

SUSTAINABLE HIGHLANDPARK



June 25, 2025 - Meeting Minutes

Hybrid Meeting - 7:30pm – 9:00pm

In Person – Boro Hall (downstairs meeting room)

Google Meeting Information - <https://meet.google.com/ibq-yymb-zhf>

Call Meeting to Order

Roll Call :

Rose, Mark, John, Laura, Ellen, Meli, Matt, Claudia, Tami, Irene M., Allison, KT, Lisa, Irene R. Randy

Topics Discussed

- Committee Updates
 - Programming Updates – Tami (~ 15- 20 min)
 - **Next Meeting is July 14th.** *Meetings are currently on the 2nd Monday of every month.*
 - **Skill sharing series:**
 - We have 18 community members wanting to volunteer various skills.
 - *This program enables stand-alone events throughout the year.*
 - We need volunteers willing to reach out and coordinate events with the people who have filled out our interest form.
 - Tami has resources on how to work through the event planning process
 - ***If we want to continue hosting events through this series, we'll need more folks' support in outreach.***
 - Past events: food waste reduction, turning your lawn into a food garden.
 - **Future Event Ideas:**
 - Leveraging summer events like Parkstock, Night Out, to do more outreach / tabling.
 - First Parkstock event is July 17th – too early for us to plan something but ***we should get a conversation started about who can volunteer for tabling at the summer events.***
 - Meli has many materials from the tables at the Earth Day Fair for anyone who volunteers to table at the summer events.
 - Claudia proposed a **rain garden tour** – we can either highlight a few rain gardens near each other, or do a neighborhood walking tour.
 - Meli would like to get a head start on reserving space at the library for winter speakers.
 - We have many members in our community who can speak to many topics. The biggest challenge is being able to reserve space at the library.
 - There was something similar done a while back where winter speaker events occurred from Nov-Feb.

- There's an official application process for reserving library space *and* we need to also get approval from boro for planned events.
- Will resume planning this in **August**. Anyone interested/know someone who could speak should reach out / keep this in mind.
- **Strategic advertising:**
 - **Would like to expand the spreadsheet documenting potential flying locations** (and instructions for posting flyers).
 - **Would also like folks to volunteer to distribute flyers in specific locations** on the list that they frequent (so that one person doesn't have to visit every location across town in one go).
 - *The priority is spaces that get heavy foot traffic.*
 - Tami will send out the spreadsheet for people to share any spaces that are missing from the list **and are not managed by the boro.*
- **Making Programming meetings public** (formally)?
 - Matt: in order to make meetings public like the monthly general meetings, we would need to bring it up at the end of year – it's an annual process.
 - We can continue the current meeting procedure and extend invites to new volunteers etc ad-hoc.
- Meli: someone has a small plot of land that they want SHP to use for planting a rain garden or micro-garden.
 - There are some restrictions in place, Matt will follow-up
- Clean and Green Weekend – June 7 & 8, 2025 – Tami
 - Saturday was a clean-up followed by the giveaway.
 - Sunday was a giveaway with a meadows trail tour towards the end.
 - It was a successful and busy event. Many folks registered in advance.
 - About ⅓ who registered for the Native Plant Giveaway did not show up, but the walk-ins who came for the clean up or meadows tour, made up the difference.
 - Was hard to coordinate this event with SWAC (conflict of dates) but we will look for other opportunities to cross-collaborate. Maybe cycling to a clean-up?
 - Feedback from attendees indicates that Flyers, Facebook, and Bulletin Boards are effective methods of promotion.
 - Clean-up also saw higher foot traffic than the last few events.
 - Although the event was originally supposed to be a separate native giveaway, the discussions in the programming meeting led to this becoming a more integrated event across different engagement opportunities that SHP offers. I.e: community clean-up volunteers and native plant enthusiasts. Would love to see more events where we combine engagement opportunities from different angles together. (resonates with more members of the community & helps make the event successful).
 - Given the success of the Clean and Green Weekend, we might want to consider making it an annual event.
 - One of the attendees asked if they could **donate to SHP / fundraise for us**.
 - Matt: It's allowed but there's a specific process for it. **Matt will need to get back to us.**
- Adding Color to Your Garden with Native Plants:
 - **When:** Thursday, July 17 at 7 pm **Where:** Highland Park Public Library
 - Claudia wants to know if the event will be recorded
 - Irene M. – it might be, and might be hybrid.
- Prioritize of programming for the remainder of the year (not addressed)

- Outstanding Concerns
- Sustainable Jersey Actions and Borough Updates - Matt (~ 5-10 mins)
 - There are 3 sustainable jersey actions that HP wants to focus on (each worth 10 points).
Matt and/or Jake will provide additional detail to Rose/SHP
 - Complete & Green streets policy:
 - Tied to SWAC,
 - Roads are intentionally designed for safe access (like the school cycling routes).
 - Sustainable Land Use Pledge:
 - Mayor/Boro officially pledge to make land use more sustainable.
 - They are also required to have a plan of actions that fall under sustainable development.
 - Diversity on Boards & Commissions:
 - There's a survey for people on boards and commissions to fill out. Was also shared in the SHP discord group.
 -
- Gas Powered Leaf Blower Task Force Update – Mark (~ 1 min)
 - Meeting on Thursday at the library.
 - Now that there's an official announcement of the meeting from the Borough, SHP can share and promote the meeting.
- Park Partners Grant/Rain Gardens Update – Mark, Chris (~ 1 min)
 - Would like to have an event that introduces people to Rain Gardens (needs to happen asap but ideal promotional window is 4 weeks), and before that, 2 weeks at most to plan a day/time/location.
 - First event has to happen before planting begins in the fall. The event could be something educational at the library, and/or a walking tour of rain gardens.
 - Also waiting on the Boro to finish construction. Chris wants to see what kind of weeds they're working with so has asked them not to cut down any weeds.
 - If the portion of the sidewalk on 5th gets backfilled, it'll impact the Rain Gardens.
- Repair Café – Mark and **John** (~ 1-3 min)
 - John connected with the person in East Brunswick that Irene M. knew.
 - Had a successful convo learning about East Brunswick's event and how they set it up.
 - E.B. is registered with the official Repair Cafe network.
 - It's a one time \$60 fee
 - Fee includes informational materials on getting set up
 - You get listed on their network of registered 'cafes'
 - Also get access to their network of other certified groups (great for asking questions/learning from other cafes and getting helpful tips).
 - Registration also gives us access to their pre-written liability release form so that if someone brings an item for repair and it gets broken in the process, we aren't held liable.
 - E.B.'s next repair cafe event is in January – which we could attend to learn from it. There might also be other repair cafes around the area that we can attend sooner than that.
 - E.B. started small (first repairing jewelry at one event), and then expanded on the next event (to include bicycle repairs etc.) → we can follow a similar template – makes it easier to build on momentum rather than having everything ready to go at once.

- Next steps: Put together a contact sheet of folks in the community interested in volunteering their skills.
- Marketing – KT, Tamara (~ 1-5 mins)
 - Moving forward, we **each event that occurs should have a point of contact who provides the following:**
 - Photos,
 - Some #'s or metrics related to the event. Examples:
 - Number of attendees,
 - quantity of ____ collected/diverted etc.
 - A blurb recapping it
 - *Having this info enables us to post recaps on the website, socials, and newsletters.*
 - There's an existing **google drive folder setup by Lisa for event photos**. The point person just needs to create a folder (named after the event) and can share photos in there.
 - There's a **pinned post in Discord** (started by KT) for folks **to start sharing their event recaps**.
 - Irene M. will take pictures for the next event (July 17 – adding color to your garden).
- School Green Team Update - Used Notebook Donation Drive – Rose (~ 1 min)
 - **Used Notebook Donation Drive:**
 - Using Irene M.'s contact at E.B., Rose reached out to their used notebook drive coordinator.
 - The person uses the pages from old notebooks to create new notebooks.
 - 146 books were salvaged from the Middle School/High School used notebook drive,
 - Rose has shared the post-event blurb with Lisa.
 - Rain Barrel Painting w/rec kids (July 15, @ 10:30am), an event coordinated with LRWP and HP Recreation (Heather Fenek and Mason Springer-Lipton)
- Chair Report (~5 – 10 minutes)
 - Budget and Board/Commission/Committee Chair Meeting
 - Procedure: need to submit proposals to the Boro for approval *prior to spending*
 - We've used \$1,184.92 / \$5,200 of our budget (less than 1/4)
 - Use it or lose it (annually)
 - Possible uses:
 - Repair cafe registration fee,
 - Fall events,
 - Tribute to Tina
 - Need to provide a credit card statement in addition to the receipt for reimbursement. Expenses are submitted to Jake Calahan
 - Don't get reimbursed for sales tax.
 - Need to reach out to our liaison for any grant applications.
 - The handbook Rose will be sharing a copy of has more information regarding procedures that boards/commissions and committees need to follow.
 - Go Daddy, A2 hosting, MailChimp
 - Rose and Lisa are working on transferring billing to SHP
 - Monthly newsletter and Sustainability Spotlight
 - People should share their nominations for anyone (or business) doing something sustainable for the Sustainability Spotlight.

- At least 1 or 2 weeks before the newsletter goes out?
 - Lisa has a google calendar invite for people to know when the newsletter submissions are due.
 - Tabling at the Farmer's Market
 - Would like to resume tabling at the market
 - We're required to table from 11-4.
 - Can do it in shifts, but we need folks to , if there is interest sign-up.
- Other Updates (time permitting)
 - Redevelopment Update – Irene R
 - Adopt a Drain or other updates – Irene M
 - Tribute to Tina – Sheree, Rose, Matt and anyone else
 - Community & Apartment Outreach Update
- New Business
 - East Brunswick's recycling initiatives (**Irene M.**)
 - Irene M. reached out to their sustainable team's member
 - They have bins labeled for each group of items that residents can drop off.
Examples:
 - Markers – recycled through terracycle
 - Candles & crayons – re-used in summer camps
 - Notebook page recycling – Good Green Guardian
 - Sneakers – someone picks them up and recycles them
 - Tennis Balls – **an org?** They get repurposed into dog toys or shredded and used for something else.
 - **We can do something similar here in HP.**
 - Irene: need to figure out a location, maybe work with DPW on the location? Or transport?
 - DPW, Matt, and Jake would need to be involved in establishing a centralized location that works, while SHP would coordinate logistics of the actual recycling event.
 - Meli: could explore shorter term events (like the notebook drive) that occur within a set time frame.
 - Tami: likes this idea because it takes away the burden of looking for more permanent spaces to setup collection bins.
 - Rose: we can do a semi-annual collection event (2x a year). Could also coincide with the HPD's expired medicine drive. Maybe we can get permission and set up a collection box near the building?
 - Tami: would even be willing to sign up for a 'shift' to help monitor what people drop off for recycling.
 - Explore something like terracycle's free options & setup drop points
 - Could also hold limited time frame events
 - Arts in the Park – Sunday, September 14th – 11:30am – 4:30pm
 - Need to figure out how we want to participate
 - Someone needs to take the lead on this and notify Main Street HP of SHP's intent to participate
- Open to the Public

Next meeting, Wednesday, July 23rd (hybrid); in person location to be confirmed