



## ***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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SHP Meeting Minutes 10.23.24

Attendees: Claudia Farber, Tina Weishaus, Matthew Hersh, Mark Lesko, Sheree Neese Todd, Joshua Rothberg, Theo Shiffman, KT Ho-Nguyen, Tami Sharma, Irene Marx, Paul Sauers, Rebecca Risman, Irene, Chris Perez, Rose DeLorenzo

1) Introductions

2) Report from Borough Liaison - Matt Hersh

- River Greenway project - Engineer has embarked on the next phase of a feasibility study, doing outreach to relevant state agencies, getting permits, etc. All is still abstract but meetings will be starting in earnest soon.
- Redevelopment - Council did a first reading of the reorganization plan of Tract C. There will be a public hearing at the next council meeting on 11/12 after the planning board checks over the plan. This plan includes some additional properties and will make sure that the zoning conforms to the redevelopment area. Plans are all on the Boro website. Minutes will be available this week.
- Matt pointed the group to Sustainable NJ Actions (<https://www.sustainablejersey.com/actions/>). These are programmatic and legislative efforts local governments can take to accrue points toward certification and which can provide significant grant opportunities for the Boro to meet its sustainable goals.
  - Matt suggested that we may want another committee that would focus on related policy issues and would work with Sustainable Jersey.
  - Tina also urged people to look at the Sustainable Jersey website and the actions that are found there.

*In a follow-up email to the group, Matt added: "I would encourage this group, as a policy committee, either at the end of every year or at the start of the new year, to hold a work session to identify policy and programmatic actions to focus on and I can help navigate those through our agencies, and through the budget and legislative process".*

3) Report from HS Environmental Club and work with Schools - Theo, Rose, Meli

- The environmental club met -
  - They will do composting again
  - SHP is giving clean-up equipment to the HS,
  - SHP hopes to work more closely with H.S. Club.
  - *Thrift store??*

#### 4) Seed Library Update

- The seed library will be housed in the Highland Park Public Library and HS members will be getting involved.
- A proposal to make it a native seed library was discussed. Adding vegetables was also suggested.
- Seeds will need to be collected and put in small envelopes. Irene will order more envelopes and she will give them to people who have collected seeds to put them in the envelopes. There are videos on youtube about how to collect seeds.
- Irene, Sheree, and Rose are the people to contact about the seed library

#### 5) Reflections on Native Plant Grant, looking to the future - Chris

It was a great Sustainable Sunday 11/20 at the Native Plant Sanctuary. Many SHP and community folks dropped by to get plants and to volunteer. There was even a dolphin sighting. Activities: (1) native plant giveaway with about 67 plants leftover from grant, (2) clean up led by Mark in the sanctuary (47 lbs trash were collected and 13 people participated). (3) Tour by Andy Warren - the principal volunteer of the Sanctuary - who led a tour of the Sanctuary. SHP donated 33 plants which were planted there.

This year's native plant program expanded - more giveaways, experimenting with different size plants, and different plants. May conduct a survey of the plants that worked best. Chris discussed developing plans to connect with people who can't plant plants - maybe container plants, planting in public places...other ways to connect with renters.

#### 6) Social Media idea and Slack info - KT

KT and Lisa set-up Slack for holding conversations. KT shared a view of Slack and described it. She will invite more people to join Slack. There is planning underway for social media posts for November with a focus on gratitude. KT would like people to send in suggestions for people, etc. to express gratitude towards.

#### 7) Website grant report - Claudia

There were quite a few applications for a designer/developer to redesign and re-implement the SHP website. Lisa and Claudia selected 2 people to interview, and they judged both to be qualified. They have a local reference for one of them (namely, Rose) and are in the process of getting a reference for the other applicant, who lives in Florida. They'd like to make a decision on which applicant to hire by the end of the month.

#### 8) Discussion of end of year SHP social gathering

Irene M. described last year's successful, zero waste, potluck gathering at the Teen Center and plans for this year were discussed. It could also be held at the Teen Center. The date could be at the regularly scheduled meeting 12/18 or another date. A spreadsheet will be put up for what people can bring. The open house would be open also to people who work with us.

#### 9) Clean-Ups - Mark

Mark is looking for new locations for clean-ups. This has been posted on the website and on social media.

#### 10) Programming Meeting Report and New Ideas - Chris and Tami

- There is an intersection of new programming, waste reduction, and art with recycled materials.
  - Workshops were discussed at the programming meeting and will be followed-up on. The next programming meeting will be 11/11 and a workshop slack channel may be established.
  - Tami talked about waste reduction / community workshops - community led workshops to reduce waste and extend the life of things across categories such as: clothing related; furniture repairs; appliances and tech devices; arts and crafts related workshops with materials people have on-hand; and reducing food waste.
  - Tina raised the issue that re-use is a mindset. Rose spoke to the quilting groups at the Reformed Church and they would assist anyone who was interested in participating.
  - There is an artist who works with recyclable materials who charges \$200/hr. Something that will be followed-up. KT will send out an article about her to the group.
  
- Irene(?) noted that 9 people attended Andy's tour of the Environmental Center on 10/6. Andy could use help at the Sanctuary, which we will follow-up on. He's open to giving more tours.

9) Rain Garden Maintenance Team - Mark

Rain garden maintenance is on hold at the moment.

10) Apartment/Tenant Meeting follow-up - no updates

11) Next Monthly Meeting: Wednesday, November 20 at 7:30pm on Google Meet