

Green Ridgewood-Green Team Meeting Minutes 20210701 - DRAFT
Held in-person in the Senior Lounge, Ridgewood Village Hall

Attendance:

Green Ridgewood: Bob Upton, Ellie Gruber, Yvone Nava, Beth Creller, Jill Fasano (Village Staff Rep), Pam Perron (Village Council Liaison).

Green Team: Justin Manger, Ellie Gruber, Bob Upton, Anthea Zito, Mike Faherty, Abby Clothier (Student Liaison), Mike Sedon (Village Council Liaison).

Additional: Miles Luo (RHS).

1. Welcome/Introductions:

Apologies had been received from Saurabh, Diala, George, Christine, Mary and Tony.

2. Approve June Meeting Minutes:

Pam proposed and Beth seconded a motion to approve the minutes from the June 3rd meeting, as distributed to members on June 9th and 30th, and motion passed unanimously.

3. Membership/Recruitment:

Nothing to report.

4. Communications: Website, Social Media:

We are pleased and grateful to Dylan for updating the Green Ridgewood/Green Team meeting minutes on the Village website with a few further updates to be made.

5. Green Team/Sustainable Jersey:

(a) Silver Recertification: Thanks were expressed to Justin & Mike S and all who contributed to our application for recertification. We can't do much now until we get the response from SJ.

(b) Green Business Subcommittee: At the April meeting George had requested suggestions for questions and issues to include in qualifying non-restaurant businesses. Members requested to see previous questionnaire(s) to help them respond. Bob will distribute.

(c) "Green Your Green Fair" action. See paragraph 15 "Earth Day", below.

6. Sustainable Bergen Hub:

(a) Bob hosted a Zoom Hub meeting on June 28th which included a presentation by Green Waste Energy and discussion of an action plan to promote sustainability with Bergen County leadership. Minutes will be distributed on Basecamp. Glen Rock will host the next meeting on July 26th.

(b) The Single Use Plastics sub-committee has not met.

(c) The Styrofoam Sub-Committee leaders plan to meet soon, possible date July 13th. The April 17th Hub/Green Ridgewood Styrofoam collection expenses for truck rental & gas totaled \$387.59. Bob has received reimbursement of \$290.62 from the Hub and applied for reimbursement for the balance of \$96.97 from Green Ridgewood funds, i.e. less than the \$200 approved at our December 2020 meeting. The Hub Styrofoam grant is now exhausted. See New Business below re October Ridgewood collection.

(d) Creative Bergen – The Arts Amble event took place at about 20 venues countywide on the weekend of June 11 – 13th. The Art of Motion performance and James Rose Center exhibitions were highly successful and well attended. Thanks were expressed to Anthea for organizing these events and to those who assisted including Abby and Ellie.

(e) EV Sub-Committee – Beth expects to meet soon with Ken Jones of Glen Rock to discuss the proposed Ridgewood event.

(f) Solar Sub-Committee – no update.

7. ANJEC

Bob reminded everyone to sign up for ANJEC e-mails.

(a) NJ Plastic Ban webinar attended by Bob and Ellie. Presentations by NJ Clean Communities Council and Delaware River Watershed about introduction and publicizing the law through NJCCC's Bag Up NJ campaign. Recordings available on ANJEC website. Main provisions of the law are effective May 2022. Also see <https://njnoplastics.org/> and <https://nj.gov/dep/plastic-ban-law/>.

(b) New Jersey Conservation Blueprint Interactive Mapping Tool – Ellie attended this webinar and will provide a report on this impressive tool as an addendum to these minutes for future discussion – see below.

(c) NJ Recycled Content Bill – Passed in Senate, awaiting Assembly approval. ANJEC is lobbying to make this happen.

8. RGEA (Renewable Government Energy Aggregation) Sub-Committee:

Pam reported George is working on the list of FAQ's and answers. Pam requests support at a planned table at the July 18th Ridgewood Farmers Market

9. Planning Board/Master Plan:

Recent PB meetings either cancelled or raised no significant environmental concerns.

10. Adopt-a-Drain:

We are still seeking a person or organization to take on this project.

11. NJ Green Amendment:

Ellie suggested in view of time constraints we defer this discussion to our next meeting.

12. Master Plan/ERI (Environmental Resource Inventory):

It was noted that the Village Council has passed an ordinance to engage the Land Conservancy of NJ to develop the new Open Space Plan* for the Village and also to create an ERI* which, hopefully, would be incorporated into the Master plan. Pam explained the need to resolve the Open Space diversion issue.

13. Shade Tree Commission:

In its June 8th meeting minutes the STC recorded the need to renew the Village's Community Forestry Management Plan at a possible cost of \$3,500, which cost may come from the tree planting budget. Goals for the plan include tree planting and approving a protective tree ordinance* so it was suggested, if tree planting funds are impacted, we could consider contributing. No decision needed at this time. Pam and George plan to meet to review tree ordinance history and suggested plans.

14. Schools:

(a) BCUA Grant - Green Ridgewood congratulates Miles and RHS for obtaining a grant from BCUA, possibly to be used for composters and rain barrels.

(b) Green Ridgewood grants to RHS & BFMS – Now schools return to more normal operation we will follow up with the schools on the use of the grant money previously awarded and future projects. Bob has contacted Greg Wu at BFMS to that end.

15. Earth Day:

Typically the committee that plans the Village Daffodil Festival and Earth Day Fair starts to meet in the January. Before the 2020 Fair was cancelled it was planned that it would highlight Green Ridgewood so hopefully that plan will be applied to 2022. At our last meeting it was suggested that, having missed two years, we “do something big” so members are reminded to try to come up with big ideas. Also if we are to attempt to pursue the Green Your Green Fair action perhaps January is too late to start. To be discussed next meeting.

16. New Business:

(a) Ridgewood EPS Collections - With the success of the Hub EPS (Styrofoam) collections and resulting awareness of the option to recycle EPS people are now saving their EPS for the next event. Therefore it was suggested we consider holding regular Ridgewood-resident-only collections, maybe twice a year, with the next one in October.

(b) Recycling Dept Cooperation – Yvone will invite Sean Hamlin to attend a future GR/GT meeting to discuss EPS recycling and update us on the Food Waste Pilot and the Village's use of Clean Communities grant monies.

(c) Community Supported Agriculture – It was noted that, while we were not able to undertake a CSA drop-off program, Travell School has been able to establish one with Stokes Farm.

(d) Pam informed us that the Village has approved the removal and remediation of underground storage tanks at the former fleet garage.

(e) Youth Environmental Council – This group led by Mike S, George W and Stacey Antine is planning a movie event in conjunction with Green Ridgewood.

(f) Grove Park Tour - Pam advised this walking tour will be on Saturday July 17th.

(g) PFAS – During one of our off topic meanderings a question was raised about the Ridgewood Water's efforts to address PFAS issues. Justin will provide references to be distributed with these minutes**.

17. Next Joint Meeting will be Thursday August 5th at 7:00 PM, venue to be advised.

The committees expressed the desire to meet in the Senior Lounge again next month. Bob will check availability.

*Note: The Open Space Plan, an ERI and a Protective Tree Ordinance could all contribute SJ points.

** <https://water.ridgewoodnj.net/pfas-resources/>

ADDENDUM

Report to Green Ridgewood re: NJ Conservation Blueprint

The Blueprint is a collaboration between Rowan University, NJ Conservation Foundation, and the Nature Conservancy. This Conservation Blueprint is an amazing tool used by Environmental Commissions and others to advise on PB applications. There is also a mapping tool for the new Environmental Justice law (keeping more pollution out of overburdened communities).

But this tool, which takes a while to navigate is a combination of GIS, Federal and State protections, wetlands, Category 1 streams, you name it. It allows you to map out a potential application, go through 9 layers of environmental information, in order to see impacts of any projects. As Mike S said last night, we are almost built-out so we could use this tool in the margins: how many trees will be lost, how much impervious surface is planned, how many driveways are paved, etc.

Some of the towns in NJ have hundreds of acres of open space; farmlands that are under constant assault, for which this mapping tool is essential. It is estimated that NJ is comprised of 5 million acres squeezed between two large metropolitan areas and pressure from developers. We are the most densely populated state in the US.

Ridgewood has limited open space available, but the map would be helpful. Although we are almost "built-out" there may be a few acres here and there that should be protected, or we could monitor the amount of impervious surface.

More important, if we had the map, or at least a Tree Protection Ordinance, dozens of mature trees would not have been cut down recently to make way for another shopping center on Rte 17. As a result the entire neighborhood loses its protection from noise and pollution from Rte 17.

In New Jersey, from 1986-2015, and in spite of 1/3 of our protected farmlands, wetlands and open space, over 360,000 acres were developed. In the last 30 years we had forest and wetlands loss of 57,000 acres, impervious surfaces covering over 30,000 acres. If it weren't for the Great Recession years (2007-2012) we would almost be "built-out". That is why it is critical to preserve these remaining acres.

The goal is to protect 1,000,000 acres, which requires funding from Land Trusts and individuals. That is one reason why the Blueprint was developed. There are 4 goals: ecological, water quality/quantity, agriculture, and community well being. There are 4 components: water, rare species, climate change resilience and connectivity.

There is a YouTube tutorial: This is part 1, and you can see the next parts on the right hand side of the first tutorial. Part 1 tells you how to get to the home page; Parts 2, 3, and 4 will teach you how to navigate the map pages.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mikhF4C2cpg&list=PLP9uhlMvbw1zrGvVMJ0D7qFIQNU600Vt&index=2&t=11s>

Go to www.njmap2.com. Here you will find all of the Rowan University Geolab projects, including the Conservation Blueprint in the "Projects" section of the page. It's important to note that NJ MAP hosts a variety of web mapping tools that each focus on a different environment, land use, or sustainability issue in NJ. Each project has a unique home page to visit before going to the map.

In the Projects section you select Conservation Blueprint. There is a "first time user" button on the navigation bar (cannot see from laptop, you need desktop, unfortunately). But you can always go to the tutorials for help.

Once you get to the correct button, you click on "Open a Map" and the page should jump to each of the Blueprint's thematic maps (Agricultural, Community Green Space, Ecological Integrity or Water Quality). There are subsections on all maps (e.g. vernal pools, federally protected species, migration routes, Category 1 streams, etc).

It is a fantastic tool to protect those open space acres that are so critical to combat climate change.

But I will admit, you will need to be much more advanced in computer skills than I am!

Ellie Gruber