



MEETING MINUTES

Jersey City Environmental Commission
City Hall – 280 Grove Street, Jersey City NJ 07302

Sara K. Schultzer, Chair

Meeting: Jersey City Environmental Commission Public Meeting

Date / Location: 11 October 2016 – 6:30 p.m.
Caucus Room, City Hall, 280 Grove Street, Jersey City, NJ 07302

Attendees:	Commissioners/City Representatives	Public Participants
	Sara Schultzer, Acting Chair	Annie Burtoff, City of Jersey City
	Alison Cucco	Office of Innovation
	Eric Goldsmith	Tim Keating, EarthBilt
	Gregg Lanez	
	Mario Verdibello	
	Kate Lawrence, Secretary	

Prepared By: Sara Schultzer, Katherine Lawrence

Date Prepared: 11 October 2016

ROLL CALL

Five of eight active commissioners were present; four constitutes quorum. Commissioners Luebke, Meggett, and Solowsky were absent.

SUNSHINE ANNOUNCEMENT

Secretary Lawrence confirmed the sunshine announcement went out Friday, October 7th before the holiday weekend.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Chair Schultzer noted the reference to the stormwater and shade tree ordinances must be corrected. No other comments from commissioners. September minutes stand approved as corrected.

SCHEDULED SPEAKERS

Annie Burtoff, City of Jersey City Office of Innovation

- Background: 7-person office with variety of backgrounds.
- Bloomberg Philanthropy's 3-year grant of in-house consultants with Innovation approach.
- 1st year focused on small-business.
- Comprehensive process to select this year's focus.
 - stakeholder interviews
 - research of datasets
 - pop-up engagement salons
- This year the Office of Innovation will focus on sustainability.

- Focus on water: drinking water, stormwater, infrastructure issues, and green infrastructure
- Step 1: Help align & support agencies and departments.
- Step 2: Help provide some approaches the city can adopt.
- Focus Groups start tomorrow Wednesday, October 12, 2016.
- Commissioner Goldsmith: What's the future of the Office of Innovation?
 - Annie: Work closely with city so work is sustainable no matter Office's duration.
- Commissioner Cucco: Is the Office of Innovation still setting goals?
 - Annie: Goals include aligning priorities, encouraging partnerships (i.e., businesses and public community members and agencies and organizations spanning Federal EPA, State DEP, internal agencies, Sustainable JC, private consultants, and educational institutions namely Rutgers University. Open to high school and local city contacts), and modifying behaviors.
- Chair Schultzer: Do you have a timeline, current action items?
 - Annie: co-creation of new strategies. Through end of 2016. Bloomberg grant has set schedule. Deliberate and comprehensive in early stages.
 - Balance with existing initiatives and other cities' successes.
 - Various initiatives and policies, to move forward.
 - Will work with City Council.
- Commissioner Goldsmith: What will be the transition of information/insight to be shared beyond Bloomberg and City to all stakeholders.
 - Annie: The Office of Innovation will be identifying owners and sponsors of all of their initiatives, including organizations like the JCEC
- Commissioner Verdibello agreed with focus on Sustainability, Natural Resources, Green Infrastructure.
- Chair Schultzer: Who should we contact with questions or on-going information?
 - Annie: The primary point of contact will be Brianna Lawrence.
- For more information and to follow Office of Innovation:
 - <https://innovatejerseycity.org/>
 - @InnovateJC on Twitter.

OLD BUSINESS

Resiliency Planning Documents

- Secretary Lawrence spoke about the progress of the project.
- Resiliency Planning Documents are funded by NJ Dept of Community Affairs post-Sandy funding. The project includes 6 distinct documents:
 - Started
 1. Resiliency Master Plan – Review of existing studies and projects and framework for expanding these efforts
 2. Adaptation Master Plan – Action plan to make the City more resilient
 3. Urban Environmental Design Plan (aka Green Infrastructure Master Plan) – Identifying specific areas that are good candidates for Green Infrastructure based on topography, location, soils, and other factors
 - Expected to be drafted by end of November



- Coordinating with Rutgers Cooperative Extension & MUA to discuss overlap between Green Infrastructure Municipal Outreach and Technical Assistance Program (<http://water.rutgers.edu/PVSC.html>) and Urban Environmental Design Plan.
 - Rutgers is currently working with the MUA to identify locations for GI and to create location-based standards.
- Not yet started
 4. Zoning and Building Code Revisions – Proposed changes to City zoning and building codes to make private development more resilient
 5. Design Standards – Guidelines to ensure proposed changes are consistent with the City’s built environment
 6. Capital Improvements Plan – Identifying capital projects that should be done in next 5 years & funding to complete them.
- The project will be completed in July of 2017
- Oct 25th – Open House to share information gathered so far
- Second public meeting will take place in spring 2017

Draft Stormwater Ordinance

- Currently under review
- Improves upon existing Stormwater Ordinance, need MUA to approve it.
- Based on Sustainable Jersey’s verbiage. Need manpower to support its enforcement.
- Retain set amount of water on-site to limit stormwater runoff.

Shade Tree Fund Ordinance

- Ordinance is still being drafted. It needs to be simplified from a previous version.
 - Ordinance needs to incorporate reactivated Shade Tree Commission. Shade Tree Commission was created over ten years ago but has never met. Original intent of Commission was to advise on planting, treatment, and removal of trees.
 - 5 members as well as representative of DPW.
- Draft of Shade Tree Fund ordinance calls for payments to be made to Fund by developers that cannot meet their obligations for street trees.
- Street trees specifically; jurisdiction is limited for private property.
- Need to alter/adapt existing Shade Tree Commission verbiage either way.
 - Wouldn’t be reviewing every tree.
 - Jersey City Planning already reviews plans, but perhaps there should be a threshold that triggers review by the Shade Tree Commission as well.
 - Chair Schultzer: You could have various quantitative thresholds, where if any are exceeded it would trigger review. (i.e., # removed, % removed, caliper size, root width)
- Commissioner Goldsmith: Reasons tree planting would be prevented?
- Secretary Lawrence: sidewalk width, location (e.g. highways), utilities/exhaust fumes, grandfathered streets that don’t or can’t meet code.
- A Shade Tree Fund would provide choice & enforcement.



- Planning, DPW, JCEC, Parks Coalition have input/involvement.
- Commissioner Verdibello: We can provide names of the people who updated the tree species list in 2013.
- Secretary Lawrence: Would like to finalize ordinance sooner than later, so when Shade Tree Commission convenes there is a good basis. Provide suggested thresholds or candidates before next EC meeting on Nov 22nd.
- Jersey City doesn't currently have a forester/arborist.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

CLOSING REMARKS AND OTHER BUSINESS BY COMMISSIONERS

- Chair Schultzer received Commissioner bios from most commissioners. To be posted on city website. Will send them all to Secretary Lawrence.
- Secretary Lawrence: developing broad sustainability plan, assessing areas that could use attention and be focused. Different types of initiatives, preliminary draft by next meeting Nov 22nd.
- Commissioner Lanez: A recent report indicated chromium concentrations in Hudson Country's drinking water to be 0.07 parts per billion. There is no federal limit for chromium in drinking water. There are epigenetics effects that could affect cancer rates. We must be concerned.
- Commissioner Cucco: What can we do to have an impact on this situation? Are there epigenetic effects of chromium at this concentration? We should be more concerned with actual mutations and specific deliverables JCEC can do.
- Chair Schultzer reiterated that we have a responsibility to base our dialogue on facts and expertise, especially when identifying ourselves as representatives of the Commission, and that an individual commissioner can never speak on behalf of the entire Commission.

GENERAL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Tim Keating, EarthBilt

- Discussion of recent improvements to public school by Pershing Field across from Reservoir that did not include any green infrastructure
- Inquiring about stormwater runoff, lack of standards/enforcement
- Interested in continuing involvement
- Secretary Lawrence clarified that the City has limited jurisdiction over school development projects.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next Environmental Commission meeting is scheduled for 22 November 2016 at 6:30 p.m. in the Caucus Room, City Hall, 280 Grove Street, Jersey City, NJ 07302.

