

City of Summit Environmental Commission Minutes, May 15, 2023

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

Council Rep: Jaime Levine

Guests: Fred Blau, Rosemary Grace, Kathy Head

Donna Goggin Patel called the meeting to order at 8:04 PM. The April minutes were approved.

Earth Day Clean-Up Planning: Donna Goggin Patel

The Earth Day Clean-Up was a success. We had 269 volunteers across 10 sites in Summit, and we cleaned up a lot of trash. The final numbers are nearly a ton of trash (1,820 lbs) plus another 80 lbs of recycling. Volunteers also added wood chips at Martin's Brook Park, Hidden Valley Park, and Wilson Park. Special thanks to Kelly Moughalian for coordinating the Earth Day Clean-Up. And a huge thanks to Kelly, Dan Crisafulli, Jaime Levine, Lara Mendenhall, Chris Sprague, Mimi Zukoff, George Drossinos, Marjorie Fox, Sofia Mendenhall (and other SHS Eco-Club students) for running sites around town, and to the various contact people for the groups who helped from the Summit Area Y, PEP, and many local businesses.

Several site supervisors mentioned finding collections of litter, particularly dog waste bags, or noticing areas that were clearly used repeatedly as a dump. Kathy Head asked if there is a local ordinance that covers this issue. We also wondered if there is a way to have surveillance as a deterrence. Jaime Levine explained that there is a local ordinance. The procedure is for residents to file a littering complaint with the Police Department and then the PD researches the complaint.

Sustainable Jersey May 5 Summit: Donna Goggin Patel/Mimi Zukoff

Donna and Mimi attended the Sustainable Jersey full-day Summit on May 5 at Bell Labs in Holmdel. They collectively attended 6 sessions on the following topics: Community Solar; Resiliency at the Municipal Level; Community Energy Planning; Food Waste in Schools; Sustainable Jersey's Technical Assistance Offerings, and Maximizing Hashtags and Other Media Tools. They both enjoyed test driving electric vehicles there, as well.

"Tiny Forest" Reforestation: Donna Goggin Patel

Donna is working with Amy Cairns and Megan Trindell on the design of the larger, educational signage for the Tiny Forest. On May 13, the city and the Shade Tree Advisory Committee

celebrated Arbor Day at the Tiny Forest. About 25-30 people attended the ceremony with Council President Pro Tem Susan Hairston reading a proclamation and John Linson speaking about Arbor Day and the Tiny Forest. Donna also spoke and answered questions about the project. Thanks to John Kilby and Dan Crisafulli for joining. We planted 10 swamp white oaks (thanks to Richard Leister and the Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission) and 2 black cherry trees (thanks to Jay Cho) after the ceremony.

Recycling Advisory Committee: Mimi Zukoff

The food waste collected at the Transfer Station in April 2023 weighed 2,550 lbs. (This lower amount is possibly due to the public schools' Spring Break falling in April. The capacity is 6,900 lbs/month.) City Communications office has created an excellent and beautiful array of graphics to be used both on social media and at tabling events to publicize the food composting program and educate residents on how and why to compost their food waste.

RAC will have a tabling event at the June 4 Farmers Market. If there is anyone from the Environmental Commission (member or guest) who would like to volunteer for a 2-hour shift, please let Mimi know. Shifts will be 7-9, 9-11, 11-1. RAC will be giving away repurposed 5-gallon covered buckets donated from Natale's Bakery and procured by Karen Venturella. Buckets will only be given to Summit residents who provide their name, email address and Summit address. RAC also hopes to have a table at Community Night, which is July 18, 2023. (The EC and Shade Tree share a table there, too.)

RAC's high school representatives have been trying to keep the Book Barn tidy, but it is a very difficult job. They had organized books by category attaching labels to the shelves a few weeks ago, but apparently, the labels disappeared and everything is now intermingled again. Despite the sign saying no textbooks, records, etc., residents continue to dump them at the Book Barn. City Communications posted a reminder on the city website and on social media. Mimi also suggested that there be a bin outside the Barn for text books and encyclopedias, so that they do not enter the Barn and add to the disarray.

There is a collection bin for stretched plastics at the Transfer Station for Summit residents with a permit (as part of a Union County effort). The bin is located next to the comingled plastics dumpster to keep people from placing plastic bags in that dumpster. More info can be found at <https://ucnj.org/recycling/plastic-film/>. Please continue to log any stretched plastics dropped off there for Brayton School's collection toward its Trex bench: [Google form](#). (You do not need to have children in the schools to contribute to Brayton's collection numbers.)

Update on Grants: Donna Goggin Patel

The Environmental Commission received the ANJEC Open Spaces grant in the amount of \$1,500 to complete fencing and provide signage for the Butterfly Garden at the Park Line. For the Community Energy Plan grant, Donna Goggin Patel and Dan Crisafulli are drafting Summit's Plan. Sustainable Jersey grant decisions will be public on May 22.

Jeff Hankinson also reported that the Park Line received other funding that will be applied toward the Phase II section across Morris Ave and continuing toward Briant Park. This money is from the federal government and from funding provided to Union County.

Shade Tree Advisory Committee: John Kilby

STAC is moving ahead with the revised tree ordinance for Summit. The next round of shade tree plantings will be approximately 50 trees in Fall 2023. STAC is meeting with Reeves-Reed Arboretum to plan the Fall in Love with Trees speaker series. The tentative dates for the Fall are 10/5, 10/19 and 11/2.

Summit Free Market: Mimi Zukoff

The Free Market will hold its Saturday event on May 13 from 8AM-3PM and will hold a weekday event on May 26 from 12-2PM. The rest of the 2023 dates for the weekday events have been posted. They are June 23, July 21, August 25, September 22, October 27, and December 1 (there is none in November). The rest of the weekend Free Markets will be held on the typical second Saturday of each month from 8AM-3PM.

The rain gardens to the right of the Free Market building are in need of weeding, and Mimi has been doing this gradually. If anyone is available to help with the weeding of these or the rain gardens at City Hall and the Library, please reach out to morahzukoff@gmail.com.

Multi-Town Environmental Commission Meetings: Donna Goggin Patel

The NJSMA worked with the Great Swamp again this year to host a Native Plant sale. A big thanks to Mimi Zukoff who coordinated the transportation and distribution of Summit's 31 on May 6. Overall, the GSWA sold over 25,000+ plants and 590 unique orders.

Green Schools: Donna Goggin Patel

The Green Schools parents are advertising a Walk/Bike/Carpool Week for Summit students from June 5-9. The next meeting will be on Friday, September 15, at 9:30 am. If you would like to join the green parent group, please contact Donna Goggin Patel at dgp212@gmail.com.

GreenFaith: Mimi Zukoff

Summit Area GreenFaith Circle partnered with the Environmental Commission and Summit Public Library to present a seminar on residential solar virtually on May 11. Marc Miller ended up speaking to the group as Frank Curran had a conflict.

New Business: Everyone

Rick Bell informed us that applications from Bristol Myers Squibb and 39 Beechwood will be before the Planning Board next week.

We also revisited the status of pesticide and herbicide applications on the public playing fields and playgrounds around town. Donna and Jaime will check in with Aaron Schrager to determine the status of the planned pilot on the Village Green. Rick mentioned that there is a section of Memorial Field with lots of dandelions that may be an inadvertent test area.

Jeff mentioned that Bill Gates is funding a nuclear power plant in Kemmerer, Wyoming, using liquid sodium as the coolant as opposed to water. (The plant would hope to be operational in 2030.) You can read more about the technology here: <https://www.gatesnotes.com/Wyoming-TerraPower>.

Lara Mendenhall mentioned that Nautilus Solar may be available to present to the schools about solar panel options in a few weeks.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Donna Goggin Patel.

Dates for the 2023 Environmental Commission Meetings

All meetings will be held in the Whitman Room in City Hall. These are typically the 3rd Monday of the month. Any changes to that schedule are noted:

6/12 (2nd Monday)

There are no meetings in July and August.

9/18

10/16

11/20

12/18