

# Madison Environmental Commission

Minutes, January 29, 2021

Present are chairperson Claire Whitcomb, Borough Council liaison John Hoover, members Stephan Stocker, Joan Maccari, Brian Monaghan, Bridgit Daley, Trina Mallik, Kristen Wallenstein, Ann Huber

Guests: Lisa Jordan, Jamie Salaki and High School Students Amanda and Caroline, both with Project Aware.

Meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM.

Chair read the Public Meeting Notice.

## Town-wide Yard Sale:

It has been suggested that partnering with the Great Swamp Watershed Association will give us the flexibility to charge \$10 per ad through Eventbrite, with the proceeds going to the non-profit Watershed Association. Rebecca Bertrand from Parks is working on the Yard Sale and will prepare the Map of where the sales are. The event is scheduled for April 17, 2021 which is the week before Chatham Borough's bulk pickup.

## Project Aware:

This is a high school Community Service project, presently developing a Summit for March in which they propose to collect children's and Young Adult books to reduce landfill waste. Kristen offered to advertise the book collection on FB Swap page.

Project Aware is also working on an environmental education program for middle schoolers.

Stephen Stocker welcomed the high students and requested each of their email addresses to keep them informed.

## Multi-town Student Initiative on EVs:

Trina reported that student groups in Chatham and Morris Township may be partnering to work on EV's. Interest in this has not been confirmed in Madison.

## Green Vision Forum:

Kristen reported that topics will be confirmed with those attending in February. New this year is expected participation by St. Elizabeth and possible, St. Vincent.

Joan will be documenting the Forum for Sustainable Madison and requested a list of participants.

### Site Plan Reviews:

1-Comments were submitted on 14 Lincoln Place (former theater) for the meeting which was taking place simultaneously with this meeting. Kathi from Sustainable Madison is attending the Board of Adjustment meeting.

2-Comments are being prepared in connection with 295-297 Main Street. They are seeking a use variance and impervious coverage variance for an increase of 8%. The MEC is proposing that, in lieu of a variance, parking and walkways be constructed from permeable material. We are also requesting lighting controlled by motion sensors and yellow in color to protect insects.

3- Cook Ave. Parking Lot – the MEC requested a meeting in July before the project was designed. However, no discussion took place until earlier this month when part of the plans were nearing completion. Rain gardens were included in the plans.

Bridgit commented that the common concerns/ themes suggest that they need to be institutionalized, rather than allowing decisions to be made piecemeal. Claire remarked that she had come to the same conclusion and had had a discussion with Susan Blickstein, Planning Board Planner, about redoing the Preliminary Environmental Checklist and Environmental Impact Assessment. A request would need to go to the PB. It was agreed that Kathi should be on the working group when it is formed. Claire will circulate the existing checklist and environmental impact statement.

### EV Ordinance:

Claire shared a draft of the Chatham Borough Ordinance (taken from Morris Twsp Ord):

The Commission members reviewed the Ordinance in depth resulting in some general comments –

Non-residential uses should allow for charging stations at gas stations;

The required number of charging stations suggested in the chart need to be revised since the 2% figure seems too low;

Many of Chatham's provisions about installation standards and signs are not relevant to our circumstances;

Existing design standards should apply to parking lot installation and signs; and

Maintenance and upkeep need to be provided for in the Ord.

It was concluded that some revisions would be attempted and then the Ord would be revisited at the next meeting before the it is sent with a list of our concerns to the Borough Engineer to finalize.

### MEC enabling Ordinance:

ANJEC is suggesting that adding non-voting as Associate members as well as student members would be helpful. Associate members would have to reside in Madison but student members could be non-residents from such institutions as Fairleigh and the College of St. Elizabeth. For those students who need them, their participation could provide Community Service Credits.

MEC Projects List:

Kristen prepared a spread sheet as a repository for green events to keep track of Climate Action steps being taken regionally and by the working groups made up of Madison, Chatham B & T, and Morris Township. It would allow us to also keep track of budget needs, outreach efforts and Climate Action steps. ANJEC is also working on a list for recommended Climate Action steps.

Other:

Brian, a Rutgers Master Gardener, will be presenting a program via Zoom on Organic Gardening Practices on April 5, 2021.

A discussion of mini-meadows will be carried to next meeting.

There was also a short discussion about the MEC's involvement, if any, in the 350,000 grant being sought for historic preservation of the Masonic Lodge on Main St. More information is needed about the application and our role.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15pm

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Huber