



EWING GREEN TEAM

*Promoting People, the Planet, and Prosperity in
Ewing*



JUNE 24, 2020 MINUTES

Virtual Meeting

IN ATTENDANCE:

Pete Boughton

Evan Crumiller

Lisa Feldman

Heidi Furman

Jennifer Helminsky (The
Watershed representative)

Gary Keel

Joe Mirabella

Donna Morgan

Joanne Mullowney

Lynn Robbins

Caroline Steward

Sarah Steward

Priya Vimalassery

Mark Wetherbee

INTRODUCTION

- The meeting began at 7:09 p.m.
- The February Meeting minutes were approved.

OVERVIEW

We have not met since the Coronavirus Pandemic began in March. Our goal for this meeting is to determine what we can accomplish safely during this time of social distancing.

2020 CANCELLED ACTIVITIES

Many of our planned activities had to be canceled due to the pandemic. These include:

- **Arbor Day Celebration**
Joanne canceled the order for the trees for our give away and Evan had not ordered the plaque for the trees that were being donated by the Green Team, the Environmental Commission and Joanne and Bill Mullowney.
- **Green Fest**
The Annual Green Fest put on by the members of the Mercer County Sustainability Coalition
- **Garden Tour**
This was canceled for the spring and summer tour dates. The October Tour is still up in the air, but most likely canceled.
- **Gardening is for the Birds**
March lecture by Mary Anne Borge. She said that she will be happy to reschedule.
- **A Basic Honeybee Crash Course: How We Can Help Honeybees Help Us**
April Lecture by Jeff Burd celebrating Earth Day was also canceled.
- **Rain Barrel Workshop**
Scheduled for early June to be run by this year's Watershed Ambassador



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- **April Stream Cleanup**

Organized by Donna Morgan thru The Watershed

- **Pollinator Garden at the ESCC**

Completion and grand opening of this garden was put off until the fall. The grant was extended. We had planned to invite NJEC. Will find out about planting in September to see if it's possible to have a community event? It may not be feasible with the health concerns so it's too early to know.

MOVING FORWARD

Joanne proposed we discuss the possibilities for moving forward to see what we can realistically do under our current circumstances.

COMMITTEES

ARTS COMMITTEE

Fall Scarecrow Scavenger Hunt. Lisa has not met with any of the committee and was not sure if people would be interested during our current situation. The group discussion was pro-Scarecrow Hunt and Lisa agreed to start working on this activity. The very nature of the scavenger hunt lends itself to social distancing. Even though businesses are not all open or doing well; the positive nature of a fun community event seems to suggest we need to give our residents something good and upbeat to think about. This might be a fun idea for families to do together. Money will certainly be an issue, but we'll move forward anyway. Several GT members offered to donate towards the prizes along with Lisa and Joanne.

Lisa will be contacting the people who worked on it last year and will start getting the word out that something fun will be happening. Perhaps during this difficult time more people will be interested in helping to make sure this happens.

GARDEN TOURS

The first 2 dates have already been canceled. The October date is still a possibility. We have time to see what the circumstances are for the on-going conditions due to the virus. The logistics of multiple people visiting a garden while we are worrying about Social Distancing is a big consideration. However, we have time to explore different ideas; virtual online garden tours with photos, videos, albums could be made for each garden.

Since people have been home for the most part of months many have been focusing their time and energy on their gardens. Some might like to 'show off' their results when normally they would not volunteer to be on the garden tour. We have time to explore different ideas before we must cancel our October date.

ANNUAL BIKE RIDE

Normally our annual bike ride is combined with the popular TCNJ Community Fest. This year it's looking like they will be canceling Community Fest due to the health concerns of the Coronavirus. Without the tie-in to Community Fest it may not be a good idea to do the bike ride. Garry Keel had spoken to BA Jim McManimon and both agreed that the event was not likely to move forward this year. First, without the TCNJ support we would have to do some fundraising. The event is popular, and half the fun is the camaraderie of people biking together. This is not good for social distancing. We would not have the funds for the police support and escorting service. The consensus of the



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group is that we should not have a 2020 Bike Tour; there are just too many logistical and health problems to do this well.

CLEAN-UPS 2020

Community-wide group clean-ups are not practical under our current situation. Donna is a great example of what people can do on their own to help with community clean-up. Donna walks everywhere and is prepared to pick-up litter as she goes. Donna is a water sports enthusiast and as she is out and about along the Delaware River; she notices areas that are in much need of clean-up. She shared how badly people are abusing our local park areas, especially along the river, and takes it upon herself to get a small group organized and just cleans up. In fact, Donna has heard that the littering and garbage is so bad that the police may have to shut down the park areas along the river. Thank you and kudos to Donna and her friends.

Sadly, we are not able to organize a bigger group to get together to clean up. It's just not a good idea to get lots of people together currently. We need to recognize that health protocols must be adhered to – such as keeping our distance, wearing gloves, wearing masks when close to other people, washing hands, and just being cautious.

ENERGY

The **Direct Install** films by the MC Sustainability Coalition have been completed and turned out beautifully. There are some film clips of about 1 minute and then more detailed ones 3-4 minutes. They had a variety of people who had successfully participated in the program answer questions and share their feedback on how well this program worked. Our own Gary Keel was one of the people and did a great job sharing how well this program works.

However, the Coalition doesn't know how they're going to utilize the films currently. With the current situation of many businesses just now re-opening; we recognize that energy upgrades for their buildings is probably not a high priority. FYI, we still have \$3,000 left of the original \$10,000 Sustainable Jersey grant.

A Pastor from a church in Trenton had seen some of the videos and it impressed him enough to investigate the program. Joanne is going to let Sandra Torres, the Manager of Direct Install, know that the film has worked. This is just what these videos were meant to do. A variety of types of businesses, such as non-profits like HomeFront also participated.

GREEN BUSINESS RECOGNITION

Will probably remain quiet for a while.

RECYCLING

- Shred Day has been rescheduled for Saturday, June 27th. We have not heard from Township so assume they don't need our help.
- The Outreach Subcommittee needs to regroup.
- Plastic Ordinance - Council will revisit in Fall. We will supply education and outreach.

WELCOME COMMITTEE

Princeton has a successful program for neighbors who can help check on one another. It's called 'Star Neighborhoods'. This would be great for the current social distancing policy, especially for older residents. Ewing still needs help in forming neighborhood groups.



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Glendale and Palmer Lane are 2 well established neighborhood groups who would probably do well with this program. Maybe since our mandatory stay-at-home decree has shown how important neighbors are in times like this; this might be a fortuitous time to try to get neighborhood groups organized. Before this happened, people did not seem interested in organizing any type of group; now they might welcome such an organization.

OPEN SPACE

- We have not heard of any forward movement on our Open Space Plan resulting from the Community Survey.
- D&R Greenway has allocated funds for Open Space.
- Were sales from the medical marijuana dispensary supposed to go to Open Space? This has not been adopted yet. Special challenges have come up.

OTHER BOARDS

CONDEMNATION BOARD

Has continued but has nothing to report.

ARTS COMMISSION

Working on a virtual art show online. They are also working on doing murals on the new medical marijuana dispensary on Olden Ave. This is in the early discussion stages.

COUNCIL UPDATES

TREE ORDINANCE

The Tree Ordinance will be brought back second week of July. It had gone back to the Planning Board yet again and they recommended still further changes. According to Councilwoman Sarah Steward, it's not totally 'dead', but the changes were extensive enough that Council cannot pass it as the same proposed ordinance. The plan is to bring it back yet again. While the previous version was voted down; there is still hope that a new adaptation with changes will be introduced.

PLASTICS ORDINANCE

Council plans to discuss the Plastics Ordinance in July. GT expressed interest in adding straws and Styrofoam to previous version. Might want to hold longer for adding education? Senator Shirley Turner, Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson and Assemblyman Anthony Verrelli all support the Plastics Resolution – Green Amendment, 'every person has the right to clean air, clean water.'

COMMENTS FROM VISITORS

THE WATERSHED

Jennifer Helminsky reported:



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- The Watershed has been reviewing developments on Delaware River. Many Boards such as Environmental Commissions have not been meeting. Things are being pushed through without much oversight.
- Trenton River Program in September. Rolling out webinars, series in advocacy teaching people how to get involved. Three new municipalities passed plastic ordinances.
- Storm Water Management – each municipality must adapt to new standards.

Heidi has heard of an interesting idea that other municipalities are trying for storm water management – people can 'adopt a drain'. They would take the responsibility to make sure their assigned drain is always kept clear and free of debris.

- The Watershed has new webinars and exploration programs 2 times a week.

Priya is interested in a variety of our issues and happy to help where needed. She is very interested in composting and may be interested in doing a short video on how to compost. She also likes the Gardening for Wildlife program.

Lynn Robbins said that she is very interested in the Green Amendment.

A motion was made to adjourn at 8:51p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Feldman

Secretary