

**MUNICIPAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
BOROUGH OF EMERSON
January 22, 2019**

This meeting of the Emerson Environmental Commission was held in the Municipal Building. Chairwoman Stephanie Clark opened the meeting at 7:35PM. In compliance with the Open Public Meeting Act, the Clerk has notified The Record and The Ridgewood News of this meeting and notice has been posted in the Municipal Building.

Councilman Ken Hoffman gave Michael Guarriello the Oath of Office.

Roll call was taken:

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

BOARD BUSINESS:

Chairwoman Clark asked each of the members present to introduce themselves, their backgrounds and interests,

Ms. DiNallo said she had been born in Emerson, but as a youngster her family moved to Norwood. When she married, she returned to Emerson

Mr. Frassa stated he was a lifelong Emerson resident, his family lived in town since 1897. He is a tree expert and is returning to the Commission after several years absence.

Mr. Guarriello is also a lifelong resident. He is a graduate of Rutgers with principal interest in the ecology. He is currently working for a remediation company.

Mr. Casey graduated Emerson High School and is currently a sophomore in the Community College majoring in science, and looking for inspiration as to how to help clean the environment.

Ms. Clark shared that she moved from Paramus to Emerson several years ago. Her background is in communications and public relations and is looking to help implement methods of maintaining a clean Emerson and environment.

Mr. Ken Hoffman, the Council liaison made mention of some of the items that must be covered in the reorganization meeting. In particular, appointing a Vice-Chair, adopting the calendar, reviewing and accepting the by-Laws of the Environmental Commission and the shade Tree Committee, as well as assuming control of the Shade Tree Committee.

Chairwoman Clark replied she wanted to wait until the next meeting to appoint a Vice-Chair, and wanted time to review the by-laws by each of the members before putting them up for a vote to

accept. Chairwoman Clark continued that there were so many items she would like to cover that she has to prioritize, as well as appoint captains for the various projects that the Commission would schedule.

Chairwoman Clark told the members she would like to appoint Steve Frassa as the Borough Tree Inspector. Ms. DiNallo made a motion to appoint Steve, second was made by Mr. Guarriello. All were in favor.

Chairwoman Clark wants to emphasize the goals of the Commission to educate, engage and evaluate.

Each captain should come to the meetings prepared to give a detailed report of the progress and achievements of their respective projects. She planned to have the appointment of captains made by the next meeting to cover an array of project areas such as Community Garden, woods, etc.

Ms. DiNallo mentioned that Centennial Park and the Woods were ongoing projects with the EEC and the DPW. Chairwoman Clark also recommended scheduling attendance at the Land Use Board meetings. She would like to see at least one member at each Land Use Meeting. She does not expect each member to attend all meetings, but a representative should be at each meeting.

Councilman Hoffman wanted the Commission to review the Ordinances passed in regard to the EEC and Shade Tree, as well as the responsibility of the EEC and Shade Tree for conformance to the tree scape to be planted in block 419, and the rest of the Borough. It is important that the trees in the 10' right of way be approved by the Commission.

Mr. Guarriello wanted to know if there were any forms available for the planting/removal of trees, and list of the trees that should be planted. Councilman Hoffman replied there is a Tree Management form in the Land Use packet, but the information is not always passed along to the EEC. He thought Jill McGuire would be a perfect link between the EEC and LUB on this project. He referred to Chapter 266 for more information. Councilman Hoffman continued that Mike Sartori, Building Supervisor needs to be sure the project conforms to the Tree Management specs before issuing a Certificate of Occupancy.

Councilman Hoffman continued that the current ordinance transferring the Shade Tree to the EEC is very confusing and, on some issues, conflicting. The Tree City specifications need to be reviewed and adhered to, plans need to be made for Arbor Day, and management of replacement trees, and auditing/control of the monies deposited and used in the Tree Escrow funds.

Chairwoman Clark asked about the current requests for inspection of trees by the Borough and the residents. Mr. Frassa has been attending to these requests as they come up, but there is the matter of stipend, as these inspections involve quite a bit of time and research. He had been in contact with the Mayor and is still in negotiation. Some of the requests are 61 Pine Drive where the roots of a tree are cracking the foundation of the home; 320 Grand Blvd, which turned out to be a PSE&G project, 351 Grand Ave, which is a cleanup.

It was noted that the Board of Education is not covered under the same specs as residential or commercial. When asked if the Shade Tree Committee should have a separate meeting date, Chairwoman Clark responded no.

Ms. DiNallo mentioned the Arbor Day planting in the park, she said although she likes all the trees that are planted, she would also like to see some flowering trees.

Chairwoman Clark wanted to cover more of the EEC agenda and projects before returning to the Shade Tree Committee. She reviewed the list of projects from the 2018 agendas and the progress/priority of each. Recycling - Councilman Hoffman referred her to the Administrator and the recycling coordinator.

Chairwoman Clark did not want to pursue the gas fire power project. She went on to plastics and how we could better educate the residents on recycling. Next on the agenda was the idea of hosting an Emerson cleanup which is scheduled for April 22. Mr. Guarriello thought Suez and the Board of Education should be involved in the cleanup of the streams and stream beds. Councilman Hoffman reminded the Commission that approvals are required for cleanup of Suez property. Mr. Guarriello also stated the Board of Education needs to be more proactive in the cleanup of the sports fields, in particular under the bleachers. Chairwoman Clark stated she belongs to a Junior League and thought members would be interested in this type of cleanup project, if more volunteers were needed.

Chairwoman Clark advised the members there was an ANJEC program on March 2, if any one was interested and wanted to register.

Chairwoman Clark then went on to the calendar. She asked to have the Saturday, April 7th "Clean-Up" event removed from the current Commission calendar. She confirmed there are no meetings planned for July and December 2019. If a meeting is required during those months, then a sunshine notice will be issued to advise the public. She then told the members that she had a conflict for the meeting in February and asked to consider a different date. Chairman Clark also wanted the meetings to start at 7:30 pm, like many other Borough Commissions, rather than 7:00 pm. Ms. DiNallo made a motion to accept the date and time changes in the calendar. Mr. Guarriello made a second, all were in favor.

Chairwoman Clark then directed the members attention to the Shade Tree Committee business and asked Councilman Hoffman to bring the members up to date. Councilman Hoffman reminded the members that the Shade Tree Commission had been disbanded in November of 2016. An Ordinance was passed transferring the powers of the Shade Tree Commission to the EEC with all the powers of the original Shade Tree Commission incorporated into the responsibilities of the EEC. He reviewed several of the bullets in the Ordinance as well as some of the conflicts.

Chairwoman Clark asked about the responsibility of the EEC and any liabilities. Councilman Hoffman replied there was no personal liability for any of the members of the commission.

Mr. Frassa said the Shade Tree Committee is responsible for tree survey, tree planting, and contractor quotes, tree removal and tree trimming, as well as emergency response to fallen trees. He told the members that currently, Ace Tree Service of Paramus is the contractor on record, and he has been pleased with the service they provide. He went on to say the residents often complimented him on the choice of Ace and the responsibility they've shown toward keeping properties in good condition. He told the members he had asked Perry Solimando to provide the records of the shade tree actions for the year of 2018

Mr. Frassa then shared the compensation rate his role, currently offered by the Borough. He said he was using his car, gas, time, etc. on an average of 10-15 hours each week and felt the stipend offered by the Borough was not satisfactory.

Mr. Guariello told Mr. Frassa that he would like to ride along with him on his inspections during weekends to learn more about the procedures and inspections. Councilman Hoffman advised the Members that there would have to be a spreadsheet set up, which would normally be maintained by the secretary of the EEC as to requests/complaints, the problem, dates received, dates serviced, resolution. Chairwoman Clark agreed it was clerical responsibility and not inspector responsibility.

Chairwoman Clark reminded the members that we have to work as a team to resolve some of these issues. She wanted to know if there were areas that some of the other members could take on to relieve Mr. Frassa. Councilman Hoffman continued that Mr. Frassa is highly experienced and keeps excellent records.

Chairwoman Clark asked how Ace Tree Service could be locked down as the contractor for the Borough. Councilman Hoffman replied that the contract does have to go out for bid again, which would have to be done through the CFO and Administrator. Mr. Frassa told the members he had no complaints on the work done by Ace or the service. Mr. Guariello wanted to know if the DPW knew what plantings would work in the Borough. Councilman Hoffman told him extensive education was required, which Mr. Frassa already had through experience and training.

Councilman Hoffman said he would check the Ordinances, the budget and the Escrow account for the Shade Tree Committee and report back. He advised the members that 25% of the prior year's budget could be spent even if the current year's budget had not been approved.

Chairwoman Clark wants the Commission to work with Mr. Frassa and his team to create a system of inspection and reports.

Chairwoman Clark asked for a motion to open the floor to the public which was made by Mr. Frassa, second was made by DiNallo, all were in favor. Since there was no one in attendance, Mr. Frassa made a motion to close the floor, second was made by Mr. Casey, all were in favor. The floor was closed.

Since there was no additional business, Chairwoman Clark asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting which was made by Ms. DiNallo, second by Mr. Casey, all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Marie Shust
Commission Secretary