

**MUNICIPAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
BOROUGH OF EMERSON
May 27, 2020**

This meeting of the Emerson Environmental Commission was held virtually on gotomeeting. Chairperson Stephanie Clark opened the meeting at 7:34 PM. In Compliance with the Open Public Meeting Act, the Clerk notified The Record and The Ridgewood News of this meeting and notice as posted in the Municipal Building.

Roll Call was taken:

Chairperson Stephanie Clark	Present
Vice Chairperson Kate Stutzel	Present
Michael Casey	Absent
Michael Guarriello	Present
Matt Helm	Absent
Elizabeth Garis	Absent
Walter Romanski	Present
Eric Shuda	Present
Kathryn Haight, Student Liaison	Present
Grace Whalen, Student Liaison	Absent
Council Brian Gordon	Absent

During the roll call, Ms. Shust stated that she had not been able to get in contact with Ms. Whalen. Chairperson Clark asked Ms. Height what year she was in and if she would be continuing to the end of the year with the Commission. Ms. Haight replied she is going into her Senior Year and would stay until the end of the year.

MINUTES & VOUCHERS:

Chairperson Clark asked the members if there were any comments/corrections on the minutes of the meeting of February 19. Mr. Romanski said the minutes indicate that perennials are now allowed, this should read are *not* allowed. Mr. Romanski made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Second was offered by Vice-Chairperson Stutzel. By roll call vote, all were in favor. Chairperson Clark abstained as she had not been present at that February 2020 meeting.

COMMISSION BUSINESS:

Virtual Earth Week

Due to the quarantine, all of the events planned for Earth Week were postponed. In response, the team created a quick, social media campaign as a way to still engage residents around the celebration of Earth Day.

Chairperson Clark relayed information about the only “live” event, which was the opening of the Community Garden. Plots were quickly assigned to capacity, and safety guidelines – such as wearing a mask within the Garden gates – were shared with registered gardeners via email.

The Chairperson noted she was hopeful that as a Commission, we might be able to resume physical, in-person events for the community in the fall – CDC recommendations pending.

Mr. Romanski told the Commission that during the quarantine he watched a film online on the story of plastics, and that it could compliment the team’s ongoing Single Use Plastics campaign. Mr. Romanski said he would provide the link for the story.

Mr. Shuda asked if the town wide “garage’ sale, originally slated for Earth Week 2020, would be rescheduled. Chairperson Clark said she was hopeful it would be rescheduled, but no decision yet on how to safely host given social distancing recommendations.

Community Garden

Vice-Chair Stutzel announced that since the Mayor and Council had opened the parks, the Garden was able to open, with the stipulations mentioned earlier. She was pleased to announce that all of the plots had been filled. There had been some confusion as to plot assignments, which had been rectified, and there was a pill bug problem with some of the topsoil. To address that issue, the EEC collaborated with Perry to offer an organic spray to those interested.

Chairperson Clark noted that since moving to “half-plots”, we doubled participants and at least a dozen were brand new to the activity. She asked that if anyone noticed a plot not being cared for or underutilized to please let her know.

Mr. Shuda suggested that plots that were not being used should be issued to anyone on a waiting list. Chairperson Clark said all plots were filled, and at the moment, there was no waiting list.

Chairperson Clark also wants the members to keep an eye out at the closing of the Garden in November to be sure each plot is cleaned and not left for the members to do.

Member-Only Clean-up

Chairperson Clark said she would like to know if the members were interested in a day or two for members to team up and clean-up, since a community wide clean-up is difficult during the quarantine.

She asked each member to consider and let her know at the next meeting. She said she thought it would only require a couple of hours. She has all the equipment, bags, gloves, masks needed. In particular she would like to concentrate on high traffic areas like Main Street and Kinderkamack (and not the EWP, with ticks being an issue).

Mr. Shuda asked if she had any dates in mind. He thought August would be too hot and buggy. The Chairperson said she would like to discuss it further at the next meeting and asked the members to come up with some ideas/dates, etc.

Emerson Woods

Chairperson Clark shared the draft “Emerson Woods Preserve PDF Guide” she had been working on. This draft design included placeholder information regarding the Woods, trail markers, safety tips, pet regulations, and dangers included. The end goal would be to finalize this PDF guide, with input from Borough stakeholders, and make available each year on the Borough website.

There was discussion about adding in information regarding the various flora and fauna in the EWP, as well as cartography of the trails, some of which have some markers, such as wood stakes with pink ribbons.

Single Use Plastics

With our written plan submitted to Mayor DiPaola, next steps after Covid restrictions would be to assign the “Educate” and “Engage” Sub-Committees in brainstorming ways to bring this plan to life among Borough stakeholders – meaning residents and local businesses.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Chair asked for a motion to open the floor to the public, which was made by Vice Chair Stutzel, second was offered by Mr. Romanski, all were in favor. Since there were no hands from the public, Mr. Romanski made a motion to close the floor, second was offered by Vice Chair Stutzel, all were in favor. The floor was closed for public comment.

MEMBER COMMENT

Mr. Shuda wondered if, during a future town wide garage sale, certain donated items could be used by the Commission as a fundraiser. The Chairperson said there was a lot of interest in the town wide sale and she hoped it could be rescheduled and would research the idea of a raffle or sale of donated items. She continued that Vice-Chair Stutzel is still the lead on this event.

Mr. Romanski told the commission that there had been an emissions settlement; and wondered if there was an opportunity for the EEC to apply for a grant. He said there was a deadline of June 22 to apply.

Mr. Romanski also mentioned that a new Master Plan was being presented. Ms. Shust advised the Commission that the Land Use Board was hearing the proposed changes at the meeting of June 4, 2020. Ms. Shust was asked to provide information regarding the meeting and the Master Plan to the members.

Since there was no other business, the Chair asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was made by Vice-Chair Stutzel, second was offered by Mr. Guarriello, all were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
M. Marie Shust, Secretary