**Green Ridgewood-Green Team Virtual Meeting Minutes 20200519**

Attendance:

Green Ridgewood: Bob Upton, George Wolfson, Ellie Gruber, Pam Perron, Christine Amundsen, Yvone Nava, Jennie Smith Wilson (School Board Rep), Mary Mogerley (Parks & Recreation Rep), Robert Kearney (Village Staff Rep), Michael Sedon (Village Council Liaison).

Green Team: Justin Manger, George Wolfson, Ellie Gruber, Bob Upton, Serena Iacoviello, Anthea Zito, Michael Sedon (Village Council Liaison).

Other: Miles Luo (RHS), Diala Pharaon, Joanna Hanrahan, Dianne Kidwell

**1. Welcome/Introductions:**

All were welcomed to our first ever virtual meeting facilitated on Zoom by and thanks to Dylan Hansen. Due to the pause in our activities caused by COVID19, in particular the cancellation of the Earth Day Fair and postponement of our SJ recertification, we took the opportunity to re-examine our role and purpose, starting with members re-introducing themselves with a short bio. This proved a valuable exercise, creating better awareness of the resources offered by our team members and supporters.

Congratulation were offered to Pam on her election to the Village Council and thanks extended to Jennie for her support and assistance as she ends her tenure as BOE representative to Green Ridgewood.

**2. Approve February meeting minutes:**

Ellie & Christine proposed and seconded approval of the February minutes and all present voted yes.

**3. The Way Ahead:**

The role of the Green Team, established by ordinance, is quite specific, while that of Green Ridgewood is broader in scope, and the two overlap so our actions often accomplish the objectives of both. It was noted that most actions undertaken by Green Ridgewood have been initiated by the committee and not by the Council while other environmental actions have been carried out by the Village, such as solar power and biogas, motivated by energy (cost) savings. The lesson being to seek and support environmental actions which also bring other benefits, such as financial, but also to propose purely environmental initiatives.

We revisited the conversation about our role as a committee as opposed to a commission. While some members feel we could be more effective as a commission, others observed that we are not prevented from attempting environmental oversight & education of other committees such as the Planning Board, however, to be effective more training and expertise would be needed. It was suggested the Village could benefit from engaging a sustainability consultant. Further considerations: (1) change our meeting date, which conflicts with Planning Board meetings and (2) lobby to appoint a Green Ridgewood member to the Planning Board.

The need for increased expertise could be addressed through recruitment. It was noted that neither we nor the Village are conducting effective recruitment of volunteers for committees. For our part Bob & Justin could use help with communications, especially internet and social media, and asked if any committee member would take on this role.

Incidental to this discussion, it was noted the annual fee of $174 is due for the platform for our web site so Rob proposed and Pam seconded approval of this payment with unanimous approval. It was noted the Village wants to move us to a platform that better meets their needs and which will be free to us but have not done so yet. Bob/Justin will follow-up.

Due to time constraints a discussion of more specific short and long term goals was deferred to our next meeting.

**4. Grants**

Anthea had proposed a no-mow project near PSE&G property by Spring St. It required Village approval and issues raised could not be addressed by the grant deadline. We would like to pursue this again when appropriate.

**5. ERI (Environmental Resource Inventory)**

It was agreed that it would be beneficial for the Village to have an ERI but often professional services are required to create one at substantial cost. Rob has been applying his mapping expertise towards developing some components but is seeking assistance from others under 10 headings:

Section 1: Introduction Section 6: Water Resources

Section 2: History Section 7: Air Quality

Section 3: Climatology Section 8: Wetlands

Section 4: Geology Section 9: Land Use

Section 5: Soils Section 10: Wildlife

Meantime we need to understand which environmental issues which might be supported by an ERI are already being adequately addressed by the Village.

Note: As communicated to committee members previously, in comments on the Master Plan Section 1 on behalf of Green Ridgewood Bob suggested that the Plan should include suggesting consideration of the value of an ERI.

**6. Sustainable Jersey**

a. Silver Recertification.

Justin noted that Sustainable Jersey has postponed the recertification deadline by a year and extended by one year expiration of certain Actions.

b. Bergen Hub.

The Hub held a virtual meeting May 13th attended by Justin & Bob. It included a presentation by Food & Water Watch about RGEAs (see para 7d below) and a discussion about how to use the balance of the Styrofoam Grant of about $3,000. SJ has indicated they will consider extending the deadline to complete projects and will accept suggestions.

**7. Briefs**

It was understood that the main goal of this meeting was the open discussion reviewed above. Therefore the following items were mentioned briefly or not at all and deferred to future meetings.

a. Single Use Plastic Bag Bans – Ellie drew our attention to the efforts being made by the chemical & plastics industries to use the COVID crisis to repeal and oppose plastic bag bans. ANJEC and others have provided arguments supporting the use of reusable bags and we must be vigilant in defending progress that has been made.

b. Schools – Our dialog with the high and middle schools has been curtailed by the crisis but the RHS Green Club has members continuing into the next school year and Miles expects them to remain active. No discussion re. middle schools grant program.

c. Wild Duck Pond Improvement – the Village has been notified that the County plans improvements and Anthea has requested a copy of their application on behalf of Green Ridgewood for us to review.

d. RGEAs. As noted above Matt Smith of Food & Water Watch addressed the Sustainable Bergen Hub. He is promoting and offering assistance with the initiation of RGEAs in NJ municipalities. We have been monitoring the progress of Glen Rock’s RGEA program. We understand from Matt that Bergen County is working towards a County program. Matt is in contact with the County and will keep us informed and encourage them to do the same.

e. The Daffodil Festival & Earth Day Fair was cancelled due to COVID. We did receive the new Green Ridgewood banner and T-shirts which will be useful for future events.

f. George reports the Green Business/Restaurant program is continuing.

Not discussed: Future Events, Green Amendment, Food Waste Pilot, By-Laws.

**8. Next Joint Meeting will be Tuesday June 16th at 7:00 PM, details to be advised.**