



The Borough of Highland Park
Sustainable Highland Park
County of Middlesex, New Jersey
P.O. Box 1330
HIGHLAND PARK, NEW JERSEY
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Date: May 28, 2021

Subject: Sustainable Highland Park Minutes, May 26, 2021 via Zoom

Attending Members:

Tina Weishaus-Chair, Allan Williams-Vice Chair, Irene Chan Marx, Wendy Rosen, Paul Sauers

Council Liaison: Phil George

Attending Non-Member Residents: Don Stern, Ellen Whitt, Mark Lesko

Guest: Lauren O'Brien

- 1) Lauren O'Brien, NJ Campaign Director of Pay Up Climate Polluters, spoke about her organization's post card campaign urging Governor Murphy to file a lawsuit on behalf of New Jersey against major fossil fuel companies to take responsibility for polluting and pay their fair share of damages and costs of resiliency needed at present.

Action: Lauren will send info on how to participate in the post card campaign.

- 2) Butterfly weed project-Irene gave away many butterfly weed plants at the Farmers Market on April 30 and May 7. Some leftover plants were given to the Meadows Trail Crew. The remainder will be given to the HP Native Plant Reserve and Everyone's Farm members and schools. The table was shared with members of EF. About 35 people signed up to be on SHP and EF mailing list. Allan sent emails to those who signed up offering an opt out before adding them to the SHP and EF mailing list.
- 3) Everyone's Farm-Wendy discussed the possibility of working with students in the summer on community service projects; increase visibility of EF in the SHP website by posting photos/videos of members' projects; setting up a discussion group where members can interact with each other; posting on Facebook; installing signage around town as teaching stations. Wendy has not heard from Main Street HP on whether EF can have a table at the Farmers Market.

- 4) Diversity-Tina brought up the lack of diversity in the borough's committees. The planning/zoning boards need better representation and that is a priority for the Borough because of the power of those committees.

For SHP it is important to have relationships with residents in areas of town (near Edison, Cedar Lane, apartments) not typically represented to share different points of view, address their needs, ideas, concerns and complaints.

- 5) Government Energy Aggregation Ordinance-Tina reported the proposed ordinance has been finalized removing the benchmarks for each year to 2030 because Gabel and Associates disagreed with it. Instead it was decided to put the goal of 100% renewables by 2030. The borough is looking to partner with Edison to implement this program and would be the lead agency. We would have to agree in the Memorandum of Understanding that we aim to reach 100% by 2030.
- 6) Plastic bag ban-Tina reported the borough would again place a ban on plastic bags in July 1, 2021 when there will be a fee/charge of 10 cents for paper bags. Tina will work with Emma on updating signage for reinstatement of our Municipal Ordinance.

The State Law banning plastic and paper carry out bags will take effect in May 4th 2022. SHP will do community wide education, including providing signage for businesses alerting customers this mandate is from the state.

- 7) Cleanups-Tina discussed partnering with other organizations for river cleanups.
- 8) Phil's report-there will be more electric vehicles in the borough. New construction/buildings will be electric vehicle friendly with built in wiring. There is a need to ensure those living in apartments and other dwellings without a driveway/garage can access charging stations.
- 9) Ellen Whitt- proposal of second gas power plant in Woodbridge
The power plant, if constructed, will emit pollutants including, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides which will travel to nearby towns including Highland Park and increases health dangers of respiratory disease. Phil George asked for a fact sheet for the Borough to consider writing a letter of concern or resolution to the DEP. Wendy who is our liaison to the HP Board of Health will raise signing on to this letter/resolution. Afterwards, the Borough Council may take action on a resolution to oppose the gas power plant construction. **Action:** Ellen will provide fact sheet.

- 10) Don Stern-International Energy Agency Report-get off fossil fuels projects

He requested a resolution for the Borough to request the NJ divest pension funds from fossil fuel funds. Phil suggests that if SHP supports this proposal, then bring up to the borough council for discussion, which can lead passing a resolution. **Action:** Don will provide more details and draft the letter.