ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date/Time:
Monday, August 17, 2026 – 7:45 p.m.

Meeting Location: Zoom and Borough Hall
Join Zoom Meeting:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83530341361?pwd=KOrFhRVkWrvcwTl6QlXKlxIHsYJH6b.1

Open Public Meeting Statement:
Adequate notice of this meeting was provided to the Bergen Record and/or The Ridgewood News, informing the public of the time and place according to the provision of the Open Public Meeting Law (Chapter 231, P.L. 1976)

Roll Call:
Members: Lou Baldanza(P), Lisa De Pellegrini(P), Chairman Robert Hanrahan(P), Mairead Jensen(P), Randall Preston(P), Lisa Skoglund(A), Antonio Vozzolo(A), Michelle Zink-Jojic(P), Planning Board Liaison/Member Joseph Puglisi(P) & Council Liaison Christopher Roche(A)

Approval of Minutes – July 20, 2026 - A motion to approve was made by R. Preston and seconded by L. De Pellegrini.

Meeting Opened to Public Agenda & Non – Agenda Items- A motion to open was made by L. Baldanza and seconded L. De Pellegrini.

Meeting Closed to Public - A motion to close was made by L. Baldanza and seconded by R. Preston.

Communication/Correspondence:

- The EC received confirmation of receipt of the $500 Bergen County Clean Communities Grant award.

New Business:

- Review of Planning Board Submissions – No new submissions for review.

Old Business:

- Community Project Update (Lisa De Pellegrini)
    - Community Butterfly Project
        - L. DePellegrini reported that she has been in contact with Violet Walsh, a PHHS junior, who is interested in developing a community butterfly project.
        - The EC discussed the importance of identifying suitable habitats to support butterfly survival, as well as developing a budget for the butterflies and related expenses.
        - R. Hanrahan suggested that Violet organize a school fundraiser to help support the project.
        - Potential locations discussed included the community garden, Huff Pond, and other areas with appropriate flowering plants.

- The EC discussed scheduling the project for May or June, when flowers are in bloom and conditions may be favorable.
- R. Hanrahan suggested that Violet develop an educational flyer promoting environmentally friendly gardening practices for distribution at community events, including Montvale Clean-Up Day 2027.
- L. De Pellegrini suggested sharing information on the Montvale community Facebook page.
- R. Hanrahan recommended inviting Violet to present the project to the Environmental Commission and the Mayor and Council. The EC discussed the possibility of providing financial support, pending further research into the number of butterflies needed and the associated costs.
- M Zink-Jojic suggested involving local schools to encourage student participation and provide educational opportunities.

- Pascack Trail/Huff Pond Update (Robert Hanrahan)
  - Justin Rosemond of the New Jersey Fish and Wildlife Commission reported on a preliminary pond assessment conducted on August 12th to evaluate the pond's fish population and determine potential restocking needs.
  - R. Hanrahan, R. Preston and L. Skoglund participated in the visit, during which three NJ Fish and Wildlife representatives used nets to collect and measure fish.
  - Fish identified included largemouth bass, perch, and bluegill of various sizes.
  - R. Hanrahan noted that no trout were observed.
  - NJ Fish and Wildlife will provide a report detailing its findings and recommendations. The EC anticipates that the assessment may help facilitate state assistance with future pond restocking.

- Bicycle and Walking Plan (Antonio Vozzolo) Absent

- Community Garden Update (Robert Hanrahan)
  - R. Hanrahan states that the community garden is progressing well, with 40 well-maintained garden plots. One plot experienced a squash bug infestation, which was addressed. Participants are enjoying the garden.
  - Garden Plot Renewals for 2027**:** Current gardeners will have the first opportunity to retain their plots at a fee of $50 for next year. More than 12 gardeners have already expressed interest in returning. Current gardeners will have until September 1 to confirm whether they wish to renew.
  - Phase 2 – Waitlist Outreach: Following the renewal period, individuals on last year's waitlist, consisting of approximately 40 people, will be offered the opportunity to obtain a plot.
  - Phase 3 – Resident Outreach: Additional outreach to Montvale residents will follow. The number of additional plots needed beyond the existing 50 will then be determined and the governing body will determine if investment should be made on expanding the garden beyond the 50.
  - Pavilion - The proposed pavilion location will be staked out in preparation for next year.

- Repair of Environmental Learning Center, trail discussion (Robert Hanrahan/Michelle Zink-Jojic/Lou Baldanza)
    - L. Baldanza will organize another trail cleanup.
        - The main priority is scheduling the removal of the damaged floor boards.
          R. Preston will be available to assist after Labor Day.
          L. Baldanza is meeting with an architect this week regarding the trail map.

Council Liaison Report – Chris Roche - absent

Planning Board Report – Joe Puglisi

- 5 use applications for stores or offices in existing buildings were reviewed.

Adjournment - A motion to adjourn was made by L. Baldanza and seconded by R. Preston all in favor stating aye.

Next EC Meeting will be on Monday, September 21, 2026