

Environmental Commission Minutes

10/14/2020

Present

Rozella Clyde

Pat Soteropoulos

Ben Lampert

Jocelyn Mathiasen

Torri Van Wie

Kate Murphy

Joseph Treloar (8:10)

Absent

Len Resto

Yana Doyle

Phil Kagan

Susie Robertson

Guest

Maddie Kagan

Planning Board

There has been discussion lately concerning oversize buildings being built on lots that are too small for them. New parameters need to be set, but there is no clear-cut solution. The town planner is looking to other towns to see what they mandate. It would be advisable to also be able to mandate green construction and energy efficiency measures.

If we want to get involved with energy aggregation with other towns, we need more solar panels in Chatham. However, developers complain that Leed certification and solar panels are too expensive. There is a lot of new construction being planned in the Borough and we seem powerless to instill environmental aspects into these projects. Perhaps we need to hire a consultant to see what we can reasonably ask for.

Borough Council

The River Road project was discussed at the last Borough Council meeting. It has been put off because of the pandemic but it is time to start making plans again. There will be 3 workshops for the public in the near future. The first one deals with affordable housing; the second with finances and the impact on schools; the third with the physical design of the project.

There has been no progress on the Post Office Plaza project. We are in the process of interviewing a new planner and planning on a fresh public outreach in the Spring.

The issue concerning noisy leaf blowers was not presented to Council. There seems to be some interest in curtailing the hours or even the seasons when noisy lawn equipment can be used, but the public does not seem ready for any strong mandates at this point. This has been tried in other towns but did not go over well. We need more data and more public education. Landscapers need to be included in the planning. It would be a good idea to translate our ideas into Spanish for some of the landscapers.

Plastic Green Bags

Our garbage contract is expiring in March and change is inevitable. Prices have gone up 30 to 40% because of labor costs. Using one-arm-

bandit trucks and standard cans is the economical way to go. The way we do bulk pickup is also under review. It is expensive and people do not always use it fairly. A survey was sent out to the public, but no consensus was reached.

Joint Climate Action Plan

The Green Team is coordinating with Madison and Chatham Township, forming a coalition to deal with climate change. We intend to send a letter to Borough Council to make them aware of the coalition and to keep them informed as we progress.

Green Team Sustainable Event

The Sustainable Showcase which was planned for October at the Farmers' Market turned out not to be feasible mostly because of the pandemic.

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

We are currently in the queue for grant money to install 2 stations. If we do not get it, we can renegotiate with Volta Stations, but that idea is unpopular. It is also a possibility that we could buy our own stations in which case money would have to be appropriated in January.

Our next meeting is November 11 at 8 pm.