

City of Summit Environmental Commission Minutes, June 20, 2022
(VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE)

Participating: Donna Goggin Patel, Dan Crisafulli, Rich Fiore, Jeff Hankinson, John Kilby, Kelly Moughalian, Chris Sprague

Council Liaison: Marjorie Fox

Guests: Fred Blau, Kathy Head, Marwa Kamel, Janette Spiezio

Donna Goggin Patel called the meeting to order at 8:05 PM. The May minutes were approved.

Sustainable Haus: Janette Spiezio

Janette Spiezio is the owner of Sustainable Haus, a zero-waste store at 221 Broad St. (sustainablehaus.com) with over 600 products, many available for refilling. Janette also is a member of the Westfield Green Team and a Climate Reality Leader. The top four goals of her zero-waste philosophy are: (1) no plastic, (2) no packaging, (3) no toxins and (4) creating the least impact possible. She shared several health and environmental reasons for reducing plastics and toxins in our lives, including that the typical person ingests a credit card's worth of plastics a week. Sustainable Haus is also a weekly vendor at the Summit Farmers Market.

In terms of community partnerships, Sustainable Haus is exploring a partnership with GRACE to provide laundry detergent. A collaboration with a local artist on daffodil prints will benefit GRACE and Reeves-Reed Arboretum. Janette is working with parents to help spread the word about refilling and sustainability through PTO newsletters. Sustainable Haus hosts a community drop-off location for Java's Compost and periodically offers knife sharpening. They currently host 9 recycling programs for hard-to-recycle items. These include razors, oral care, personal care (mouthwash, deodorant), food storage containers, stationery (pens, watercolor palettes), Gerber's products, snack pouches (like GoGo Squeeze), and candy and snack wrappers. (Note, there is a \$5 fee to drop off the candy and snack wrappers. The others are free. More details about each are on the website.)

"Tiny Forest" Reforestation: Donna Goggin Patel

On Friday, May 20, Marian Glenn and Donna met with representatives of Kean University, Berkeley Heights' Environmental Commission, Groundwork Elizabeth, and Union County to tour the Tiny Forest and discuss its methodology. And on Saturday, June 18, Marian and Donna met with representatives from Kean University, the Rahway Environmental Commission and the Rahway River Watershed Association. We created a SignUp Genius for volunteers to sign up to

weed (and be a back-up helper if we need to water) the Tiny Forest. Weeding slots are for a Zone that is approx. 1/6th of the Forest. You have an entire week to weed when it is convenient for you. Weeding should take about 30 min for 1 person.

The SignUp Genius link is: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0D44ABAD2BA4FB6-tiny>. (To access the full Weeding Instructions with a map of the Zones, go to https://1drv.ms/b/s!AohupYnd2EZQjCQ7ABw_5M9AfpRK?e=kzuTZg.) We learned that we did not receive the \$1,500 grant from ANJEC to fund the signage at the Tiny Forest as Summit was awarded money from ANJEC in the past 5 years (in 2017).

Community Energy Grant: Donna Goggin Patel

We learned that Summit received one of the Community Energy Plan grants in the amount of \$10,000. An introductory webinar with the BPU and Sustainable Jersey is on Tuesday, June 28, from 11am-12pm. Donna will attend, and Fred Blau may try to, as well. If anyone wants to join Donna and Dan Crisafulli in planning out and effectuating the grant, please let Donna know.

Recycling Advisory Committee: Donna Goggin Patel

The food composting pilot program began on June 1 at the Transfer Station in conjunction with Green Bucket. Any kind of food item, raw or cooked can be composted, including animal products. There are 4 collection containers on the lower level of the Transfer Station, just past the garage. Residents with a Transfer Station permit can bring food waste any time the Transfer Station is open.

Starting July 1, Summit is switching recycling vendors. The two changes to note are: (1) your pick-up day now will be the same as your household trash pick-up day; and (2) the recycling collection will be single stream. (Your recycling should continue to be clean, dry and loose (i.e., not in a plastic bag). You may continue to separate your recycling and use as many containers as you wish for the collection, but all the recycling will be placed together in the truck upon collection.

Shade Tree Advisory Committee: John Kilby

STAC is moving ahead with work on a revised tree ordinance for Summit. The city is planting 125 shade trees this Spring. A Salem Oak was planted in a large pot at City Hall on June 15. STAC is meeting with Reeves-Reed Arboretum to plan the Fall in Love with Trees lecture series for the Fall with tentative dates of events on 9/22, 10/6, and 10/20.

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. NJSMA is hosting an educational presentation on residential solar on Tuesday, June 21, from 7:30 - 8:30 pm. There is a free registration on Eventbrite to get the Zoom link. The session will discuss whether solar works for a home and how to go about installing and paying for it, including the possibility of battery storage. The Eventbrite link is: <https://NJSMA solar.eventbrite.com>.

GreenFaith: Donna Goggin Patel

GreenFaith is planning an event for the GreenFaith Global Day of Action in the fall. They may possibly host a table at the Farmer's Market about installing home solar panels.

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 next school year. Washington School currently has collection bins outside the front entrance for discarded sneakers, markers 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 to record their total weight. (<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfWI8Llc5tTmwXb8SmOFzy5oBa5YwU9IeNALw9GBHoc7Q8xkw/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.

Summit's Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Dan Crisafulli

Dan Crisafulli continued his work compiling and analyzing historic data from Summit and Sustainable Jersey resources to create a snapshot of the city's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This snapshot includes carbon dioxide emissions (or carbon equivalents for categories like solid waste). Across the United States, direct emissions from burning fossil fuels account for about half of total household emissions. The other half is embedded in the goods and services we consume (e.g., food, household goods, health, education). These are the indirect emissions. New

Jersey's goal is to decrease GHGs by 50-55% by 2030. To think about this, we need to analyze where we are now and then strategize about how to get to the goal.

Looking at the 2019 data, the primary culprits for Summit's direct emissions are residential vehicles, the commercial/industrial use of fossil gas and electricity and residential use of fossil gas. The municipal emissions appear to be about 1% of the city's GHGs (with city vehicles being the top offender). But the city has an important role to play to set an example. Food is arguably the largest single category of Summit's indirect emissions, representing an estimated 10 to 30 percent of a household's emissions depending on income and meat consumption.

Dan welcomes help in strategizing next steps and effectuating them. Please email dan.crisafulli@gmail.com if you have suggestions or if you want to join the effort. Those present are also continuing to think about topics for the Environmental Commission's table at Community Night and potential community partnerships with non-profits and other civic groups.

Geothermal Heat Pumps: Dr. Frederick Blau

Dr. Fred Blau again discussed the potential for using heat pumps for the heating of the Broad Street West proposal. He believes we should be using heat pumps for the heating and cooling of the buildings. Geothermal heat pumps are more expensive up front than forced air heat pumps but save money over the long term. (There are federal subsidies for all heat pumps.) Retrofitting a building is much harder to do and costs a lot more, and it is highly likely that buildings will require retrofits by 2050 if heat pumps are not installed initially. Currently most of the buildings in New Jersey are heated with fossil fuels. An air source heat pump is a better alternative than fossil fuel. Marjorie Fox explained that the Broad Street West developer is going to do an energy efficiency and electrification analysis, which could include analysis of air source heat pumps. As of now, the developer expects to provide about 8,500 square feet of roof space for a solar array.

New Business: Everyone

Rich Fiore questioned whether the Environmental Commission has ever provided a position statement to the city about new construction, perhaps requiring electrification or net-zero construction for new construction. The Environmental Commission has not drafted such a statement.

Jeff Hankinson raised a concern about the invasive species he is combatting at the Park Line and around the Roots for Rivers plantings at the Transfer Station. In addition to Japanese knotweed (which has been a consistent issue), Jeff is finding hemlock. It is poisonous and needs to be handled carefully when removed and then bagged. Hemlock looks like a carrot plant in its first year, but it can grow as high as six feet in its second year if not removed. This makes it very hard to handle.

Jeff had also shared information about the floating solar arrays planned by NJ American Water in nearby reservoirs, including the ones across from the Short Hills Mall that provide Summit's drinking water. It is not clear if the arrays are made from metals or plastics and how that could affect the water supply. Donna reached out to the Chair of Millburn's Environmental Commission to seek more information, and potentially an environmental impact statement.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:42 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:

No meetings in July and August

9/19

10/17

11/21

12/19