



## ***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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### **Sustainable Highland Park**

**July 24, 2024**

Attendees: Chris Perez (guest chair for meeting), Tina Weishaus, Claudia Farber, Lisa Noss, Irene Marx, Meli P., KT Ho-Nguyen (new), Irene Riegner

### **Meeting Agenda**

1. Introductions
2. Approve [June Meeting Minutes](#) - Lisa
  - a. Approval process for future meeting minutes:
    - i. Lisa to take notes in a Google doc (saved in the SHP Google Drive)
    - ii. Lisa to make minor edits after the meeting and then share the Google doc with everyone who attended the meeting in comment mode within 24 hours of the meeting
    - iii. Lisa will email everyone who was at the meeting and give them a deadline of 1 week after the meeting to make suggestions to minutes (in comment mode in the Google doc)
    - iv. Lisa to add the comments
    - v. Minutes formally approved at next month's meeting
    - vi. Tina to ensure they are added to the website
  - b. June minutes approved by everyone at the meeting
3. Borough Report - Matt Hersh (unavailable this month)
  - a. Redevelopment Response Update
    - i. Chris to ask Matt to provide a July update via email (email sent 7/25)
    - ii. Tina: We will put out SHP's position on the redevelopment plan. We will write this in the next few months and be in touch with Teri Jover from the Borough if necessary.
    - iii. Borough has not been responsive to Meli's sustainability questions.
      1. Does the contractor, Garden Homes, have any environmental certification?
      2. Did the boro submit the grant for electric buses (school buses, buses for seniors)?
4. Schools Report - Meli
  - a. School completed the farm bot, just need to get an electric plug
  - b. New principal is very delighted with the garden concept
  - c. Rose & Meli meeting with principal on Monday

- d. Rose & Meli are approved as “substitute teachers” to help with sustainability efforts
- e. There was a sustainability club at the high school in the past for 30 years!? How can Meli get in touch with anyone who was part of it to learn more about the history of the club?
  - i. Newspaper archives?
  - ii. Irene M. believes Hailey Conrad started the club (more recently) ?
  - iii. Meli to email current principal to find out more info about history of club
- f. We don't know the budget yet for the high school environmental club. Need this info before creating a curriculum
- g. Want the environmental club to support SHP activities (ex: volunteer time slots for the HS & they get volunteer hours that they need for school)
- h. New swag to display at Farmers Market table: Sustainable soccer ball & rubik's cube
- i. Is there an additional liaison / parent for the environmental club? Ex: Mark
  - i. Irene M. - maybe a Board of Ed member can be a liaison to the club?
- j. What is the difference between the HS. environmental club & Green Team?
  - i. Environmental club
    - 1. A club at the high school for HS students. Meli & Rose are members of the district's green team & now that they are “substitute teachers” they will be able to apply for grants and help the environmental club at the HS
  - ii. Green team
    - 1. Currently it is mostly teachers who work in the district. They are appointed. They maintain the rain gardens, for example. There is not so much interaction with the students.
    - 2. But anyone can be a member of the school green team (not only faculty or parents). You can participate in helping the green team get points for Sustainable Jersey actions
    - 3. **To maintain the Sustainable Jersey silver status for HS & bronze status for the district, we need a more proactive approach.** We now have a limited budget to support the HS
    - 4. In 2016 Irene M. helped form the Green Team in the high school (which consisted of the principal, environmental club advisor, Irene and 2 environmental club students). The Green Team completed sustainable actions that resulted in being awarded bronze certification with Sustainable Jersey for Schools.
    - 5. More info from Irene M:

*From Sustainable Jersey for Schools Green Team Action:*

## **School Green Team**

*If a school green team is formed, the school principal will formally establish and appoint members for their school green team. The principal will also need to invite the building union leadership of the individual school to appoint up to two (2) members to serve on the school green team. Other important team members could include representatives from the school administration, teachers, school nurses, facility managers, custodians, food services, educational support staff, students, student organizations, parents, parent-teacher organizations, and community organizations engaged in the school along with representatives from the business community.*

*In diverse school communities, the formation of the team is a prime opportunity to expand inclusion. Aspiring to create a green team that reflects the overall demographics of the school community is the optimal goal.*

Thoughts from Irene M: With a new HS principal and new environmental club advisors (Meli and Rose), **this is a great time to establish a new green team with an eye on fulfilling the requirements/actions for recertification.**

5. Website Grant Update - Claudia/Lisa
  - a. We have a grant for \$2,000 to hire someone to redesign the SHP website
  - b. The plan is to have it done by March
  - c. Lisa & Claudia met with Teri from the borough & went over the action plan & deliverables/dates.
  - d. We don't need a formal RFP but we are creating a request for applications. When it is done we will advertise it on our channels
  - e. We have been looking at website examples. Thank you to everyone who has emailed us examples of websites you like & also shared feedback.
  - f. **If you have feedback about our current website (sustainablehighlandpark.com) and/or examples of websites you like, please email Lisa and Claudia**
6. Park Partners (Native plants) update and plan - Chris
  - a. We won the competitive Park Partners grant from the Highland Park borough to give away native plants. We had a great giveaway in June.
  - b. We are planning a second giveaway in September and looking to tie that into a time we are tabling (ex: Arts in the Park)
  - c. The other part of the grant is programming around native plants (ex: inviting someone to speak)
  - d. **Chris is going to email the group (this week) to see who is interested & plan a meeting for early August to finalize the giveaways/other events**
7. Rain Garden inspection report - Mark (Chris giving the update)
  - a. Mark & Chris met with HP council president Matt Hersh & Teri Jover, Borough Administrator, about inspecting the rain gardens & putting together a report on what they need to be better
  - b. Mark was trained by Rutgers in green water infrastructure & that is Chris' area of expertise
  - c. The plan is to have this report done by the end of the summer

- d. Want to tie planting native plants in the rain gardens into the Park Partners grant
  - e. Also received all the engineering plans from the borough for these gardens & Chris has reviewed them
  - f. **Check out the garden at the library on North 5th to see a cool rain garden!**
8. Upcoming events - Save the date!
- a. National Night Out - Thursday, August 15, 6-9pm at Bartle School parking lot
    - i. Police event. It's fun. There's a DJ, games, etc
    - ii. It pulls in a different group of Highland Park residents from different neighborhoods.
    - iii. Can give away folding bags as swag
    - iv. Can we give away plants?
      - 1. Have people register for plants & give them away at Arts in the Park / Yard sale. Gather email addresses at National Night Out.
    - v. **Need people to help table**
      - 1. Tina
      - 2. Irene Marx
      - 3. Meli
      - 4. Lisa (second half)
  - b. Arts in the Park - Sept 8
    - i. Thinking about distributing native plants
      - 1. Volunteers
        - a. Meli
  - c. Town-wide Garage Sale - Sept 14 & 15
    - i. Tour of gardens
      - 1. Need to ask Century 21 if tours of gardens can be added to map
      - 2. Can post on Facebook & ask if anyone would like their front lawn to be added to our "Pollinator Path"
        - a. Might need to pre-vet people to see who actually has a native plant garden
      - 3. To make it easier we can have it just be front lawns so the homeowners don't need to be home. If they are home they can volunteer to give tours if they want.
    - ii. And/or: table at farmers market parking lot & give away native plants
      - 1. Maybe we only table part of each day
  - d. Irene to look up how much tablecloth costs (\$135). Chris to ask Harry if we can use the Park Partners grant to buy a tablecloth for tabling
  - e. **Chris to email & ask about volunteering at each of these**
9. Programming group
- a. Establishing the programming team and schedule
  - b. **Chris to email about a meeting in early August**
10. New Ideas
- a. Garden tours either as stand-alone program or part of Highland Park Yard Sale

- i. Need to be in touch with people from native plant giveaway who said they have nice gardens
- b. Lawn certification medallions
  - i. Might not have budget for it now
- c. Social media
  - i. SHP expand reach & post on Instagram
  - ii. KT & Lisa to connect about social media
  - iii. Work with Meli to get content from HS club
- d. Cooking oil recycle drive for October (Meli)
  - i. Would get us at least 10-20 Sustainable Jersey points
- e. Meli can take videos of plants this week - needs location ideas from Chris
- f. Lecture at library (Meli) is a possibility once the HP Library is reopened in the fall.

Minutes submitted by Lisa Noss and approved