

BOROUGH OF OAKLAND
Sustainable Oakland Green Team
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

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November 28, 2023 – 7:30 p.m.

The Regular Meeting of the Borough of Oakland Sustainable Oakland Green Team opened on Tuesday November 28, 2023, at 7:33 p.m. in the Oakland Senior Center, 20 Lawlor Drive, Oakland, N.J. 07436.

ROLL CALL: Present: Chair Alison Fleeson, Brian Reilly, William Eilert, Steve Panosian, Ron Petherbridge, Council Liaison Eric Kulmala, SOGT Secretary Laura Saunders.

Absent: Andrea Levy and Carrie Terwilliger.

On motion of Mr. Reilly, seconded by Mr. Eilert, all absent members are excused.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

Chair Alison Fleeson opened for public comment.

Jodi Goffredo of 44 Sioux Avenue, Oakland asked the members of the Sustainable Oakland Green Team for their support in challenging Bergen County's proposal of instituting a Construction Recycling Plant in Oakland. Ms. Goffredo asked the Board members to consider attending an open floor meeting on December 19, 2023, at 6:00p.m. in Little Ferry, so they can see the faces of the people who signed the petition against the proposal. Ms. Goffredo mentioned the residents on Pool Hollow are very upset and are asking for everyone's support. Ms. Fleeson clarified this meeting is not the hearing which is scheduled for the 28th. This meeting is in front of the Board, then the Board makes a recommendation to the County Commissioner to change the solid waste management plan. The facility then must go to the town and get town approvals. Ms. Goffredo then thanked everyone for their time.

On motion of Mr. Reilly, seconded by Mr. Eilert, the meeting was closed for public comment.

OLD BUSINESS

SUSTAINABLE JERSEY UPDATE:

Mr. Kulmala, Ms. Levy and Ms. Fleeson attended the League of Municipalities and accepted the Silver Award for achieving 420 points in 2023. Oakland was also included in last year's Creativity and Innovative Award for their role in Creative Bergen. Ms. Fleeson emailed the Board information on towns which get the greatest number of points. An example given was Woodridge who had 1165 points and reached Gold Certification. It was noted they are a town of 40,000 people and their Green Team is made up mostly by the town administration. Mr. Reilly asked if that changed their access to grants. Ms. Fleeson stated it does not. Ms. Fleeson asked the Board to look through the materials she distributed to see if there are any programs Oakland can add.

FIRST SUNDAY HIKES:

The First Sunday Hikes are scheduled for December 4th and January 1st. The meeting location is on Skyline Drive in the lower lot.

COMMUNITY GARDEN CLEANUP:

It was discussed that a Community Garden cleanup needs to take place before it snows. If Ms. Terwilliger cannot organize the cleanup, then Ms. Fleeson suggested that maybe she and Mr. Eilert could do it. Ms. Fleeson is going to reach out to everyone who had a plot and tell them to clean it up. Ms. Fleeson mentioned the Garden donated about 100 pounds of food this year to Ponds Reformed Church, and the donations were very well received.

COMMUNITY SOLAR:

Mr. Petherbridge reached out to Rockland Electric who hasn't provided much help. Mr. Petherbridge also went to the Altice website to get more information. Ms. Fleeson clarified that she sent information from PSE&G which is a little different than Altice. Mr. Reilly explained that he is in the process of setting up community solar with Altice and is waiting to find out if he's eligible. He will let the Board know what happens. Mr. Petherbridge said he would resolve with Altice anything that needs to be done. There is a town ordinance template on the Sustainable Jersey site. Councilman Kulmala will run it past the Borough Attorney when it's ready. Ms. Fleeson said Sustainable Jersey advises that the Borough Administrators work directly with the power company about becoming an outreach partner. She will talk with Mr. Kunze about getting the ordinance passed supporting the initiative of community solar. Ms. Fleeson mentioned Oakland should be done soon in case the power company maxes out on the number of people who are eligible to participate.

HOLIDAY LIGHTS:

Ms. Fleeson explained the holiday lights recycling program is up and running and is being advertised on the LED sign in front of Borough Hall. She went to the collection points, Ace and the tree retailer at Copper Tree Mall, and the bins were filling up. Ms. Fleeson will check with Kevin at the DPW to ask for help collecting and storing the recycled lights.

NEW BUSINESS:**NEW LIBRARY COORDINATOR:**

Kerri Wallace introduced herself as the new Programming Librarian at the Oakland Library working with adult programs. She wants to get involved with anything to do with nature and the environment. It was discussed how the library and the SOGT recently shared the screech owl program. Ms. Fleeson talked about community education as an outreach done as a town. The SOGT needs a wildlife interaction plan to get points. Ms. Wallace explained that the theme for the summer reading program is Adventure Begins at your Library. Lots of outdoor and environmental themes that the SOGT can get involved with. Ms. Fleeson mentioned the SOGT would like to do some gardening education in the Community Garden. A discussion ensued about seed collections and pollinator gardens. It was mentioned there is also a pollinator garden at Great Oak Park. Ms. Wallace said she would share anything related to the Green Team on the Library's Instagram and Facebook pages.

REPAIR IT CAFÉ:

Ms. Fleeson and Ms. Levy have been trying to put together a Repair Café in Oakland for the last couple of years. Ms. Wallace informed the Board that the library can join Repair Café for \$80 and they do all the advertising etc. She also clarified there is plenty of space at the Library for the Café. Both parties agreed to looking into doing it in the spring, potentially

on the weekend for 4 hours. Ms. Fleeson suggested that Ms. Wallace, Ms. Levy, Mr. Petherbridge, and herself all meet separately to work out details.

GREEN FAIR:

Ms. Fleeson talked about doing another Green Fair which worked well last year in conjunction with the FLOW film festival. She recognized more time is needed for advertising the Fair. Committee planning for the film festival starts in January.

ROOTS FOR RIVERS @ ROOSEVELT MAINTENANCE:

Ms. Fleeson mentioned the Board needs to pick some dates in early spring around April, to clean up Roosevelt and Great Oak Park.

PLANT SALE:

Ms. Fleeson would like to do a plant sale again with the Shade Tree Commission. Need to get organized early to get plants sold and get the remaining plants planted in the ground.

CRAYON/MARKER RECYCLING:

Ms. Fleeson explained last time they held a recycling program, crayons were not recycled very much, but markers did well. The SOGT would like to bring back crayon recycling in the spring. Mr. Petherbridge researched tennis ball recycling but there were issues with the shipping boxes and paying for the service. Ms. Fleeson will look through recycling programs done by Woodridge to see if there are any cost-effective programs they do.

SOGT UPDATED MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2024:

Need to change the meeting schedule to the fourth Thursdays of every month except August & December, to be held at 7:00p.m. at the Oakland Senior Center, as follows:

January 25
February 22
March 28
April 25
May 23
June 27
July 25
September 26
October 24
November 21

ALL IN FAVOR.

SOGT MISC.:

Councilman Kumala mentioned the Mayor and Council will be moving an ordinance forward to make the Sustainable Oakland Green Team a standing committee within the Borough. Ms. Fleeson reminded the Board members they all need to submit their Citizen Leadership forms for next year. Mr. Petherbridge brought up that there is another form regarding an ordinance change about health and safety that needs to be submitted to Borough Hall as well. Ms. Fleeson will send the form around to the rest of the Board.

ADJOURNMENT:

On motion of Mr. Reilly, seconded by Mr. Eilert, the meeting is adjourned.

ALL IN FAVOR.

Adjourned: 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Saunders', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Laura Saunders
SOGT Secretary