



The Borough of Highland Park

Sustainable Highland Park

County of Middlesex, New Jersey

P.O. Box 1330

HIGHLAND PARK, NEW JERSEY

TEL. (732) 572-3400 FAX (732) 732-6006

Wednesday, June 28, 2023

Sustainable Highland Park (SHP) Monthly General Meeting

Highland Park Environmental Center

Hybrid In-Person/Zoom Format

Minutes Taken by Chris Perez, member, in Irene Chan Marx's absence

ATTENDEES:

Tina Weishaus (Chairperson)

Lisa Noss

Rose Delorenzo (Member)

Randy Solomon

Mark Lesko (Member)

Claudia Farber (Member)

Nicole Wines (Raices)

Paul Sauers (Member)

Aaron Todd

Sheree Neese Todd

Irene Riegner (Member)

Matt Hersh (Council Liaison)

Nadia K

Jack Burr

Kevin Dougherty

Chris Perez (Member)

AGENDA:

1) Welcome

2) Nicole Wines from Raices introduction on stewarding the EC

3) Council Liaison report

4) Brief Announcements - Woodbridge campaign, Stop Burning Fossil Fuels on Sun Sept 17

5) Developing subcommittees to be more effective - discussion

*Clean Ups

*Farmers Market Tabling

*Adopt-a-Drain Committee

*Native Plantings, rethinking landscapes

- 6) Social Media Committee
- 7) Children's programming Committee
- 8) Outreach Committee - to Triangle, to apartment complex owners, by neighborhood
- 9) Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) benefits and energy efficiency and emissions reduction education

- 10) Composting Committee - Advocating for Middlesex County to have a facility
- 11) Leaf blowers Committee (?)
- 12) Policy - Legislation Committee (?)
- 13) SHP Orientation Committee (?)
- 14) Additional Ideas

MEETING MINUTES:

1) Welcome and introductions around the table

2) Nicole Wines from Raices introduction on stewarding the Highland Park Environmental Center (EC)

- Raices to begin stewardship of the EC building for arts, history, ecology programming
- Borough to maintain EC grounds
- Raices to maintain a programming calendar and procedure for scheduling public events on request, with advance notice
- Sustainable Highland Park meetings to be held in the EC

3) Council Liaison report

- Nothing to report
- Discussion: Members shared examples of council liaison updates that would benefit SHP

● Example given: Grants applied for and received (ANJEC HP Trails \$1500 grant)

- Action Item: Future reports of relevant information to SHP to be made by email

4) Brief Announcements - Woodbridge campaign, Stop Burning Fossil Fuels on Sun Sept 17

- Upcoming Woodbridge Fossil Fuel Rally (Borough passed ordinance in opposition to the plant)

○ March to End Fossil Fuels (NYC), September 17, 2023

Discussion:

● Can something be organized locally?

(a) Green Faith

● Sept 17 is during Rosh Hashanah

○ Arts In the Park, September 10, 2023

Irene Reigner submitted an application on behalf of SHP to table

● Action Item: will need SHP staffing for the table

● Discussion: How should SHP generally table at events?

(a) i.e. programming, activities, outreach materials

5) Developing subcommittees to be more effective

○ Can creating subcommittees on general topics and interest areas AND specific projects improve the growth, direction, and sustainability of SHP?

○ How should subcommittees be organized:

i) Organizational/administrative, ex. Communications, outreach

ii) Topic based, ex. Composting, Energy, Policy

iii) Program, project, or action based, ex. Adopt a Drain, Children's programming

○ Should there be a subcommittee meeting between general meetings?

○ Examples given of existing working groups around particular events and initiatives:

i) Clean Ups

ii) Farmers Market Tabling

iii) Adopt-a-Drain Committee

iv) Native Plants/sustainable home landscaping

6) Social Media/Communication: Chris P., Lisa N reported on social media and communication

initiative:

○ Chris P., Lisa N., and Meli S. met in June to discuss SHP communication goals and strategies:

i) Goal: Reach more residents by cultivating audiences by increasing regular posting on existing social media accounts (Facebook/Twitter, and 300 members email list)

● Build up a bank (google drive or email account) of content created by SHP members for posting including:

- (a) Evergreen content (good for posting anytime)
- (b) Event Announcements
- (c) Special features
- Discussion:
 - (a) Recent website improvements have led to a significant increase in web traffic
 - (b) Social media content and audience interaction is a way to tie current SHP programming and mission together with outreach goals

7-14) New subcommittee ideas and other working groups:

- Outreach Committee
 - i) Ex. Karsey (Molimock-Graff) Park plant giveaway
 - ii) Reach new audiences, encourage growth
 - iii) Organize district meetings to reach specific geographical and demographical areas
 - iv) Orientation information for new or interested participants
 - v) Empower participants to be able to accomplish a goal
- Children's Programming
 - i) Plan a monthly children's/family activity
 - ii) Use HP Environmental Center building
 - iii) Collaborate with HP Public Library
 - iv) Interested: Irene, Mark, Sheree, Rose
- Sustainable Jersey Funding
 - State, Local, National Policy updates
 - i) Ties into understanding Borough legislation initiatives
- Stormwater Management
 - i) Educate HP residents on existing regulations and Borough efforts
 - ii) Make stormwater messaging from SHP more coherent
- Dealing with SHP meeting efficiency
 - i) Agendas, updates, and discussion tangents
 - ii) Ties into adding subcommittee meetings to streamline general meetings
- Aligning and Understanding SHP Plans and Goals
 - i) Develop strategic plan / annual plan
 - Action Item: Schedule a planning meeting - 6 months or annual?
 - ii) Set 3-4 goals with budgets (approx. \$2,000 annually)
 - iii) Focus on several Sustainable Jersey Actions
 - Visit Sustainable Jersey website
 - (a) Review HP certification report
 - (b) Review available actions
 - Suggestion: break SJ actions into big picture/little picture to develop projects for SHP participants

- Action Item: Review SJ actions for July meeting
- Action Item: Form interest groups (committees)

Lisa/Tina: To draft interest group list

- Action Item: Follow-up on public meeting requirements for ad-hoc group meetings

- Alternative Energy
- Urban Container Growing/Gardening
- Pollinator Attraction/Protection