

Esopus Environmental Board Minutes
November 20, 2024

Present:

Mark Ellison, EB Chairman
Jenna Ice
Nina Nichols
Chris DeCicco
Noel Russ

TB Liaison, Evelyn Clarke

Excused:

Julie Brinkman

Meeting commenced in the Community Center at 7:00 p.m.

Old Business:

Library Grant Application –

Nina Nichols stated that the Library had submitted the grant application. An associate of Chris DeCicco's had been able to offer recommendations regarding landscaping and square footage for stone pathway. Invasive species to be removed were identified and native plants were recommended. John Cutrone had provided a quote for delivery and hardscaping to incorporate into the grant application.

Nina Nichols had also submitted a grant application for a path and signage to the pollinator garden.

She was going to resubmit a grant in December 2024 (written last year) for four (4) paid positions to be created to perform land maintenance at Freer Park for one (1) year. If approved, Nina Nichols would approach the Town with the proposal.

Membership:

There were currently three (3) vacancies on the Board. Chris DeCicco had a friend that may be interested in being considered in the New Year. Noel Russ suggested looking into recruiting a member from the Mount Academy and suggested Dave Mercer who operated the Agricultural Student Program.

Mark Ellison stated he would be giving up the Chairperson position at the end of the year. He would like to stay on the Committee as a Member until a full Board had been established. He would still be involved with the Repair Café as a liaison to the Church. Noel Russ suggested that a secretary be appointed to assist with more than minutes. The Town had been posting information on the Town Website for volunteers and events. Jenna Ice noted that a page be created for Climate Smart page that could be approved by the Town. Nina Nichols noted that there was a Friends of Esopus Environmental Board and would reshare the link. Mark Ellison would make a new schedule for 2025 for the third Wednesday of the month. The schedule for the 2025 Repair Café would be prepared and Mark Ellison would provide the schedule. The last event for the Repair Café had been posted on the Town's website.

Library Partnership Grant – Mark Ellison would have liked to have had the entire Board review the Grant application.

New Business:

Environmental Management Council – Had been scheduled to host the NYSACC conference for the year and had been delayed to 2025 and involved a three-day weekend. The EMC was preparing and was looking for suggestions and topics looking for innovations and new frontiers (sustainable agriculture, future fuels, etc.) Second day of the conference would include what were future goals to enhance Mohonk Preserve and site visit with education and would like suggestions. Mark Ellison asked that any ideas be provided to him to forward. His next meeting with the EMC was December 4, 2024.

Mark Ellison noted sightings recently of the spotted lantern fly and its obvious presence in Esopus.

Town Board Liaison Clarke had shared information regarding EV charging stations. Environmental Board could provide list of businesses that provide EV charging stations to the public and promote to local businesses to install EV charging stations and what the benefits were. Locations suggested were the strip plaza, Wood'n'Wheel, Castaways, Stewarts, and churches. Many businesses put EV stations on a map that would include locations in Esopus.

New Business:

Chairman Ellison recommended that Members consider goals for 2025. Noel Russ was sending link to EB relative to Riverkeeper studies and underwater aquatic vegetation. Nina Nichols inquired what was the ability to plant at Freer Park.

Councilperson Clarke stated that CHPE had laid the cable in September and would return to bury.

Climate Smart Task Force – Jenna Ice

Grant Status – Jenna Ice reviewed data previously gathered and it appeared that 100 out of the required 124 points had been earned for a bronze certification. A key task required to be completed was an action point for each of the four pledge elements. “Shift to clean energy” involving heat pumps and solar energy installations paperwork needed to be obtained. “Enhance Community Resilience” plan was another category – the Town didn’t have an open space plan. Jenna would reach out to the Town Supervisor to determine where the information could be obtained. Another item was “Watersmart Landscaping Education.” Jenna wanted to host an event at the Library for a community engagement class to discuss climate change and what low impact steps could be taken to mitigate impacts. Noel Russ stated Scenic Hudson may be able to assist in providing information. February 2025 was a date Jenna would like to organize.

Legislator Manna Jo Green was looking for Towns to participate in solar mapping. Mark Ellison would inquire if the presentations were taped.

Upon Motion of Noel Russ, seconded by Chris DeCicco, and all in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa K. Mance, Secretary
Dated: December 16, 2024