

The November 2008 meeting of the Oakland Environmental Commission was called to order at 7:50 P.M. by Chairman Lee Haymon. Members present were Mike Kozak, Nancy Krause, Mike Lynch, Eric Kamm, Darren Ward, Al Lo Pilato, Councilwoman Betsy Stagg and Mayor John Szabo were also present. Robert Akovity was visiting as an interested party as advisor to the Valley Middle School's Future City program.

New Business - Mayor Szabo was present to inform us on upcoming programs of the League of Municipalities concerning municipal involvement in sustainable energy usage and conservation. He advised the Commission to look at the League's "Toolbox" website for activities and grants: http://www.njslom.org/Green_Future_committee.html

He asked the Commission what plans it has to be involved in local environmental issues. The following issues were mentioned:

1. Increase in recycling as a means to limit carbon-footprint and reduce solid-waste costs for all taxpayers. Also High School Seniors need community service time with such possible projects.
2. Community-wide Environmental Conference - Green Communities awareness – Chamber of Commerce is planning a conference for January according to Betsy Stagg who will speak there.
3. Acquisition of Open-space properties for preservation and environmental protection.
4. Involvement of IHHS and Valley Middle School through discussions with Superintendents. Lee Haymon and Mike Kozak will attend a meeting with the Mayor and School Superintendents.
- 5 March 2009 Conference in Council Chambers to be broadcast on Channel 77.
6. April 2009 - Green Carnival in honor of Earth Day. Mayor will contact Maplewood for advice.

Minutes - The minutes of the October meeting were accepted as printed.

Budget Status – Any outstanding bills in need of reimbursement should be given to the secretary. Any future request for expenditures needs to be pre-approved by the administrator. Lee Haymon will submit the request for 2009 funding.

Old Business –

1. Grants – The mayor requested a copy of the trail grants submitted in 2007 before the December 15 meeting. A trail-grant for the Tamarack and Todd properties could be used for a clean-up and trails there.
2. Reusable Bags - Mark wrote: "I contacted ANJEC in the hopes of finding out about some potential grant money to help us purchase the bags. They provided some suggestions including contacting Linda Morehouse who is the County Coordinator of the NJDEP Clean Communities Grant Program. Linda told me that the program does not give out the type of "seed" money we were looking for to purchase the bags. However, it turns out that their program looks for items or projects like this to fund on a county level and they may be able to provide us with 100-200 bags to get us started. Additionally, the County gives out mini grants for things like town clean-ups and Oakland has received such grants in the past. The local coordinator of that program happens to be Eugene McMahan, the borough's recycling coordinator. Coincidentally Judith Vihonski contacted me to tell me that two students were interested in helping out with the bag program. I know in the past the YES organization sponsored some town clean-ups so perhaps we could work with them to sponsor their next one in the Spring. Arrangements could be made to split the mini grant, which usually runs in the range of \$300." He needs to get back to Linda about possibly getting the batch of 100-200 bags which we could give out at the next Town Picnic. (Ostapczuk)

3. Open Space Inventory – Mayor asked us to decide which open-space property is most in need of acquisition, as funds are not available to purchase Pinnacle and Heritage Hill along with the purchase of the New Jersey Capitol property off of Breakneck Rd. The Open-space Trust question passed at the recent election, but funds are still limited. Heritage Hills can offer boating and other recreation. Pinnacle would create a green belt preservation area.

A vote was taken of the Commission members as to which property they support. The Heritage Hills property (with swimming pool) off of Doty Road was unanimously considered Oakland's property to be considered for acquisition next.

Currently the land use restrictions of the Highlands versus the requirements of COAH in Oakland are being debated in the courts along with other N.J. Highlands towns.

Planning Board/Board of Adjustments –

Ropper, LLC downtown housing development project is scheduled for a meeting in January 2009. No other major plans have been discussed recently.

New Business – Commission members

1. Composting – Receiving recycling bins from County could be a project for the YES group. 3-bin trash containers for public disposal have been seen in downtown Hackensack. Hackensack will be contacted for information on savings from separating public refuse.
2. Cool Communities – Mike Kozak and Nancy Krause will look for ways to present “Low-Carbon Diet” information to residents according to the book by David Gershon. Information is on the website: <http://www.empowermentinstitute.net/lcd> . Mike Kozak is looking for a situation to hold a ‘Cool Communities Café’ meeting to discuss residential and business conservation. Nancy Krause plans to hold a ‘Cool Communities Café’ at her church early next year.
3. Water Bottles – Al Lo Pilato suggested informing school children about the advantages of using permanent drinking containers versus disposable bottles. Discussion ensued regarding pros and cons, and possibility of involving students in such a project.
4. Other items – Possibility of listing household items residents want to exchange as a way to reducing solid waste sent to landfill was discussed. “Craig’s List” website was mentioned. A green-rating Borough sign at town entrance points could encourage business awareness of staying environmentally friendly.
5. Mike Kozak contacted Administrator Kunz and Recycling Coordinator MacMahon about the upcoming solid-waste contract negotiations for 2009 and wants to discuss possible public increase in waste disposal sites and possibilities for recycling, etc.
6. Visitor Akovity mentioned the ‘We-can-change-the-world-challenge’ from Siemens which uses local school groups. http://www.generation21.siemens.de/generation21/deutschland/index_en.jsp
7. Mayor Szabo will invite representatives from Maplewood to the December 2 meeting to help us prepare for the Environmental Conference and/or the Green Carnival.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 P.M. Minutes submitted by Jerri Angermueller - Secretary