

Esopus Environmental Board Minutes
March 16, 2022 Meeting Via Zoom

Present:

Chairman Mark Ellison
Climate Smart Chairperson Laura Petit
Chris DeCicco
Nina Nichols
Cynthia McVay
Ellie Gartenstein
Noel Russ

Also Present:

Town Council Liaison Evelyn Clarke

Excused: Lee Gough

Meeting commenced at 7:07 p.m.

Chris DeCicco introduced guest speaker Joe Walsh representing EV Passport who provided a power point presentation regarding EV vehicles and the technology and industry overview. (Presentation attached). Chris DeCicco will be in contact with Joe Walsh.

OLD BUSINESS:

Meeting Minutes – February minutes moved to approve by Mark Ellison, seconded by Noel Russ.

Board Membership – Contact information for all members has been provided and will not be shared publicly. Two potential members to fill remaining vacancy on the Environmental Board and there are two individuals interested in joining. Interview of the first applicant to apply will take place in April.

Ulster County EMC Update – Minutes be sent by Mark Ellison.

Laura Petit jumped in (given another obligation) to discuss Earth Day celebration. Setup should take place no later than 9:00 a.m. Saturday the 23rd. Current Riverkeeper, Clearwater, Rosendale & Gardiner environmental groups and 2 foods trucks have signed up. Setup will take place downstairs at Town Hall. Members needed to setup and man the Environmental Board table. Laura Petit had to leave the meeting and would return. Preparations could be finalized at the meeting prior to Earth Day.

Brainstorming Update –

Mark had ordered the live Monarch milkweed seed distribution (pollinators included) had been ordered – looking to create QR code to direct individuals to the EB page on the Town website.

100 saplings had been ordered from the NYS DEC in March – red pine, white spruce, black walnut and bear oak were able to be ordered. More saplings could be ordered for Arbor Day but only one type could be ordered and Mark asked the desire of the Board members.

Laura Petit rejoined the meeting.

Cynthia McVay noted that the Avian Flu was being spread through birdfeeders and flyers may be provided at Earth Day on April 22, 2022.

Mark suggested getting stickers to provide QR Code on any pamphlets or materials being handed out. Stormwater pamphlets could be obtained free from the NYS Thruway Authority and the NYS DEC. Cynthia noted that prior to directing the public to the Town Environmental Board website, the website should be made more attractive. Members would arrange with Town Supervisor and Mike Rice when material had been prepared that they would like to include in updating the website. Chris DeCicco had volunteered to working on template but discussion was needed with the website technician to determine what was allowed. Mark screenshared tr-fold that he had developed. Nina suggested a google drive folder to collect photographs of area to be used on the website. Cynthia suggested a photo competition may be a EB promotion.

Clean sweep May 7, 2022 – Lee and Laura had signed up for Connelly.

Charging Stations – Need individual to look over costs, number of stations wanted, sites. Chris DeCicco suggested that a former colleague (link provided in chat) that provided information relative to services of EV stations to local communities and advantages. Agreement to invite a representative from the region was supported and Chris DeCicco would reach out for the person to attend the next EB meeting – if not March, Chris would coordinate for April. Climate Smart Chair asked if funding was still available through the State (would need to be investigated).

Social Media Presence /Educational Activities

Mark would take environmental trifold and update the document and asked for a future consensus relative to the reproduction and distribution at events. Laura noted that she was having a conversation with the Town Supervisor and there were other events being discussed – element of education with the documentation being distributed by the Environmental board (such as a QR Code) should be created. The QR Code could direct individuals to the EB website for educational information. Nina Nichols asked if any information could be provided at the local gardens/farmers market to also inform the public and possibility of erecting signage.

Buffer in the bag/Arbor Day tree application – Much was required to participate in the Buffer in the Bag (trees for tribs). Cynthia noted that she had participated in Arbor Day and trees required a large amount of maintenance did not flourish.

Natural Resources Inventory – Firm had been selected and would be announced soon. Would not be completed until June 2023. Noel's name had been provided as part of the technical assistance committee but had not been started yet. County would be providing the maps to be used but was currently on hold.

Climate Smart Resiliency Assessment – Mark and Laura had been invited to beginning meeting via Zoom on March 23rd @ 10:00 a.m.

Greenway Grant – progress unknown.

Solar Mapping – Lee had signed up and would ask for update at the April meeting.

Repair Café – Laura investigating – new site needed to be located.

Climate Smart Task Force – Ellie stated that the NY Stretch Code had been passed by the Town and filed with the State. Proof of filing had been submitted to NYSERDA (building inspector had filled out the Petition which was required to get the points). NYSERDA requested additional paperwork which had been submitted by Laura. Ellie stated that she had wording needed if necessary for completing the Petition. The Building Inspector can choose not to enforce the mechanical ventilation requirements of the NYS Stretch Code and default back to the NYS Energy Code or file the additional petition with more technical language to the State Codes Council which would be needed to allow the Town to enforce the more stringent requirements of mechanical ventilation (would be up to the Building Inspector) but was not the call of the Environmental Board. Secretary would make sure letter from State was provided to the Building Inspector.

Kingston Earth Day Fair – Ellie provided registration form. Deadline was April 22 to submit and the EB would discuss at the April meeting.

In-person/virtual meetings – All agreed to proceed month-to-month but to continue via Zoom.

MS4 – The Town’s MS4 officers were required to complete a report which included questions relative to stormwater pollution and education. It was suggested that the Environmental Board would be an appropriate Board to educate the public, receive feedback and report any complaints or findings back to the MS4 officers. Nina stated there were coloring books for early education on stormwater runoff and pollution that could be distributed, and she would forward information to Mark to be copied.

Councilperson Evelyn Clarke was meeting with Planner Matt Rogers and would inquire if there was any funding available from the stimulus funds received by the Town that could be earmarked for Environmental Board projects.

Nina inquired if the use of social media could assist in distributing public information (i.e. Instagram) and would research. Ellie stated that Kingston had a communications director that controlled all social media.

Adjourned 8:42 p.m.