

**MUNICIPAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
BOROUGH OF EMERSON
April 24, 2019**

This meeting of the Emerson Environmental Commission was held in the Municipal Building. Chairwoman Stephanie Clark opened the meeting at 7:30 PM. In compliance with the Open Public Meeting Act, the Clerk notified The Record and The Ridgewood News of this meeting and notice was posted in the Municipal Building.

Roll call was taken:

Chairwoman Stephanie Clark	Present
Margaret Boyce	Present
Michael Casey	Present
Pat DiNallo	Present
Kevin Leeds	Absent
Michael Guarriello	Present
Walter Romanski	Present
Kate Stutzel	Present
Councilman Ken Hoffman	Present
Kathryn Haight, Student Liaison	Present

Chairwoman Clark asked if there were any comments or corrections on the minutes of March 27. Ms. DiNallo made a motion to accept the minutes, which was seconded by Ms. Boyce, all were in favor.

BOARD BUSINESS:

Chairwoman Clark opened by addressing the current plans for Earth Week, which kicked off that same Monday. She debriefed the first event, our Community Garden “Planting Party”, that was held on Monday, April 22. She told members that even though there was bad weather, there was a good turnout. The plots were cleaned, and marked with numbers and surnames to help participants find their assigned plot, and instill a sense of accountability in tending to plots throughout the season..

She continued that she had contacted all garden participants to see who would be interested in a “plot share”, as a means to allow those on the current waiting list to participate. Several plots offered to “share”, cutting the plot in half, which made those on the waiting list quite happy. Ms. Boyce thought the ‘plot share’ idea was a good one, mirroring a “buddy” system, making watering and tending to gardens easier during vacations. Ms. DiNallo suggested that the option for ‘plot share’ be added to the 2020 application.

Ms. Boyce told the members that in previous years, the Community Garden gate has been left open several times. Chairwoman Clark noted that not only did all email communications reinforce the importance of properly locking the Garden lock/gate, but it was verbally promoted during the Planting Party opening remarks.

Ms. Boyce then stated that the compost boxes have not been properly tended to; she asked who was in charge of them. Ms. Boyce continued that proper blending and maintenance of the compost boxes is important. She stated that people who are putting “weeds” in the compost are only planting more weeds. Councilman Hoffman briefly reviewed the making of compost.

Chairwoman Clark said that “compost education” would be a part of future Community Garden communications, and proposed that we arrange a tutorial during the next “meet & greet” event in mid-Summer, and more broadly, that we could dive into compost specifics at the May EEC meeting, if needed.

She also stated that the -“first come, first served” method of signing up for the Community Garden would be used moving forward, beginning in 2020. That said, any returnees will NOT be able to request the same plots, all applicants will be assigned at random to ensure fairness and efficiency. Similar to this year, enrollment information would be posted on the Borough website, e-sign and social media. There would be no direct mailing, to avoid costs, or direct email to past participants, to keep the process fair.

Chairwoman Clark then referred back to the previously-proposed leadership assignments that were shared and approved earlier in the year – noting that Ms. Stutzel has been a great asset to the Community Garden, and will serve as the main contact until the end of the season. Ms. Stutzel shared that she was very happy to be involved in the Community Garden this year.

Following the Community Garden debrief, the remainder of Emerson Earth Week was outlined as follows:

- “Storytime at Emerson Library” was scheduled for Thursday, April 25, with Mayor DiPaola scheduled to read “We are the Gardeners”, a new book that was donated by the EEC.
- For Friday, April 26, Emerson Junior-Senior High School will execute its first “Walk to School Day”, with our support and the Emerson Police Department for additional safety measures.
- Emerson’s annual Arbor Day Ceremony would then take place at 12PM, on Saturday, April 27. Chairwoman Clark told the members, she had taken Ms. DiNallo’s suggestion of a flowering tree under consideration and ordered a “Cleveland select flowering pear” tree. Ms. Shust asked for a motion to authorize payment to Forcellati Brothers Inc., for the amount of \$460.00 – which covers the cost of the tree itself, and professional installation.
- . Ms. Boyce made a motion to approve the payment, second by Ms. Di Nallo, all were in favor.
- And lastly, an informal clean-up focused on the Emerson Woods was set for Sunday, April 28. Michael Guarriello will serve as the “Clean-up Captain” and oversee the on-site effort.

To wrap up this section, Chairwoman Clark thanked Margaret Boyce, as co-Captain of the Clean-up, for her work in soliciting volunteers, as well as obtaining donations of refreshments and supplies for the volunteers, ranging from Emerson Starbucks, Liberty Subaru, Emerson Dairy Queen, Emerson Shop Rite and Emerson Stop and Shop.

Ms. Boyce detailed the donations from Shop Rite – water & snacks: Stop and Shop - gift card for the milk/creamer etc. needed for the coffee which was being donated by Starbucks.: Liberty Subaru was donating 200 – 55/gallon bags for trash pickup and Dairy Queen was issuing vouchers for participants. She briefed Mr. Guarriello on the pickup of the various donations.

MEMBER COMMENTARY

For 2020 Earth Week, Ms. DiNallo suggested an activity, like a planting, to accompany our Library activity for the kids. She gained guidance that to plan ahead; the Library organizes its annual calendar of events every fall – so the EEC will be sure to reach out.

Chairwoman Clark asked the members to make note of activity ideas for upcoming years, which would be discussed at a later date.

Ms. Boyce asked about the current Walk to School Day plan, and wanted to know if it was only for the High School. Chairwoman Clark answered yes, explaining that for safety reasons, Walk to School Day was best suited for older students, in which the Board of Education agreed.

Chairwoman Clark told the members that Emerson Earth Week would be fully debriefed at the May meeting, and asked the members to make note of suggestions for improvement/changes/etc.

Also in next month's meeting, she would also like to finalize the line-up of future events for 2019, such as another Walk to School for September or October, another clean-up, and a "Mind Your Curb" project – which would involve residents and local businesses in cleaning up their own part of Emerson, including storefronts/properties,

Ms. Boyce mentioned she would also like to discuss the Emerson Woods at the next meeting, citing the "bridges" that had been constructed in the woods. Councilman Hoffman advised the members that Suez was in the process of removing them, to which Ms. Boyce replied they will just be reconstructed, and felt Suez was weak in enforcement. Councilman Hoffman asked for photos and information in regard to the bridges which can be brought before the Governing Body for possible interaction between the Borough and Suez to maintain a pollution free environment in the woods.

Ms. Boyce stated there is a sign that says "no cycling", but it is continually ignored. Mr. Guarriello also stated there should be better signage regarding the requirement that dogs should be kept on a leash.

Councilman Hoffman stated if there were some publicized offenses in the Emerson Woods, it may deter future violations. He suggested that whenever a violation is seen, the local police should be called.

Chairwoman Clark agreed there is a lot of work to be done to educate residents about the proper use and care of the Emerson Woods, and its about finding a way for everyone to play a role in keeping the woods and environment safe.

Mr. Guarriello told the members he was glad to be working with Ms. Boyce and Councilman Hoffman who were very knowledgeable on the environment. All of the members agreed public awareness has to be intensified to help control pollution in the Emerson Woods, and maintain a safe environment.

Ms. Boyce asked if cooking oil recycling, as being done in Westwood, could be discussed at a future meeting.

Mr. Romanski asked what if anything could/would be done about the pollution that will occur due to the two large construction projects that will be starting soon. Chairwoman Clark noted that she is also now part of the Emerson Land Use Board, so she would stay close to this concern and keep members updated.

Ms. Boyce told the members that there had been a notice posted at Villano School in regard to pesticides and wanted to know what that was about. Councilman Hoffman told the members we had no jurisdiction as far as the Board of Education is concerned. Mr. Guarriello wondered if there was any

health benefit or detriment by using this pesticide.

Chairwoman Clark stated these were all excellent subjects for the May meeting and research will be done offline until the next meeting.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Chairwoman Clark asked for a motion to open the floor to the public, which was made by Mr. Romanski, second by Ms. Boyce, all were in favor. Seeing no public, Ms. Stutzel made a motion to close the floor, which was seconded by Mr. Romanski, all were in favor.

Since there were no other matters to discuss, Chairwoman Clark asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was made by Ms. DiNallo, second by Ms. Boyce, all were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Marie Shust
Commission Secretary