projects. Ms. Patel said we should hear from Sustainable NJ in May if we received the grant. The mini grant, which is due June 30, might be a good supplement.

MINUTES

A Motion was made by Ms. Mieczkowski, seconded by Ms. Pickett to adopt the minutes from the January 11, 2024 meeting as submitted. Motion unanimously approved by all members present.

CORRESPONDENCE

A. 2024 Florence Township Youth & Community Gardening Program

7.

This correspondence will be used while building this program.

A motion was made by Ms. Patel, seconded by Mr. Ordog to receive and use this document.

Motion unanimously approved by all members present.

OTHER BUSINESS/PLAN REVIEW

There was no other business or plan review.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public in attendance.

ADJOURNMENT

It was the Motion of Ms. Pickett, seconded by Mr. Ordog to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Motion unanimously approved by all members present.

MRK/amh

Michelle Ryan-Krzykalski, Secretary