

City of Summit Environmental Commission Minutes, March 21, 2022
(VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE)

Participating: Donna Goggin Patel, Rick Bell, Dan Crisafulli, Rich Fiore, Jeff Hankinson, John Kilby, Kelly Moughalian, Mimi Zukoff

Council Liaison: Marjorie Fox

Guests: Anne Berman, Fred Blau, Helen Campanha, Irvy Pinzon, Karen Venturella

Donna Goggin Patel called the meeting to order at 8:01 PM. The February minutes were approved.

“Tiny Forest” Reforestation: Donna Goggin Patel

The Tiny Forest is fenced and dormant for the winter. We are holding a public ribbon-cutting event on Saturday, April 2, at 9 am. Marian Glenn and Anne Berman have been designing the planting grid and pathway. Anne, Irvy Pinzon, and Mimi Zukoff framed the pathway. Jeff Hankinson assembled and positioned the bench inside. Donna is meeting with Chris Holenstein to attach the watering hoses on Wednesday, March 23. There will be an initial round of tree and shrub plantings from the NJ Forestry Nursery on April 2, followed by plantings from Pinelands Nursery on April 23. John Kilby is picking up the NJ Forestry order on March 31.

With the help of Millennium, we are applying for a \$1,500 grant from ANJEC to fund the signage at the Tiny Forest. One idea for the large signage explaining the Tiny Forest and the importance of native species is a kiosk like that at the Passaic River Trails near the Transfer Station (which Jeff built years ago). This could have pockets for brochures people could take and could be updated over time. Another idea is a large sign similar to the ones at the rain gardens at the Library and City Hall. Donna is going to ask Dan Bernier if there is still a Union County sign shop. Mimi suggested that the signage specifically highlight the oak tree among native species.

In terms of the smaller signage throughout the Tiny Forest to identify specific species, John Kilby and Irvy spoke about the placards for the city’s Landmark Trees and how the species identification placards in the Tiny Forest should have a similar look. Irvy explained that for the Landmark Trees, these placards would have something interesting about the species or a connection to a historical event in Summit. They would have a QR code in the corner that can take people to a virtual arboretum. Rich Fiore suggested a potential audio tour narrated by students as a potential future idea for visitors to listen to the tour on their phones.

Earth Day Clean-Up: Kelly Moughalian

Earth Day Clean-Up is Saturday, April 2, with Sunday, April 3, as the rain date and alternate date for those who cannot work on Saturday. The clean-up is from 10:00 am until 12 noon on April 2 to allow those who want to attend the Tiny Forest event to do so before heading out to the clean-up sites. Walk-ins are welcome at Briant Park and Martin's Brook Park this year. Donna and Kelly have been coordinating with various individuals and groups to assign sites ahead of the clean-up. Donna, Kelly, David Naidu, and Stella Shen (from Boy Scout Troop 67) met with Dan Bernier and Robert Berns from Union County on Monday, March 21, to walk the Passaic River Trail from Mount Vernon Avenue over to Stanley Ave.

Recycling Advisory Committee: Mimi Zukoff

At its last meeting a high school student gave a capstone presentation about the environmental injustice issues relating to trash incinerators. In NJ most incinerators are located in communities of color which are also negatively impacted by other environmentally polluting sites.

RAC and Summit Downtown, Inc. continue to explore the possibility of a reusable takeout container initiative. Over 600 people responded to the survey created by Lena Schulz. Several members of RAC and the EC have been approaching restaurants in town with whom they have a relationship to ask them to attend the informational Zoom meeting with DeliverZero. We have had some success so far.

Shade Tree Advisory Committee: John Kilby

STAC is moving ahead with work on a revised tree ordinance for Summit. The city plans to plant 125 shade trees this Spring. STAC is working with The Summit Conservancy on a project to highlight the Landmark Trees throughout town. STAC's forestry intern is working on the street tree inventory. STAC is meeting with Reeves-Reed Arboretum to begin planning the Fall in Love with Trees lecture series for the Fall. For previously-planted shade trees that no longer need the supporting stakes, volunteers (like the Summit Suckers) are going to remove the tree supports by cutting and removing the stakes. The stakes likely will go to the Transfer Station. Donna is checking with Marian Glenn to see if we can use some of these at the Tiny Forest.

Multi-Town Environmental Commission Meetings: Donna Goggin Patel

The NJSMA working group topics are energy aggregation; stormwater; climate action plans; green transportation/green fleets; green building and energy efficiency; pollinators/pesticides; environmental justice and zero waste initiatives. The Great Swamp Watershed Association will host the Native Plant sale, and the group expects to sell 21,000 plants this year. More info,

including the plant catalog, is available at <https://www.greatswamp.org/native-plant-sale/garden-resources/>. You can receive links to the recordings of the related Zoom webinars by emailing plantsale@greatswamp.org. The last one will be a kick-off webinar on April 1 at noon. Summit will need many volunteers to assist in preparing, transporting, and handing out orders. The sale will be live from April 1-22. Assembling the orders will take place the last week in April and the pick-up day for Summit will be on Saturday, April 30.

NJSMA met on February 28 to discuss the progress of the various subgroups. SolSmart presented to the group about its free, technical assistance to municipalities to streamline and modernize solar permitting. Donna and Dan Crisafulli have been considering this option.

Sustainable Jersey: Donna Goggin Patel

Donna continues to meet with Dan Crisafulli, Chris Sprague, Melissa Spurr and Mimi Zukoff to discuss and plan the Sustainable Jersey certification that is due May 22. Summit applied for a Community Energy Plan grant that would provide \$10,000 toward the creation of an energy plan document.

GreenFaith: Mimi Zukoff

Summit Area GreenFaith Circle is hosting a webinar on Green Investing on April 5 at 7 pm through the Summit Public Library. The speaker is Peter Krull, CEO of Earth Equity Advisors, Asheville NC. (<https://www.earthequityadvisors.com>.) You can register at <https://summitlibrary.libcal.com/event/8709337>.

Repair Café: Courtney Cordaro

Repair Café will be held on Saturday, March 26, from 11 am - 3 pm, at Christ Church (561 Springfield Ave.). Repairs available include lamps/lighting, electronics, computer repairs, sewing/textiles, jewelry, wooden/furniture and knife sharpening.

Green Schools: Donna Goggin Patel

If you would like to join the green parent group, please contact karin.pittle.gale@gmail.com. The next meeting will be via Zoom on Friday, May 6, at 9 AM. Washington School currently has collection bins outside the front entrance for discarded sneakers and printer cartridges. Franklin School and LCJSMS have collection bins to recycle used disposable face masks.

Brayton School is collecting stretched plastic for a Trex collection on a DIY basis. Weigh your plastics, drop them off at a store and then complete this [Google form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfWI8Llc5tTmwXb8SmOFzy5oBa5YwU9IeNAL) to record their total weight. (<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfWI8Llc5tTmwXb8SmOFzy5oBa5YwU9IeNAL>)

w9GBHoc7Q8xkw/viewform?gxids=7628) You do not need to be a Brayton School family to participate. The schools rotate to receive benches. When they have an active collection, the following stores participate in the Trex program: ACME; Home Depot; Kohl's; King's; Stop & Shop; Wegmans; and Whole Foods. COVID has halted collections at many of these. From recent experience, Home Depot (Vauxhaul) and Stop & Shop (Madison) are the most receptive to taking collections of these plastics.

New Business: Everyone

Rick Bell mentioned that the next Green Cities lecture will be held on Thursday, April 7, at 12 noon. The two guest speakers will be from Antwerp, Belgium, and the Netherlands.

Rick Bell discussed the project proposed for 557-565 Morris Avenue (at the corner of River Road). Rick was able to incorporate comments from Fred Blau and Anne Berman on solar panels and the landscape plan, respectively, into the last Environmental Commission input. The project discussion is adjourned until May 16 for a meeting to be held in Council Chambers at City Hall. Rick discussed the concern raised at last month's meeting about river access and that he visited the strip of land owned by Union County between the Sunrise building and the Volvo dealership. Jeff Hankinson explained that he has examined this land and different river access possibilities.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Donna Goggin Patel.

2022 Meeting Dates. For the present time, these meetings will be held via Zoom. These are typically the 3rd Monday of the month. Any changes to that schedule are noted:

4/18

5/16

6/20

No meetings in July and August

9/19

10/17

11/21

12/19