



MEETING MINUTES

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

Alison Cucco, Chair

Meeting: Jersey City Environmental Commission Public Meeting

Date / Location: 17 October 2017 – 6:30 p.m.
Council Chambers, City Hall, 280 Grove Street, Jersey City, NJ 07302

Attendees:	Commissioners/City Representatives	Public Participants
	Alison Cucco	Gagan Singh
	Michelle Luebke	Susan Paul
	Mario Verdibello	Mufti Ahmed
	Dr. Alexander Mirescu	Luis Rios
		Matt Trump
	Kate Lawrence, Secretary	

Prepared By: Alexander Mirescu, Kate Lawrence, Alison Cucco

Date Prepared: 14 November 2017

ROLL CALL

Chair Cucco called the Commission to order at 6:40 pm. Four of the six active commissioners were present. Commissioners Solowsky and Lanez were absent. It was announced that Lucas Netchert has resigned from the Environmental Commission.

SUNSHINE ANNOUNCEMENT

Secretary Lawrence confirmed that the meeting agenda was sent on Friday, September 15 2017, to the Jersey Journal, Jersey City Reporter and the City Clerk's Office.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

No other opening comments were made from commissioners. September 2017 minutes were unanimously approved.

NOTIFICATIONS ON GREEN BUSINESS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Secretary Lawrence announced that three (3) applications for Green Business Certification were received by the Jersey City Environmental Commission.

COMMUNICATIONS TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

The Environmental Commission received eight (8) environmental notifications for various projects in Jersey City, including a termination of deed notice due to contamination for 164 Laidlaw/157 Jefferson Aves. The notifications will be available for review in the Planning Office for at least a year.

Presentation by Jersey City VISTAs– Jillian Baumann and Alma Hidalgo

- A two-part presentation by Cities of Service VISTA participants Jillian and Alma was offered to the Environmental Commission. The Cities of Service VISTAs are AmeriCorps volunteers who do one year of service on engagement activities related to resiliency. The VISTA volunteers are working with Jersey City through 4 June 2018 on ‘disaster preparedness’ and ‘tree initiatives’ to increase local capacity and green infrastructure.
- Two primary aspects of their presentation: “Disaster Risk and At Home Solutions” and “Tree Education Initiatives.” Their presentation consisted of the following main points:
- **Disaster Risk**
 - Discussion of the effects of the 2011 Halloween snow storm, where residents were unprepared. In general, the main disaster risk to Jersey City is flooding, including CSO (combined sewerage overflow) pluvial and coastal flooding
 - For residents to do at home: Water Conservation and Neighborhood Disaster Plans
 - 5 steps for multi-hazard planning through NJ Register Ready and recognizing vulnerable populations and ‘Go Kits’ for residents; Input and support from CERT and United Rescue JC.
- **Tree Education Initiatives**
 - Tree canopy in Jersey City is an average of 17%, lowest in Ward E. Benefits of trees: increase real estate value, reductions in pollution, crime, and less flooding.
 - Two initiatives: 1) Tree Lovers Crew; and 2) Mission to plant and maintain trees through workshops. Also, school involvement in the Jersey City Parks Coalition’s “City of Trees” initiative, so as to increase the number of volunteers and family participation. They shared the website for Project Learning Tree: www.plt.org
 - There will be a tree event and workshop funded by the AARP on 28 October 2017 at Marion Gardens.
 - According to Secretary Lawrence, there is an existing tree ordinance for developers but it is being updated to include requirements that every site needs to have trees every 25 feet or the option of paying the City for the cost of the tree.
 - Tree standards are also being developed through the Division of Parks and Forestry and Planning and the Office of Innovation on the right use of trees and how they are planted. New development often plants trees that die because they didn’t select the right trees.
- Commissioner Luebke on water conservation: “Save it for a sunny day” when you use dishwasher, for example, and other city household appliances.
- Chair Cucco on school involvement: we should consider the Parks Coalition, possibly the Board of Education

OLD BUSINESS

Sustainable Jersey Certification Update

- The City has recently been recertified at the Silver level by the Sustainable Jersey Program. The Commission reviewed comments from Sustainable Jersey about additional areas of improvement for submitted action items that did not receive points. In order to receive



points for this action item, the Diversity Survey of Boards and Commissions is required to be presented to the City Council or the Mayor's Office by the Green Team.

Increasing Jersey City's Tree Canopy

- Commissioners discussed a "Tree Cover Goal" for the City. If we adopt a tree cover goal, Sustainable Jersey will approve the related action items.
- Not only in parks, but, in general: for example, 5000 trees in 5 years.
- For next meeting, Chair Cucco proposed to bring a goal to a vote by the Environmental Commission.

Tree Protection Ordinance

- Sustainable Jersey doesn't give points for the removal of trees on private property. Secretary Lawrence is checking into the legal aspect about private property and tree removal. Commissioner Luebke cited an example from California. In Jersey City, there is no ordinance related to planting or removing trees on private property, except in some redevelopment plans. We need to investigate the percentage of private vs. public property for tree coverage.
- Commissioner Luebke mentioned that Contra Costa County in California has a good tree protection program, including fees for tree removal based on the value of the tree and a tree deposit that is required for all construction around trees.
- For next meeting, the EC should consider "20 by 2025," meaning 20% of canopy implemented by 2025. Is there a registry of trees? Forester did for public trees, not development trees. Kate spoke of City Code 321 of the Tree Code/345-66 Landscaping and Zoning Code, as well as Parking.
- Commissioner Mirescu asked why does JC need to harmonize laws and practice with Sustainable Jersey?
- Secretary Lawrence: The impetus for more information, not all of Sustainable Jersey ideas apply for Jersey City, but it serves as a guiding framework.
- Chair Cucco: Action item for tree cover goal for EC. Request to put it on the agenda of the City Council.
- Commissioner Mirescu suggested incorporating information on the accessibility of trees and green space. Some cities have ordinances requiring park access to residents within 400m of walking distance.
- Secretary Lawrence: Key areas include Journal Square; perhaps more green space could be acquired via a multi-stakeholder approach.

NEW BUSINESS

Highlands Tour

- Commissioner Verdibello offered a recap of the Highlands and Reservoir Tour. He made two points:



- 1) The Highland Coalition is trying to fight the management of vegetation under power lines using chemicals. Instead of cutting trees, herbicides are being used. The herbicide runs off into water that feed the reservoirs.
 - Can we follow up on this? Can we connect with them over herbicide codes to help them? We can put this up for a vote in the EC and follow-up with legal documents on herbicide and pesticide impact. Also, we can investigate with the help of the Audubon Society and perhaps invite the Highlands Coalition and Audubon to speak before the commission. Matt Trump will give us contact information.
- 2) The Highland Coalition is also trying to maintain forest cover that collects water at Sparta Mountain. Under the guise of protecting animal habitat, swathes of land have been cleared. Civic groups are stepping in to stop forest clearing, timber access to create habitat. 40-50 acres are lost at a time. Local communities are livid.

Public Demonstrations of Green Infrastructure

- Chair Cucco announced that there would be a public walking demonstration of Green Infrastructure on 21 October 2017 from 10:00 to 10:45 am at City Hall.

JCEC Presence on Social Media

- Chair Cucco announced that JCEC has a new Twitter account. Commissioner Mirescu said he would look into creating a Facebook site for the JCEC.

Meeting at Arlington Park

- Announcement will be made by Commissioner Meggett during the next meeting regarding Arlington Park educational programing.

Green Business Recognition Program Applications

- Secretary Lawrence informed the Commission that no new applications and asked if the Commission would like to formally approve the latest ones.

CLOSING REMARKS AND OTHER BUSINESS BY COMMISSIONERS

None

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next Environmental Commission meeting is scheduled for 21 November 2017 at 6:30 p.m. in City Council Chambers, City Hall, Jersey City, NJ 07302.



Notifications to Environmental Commission as of November 21, 2017*

DATE	PROJECT	NOTIFICATION FROM	NOTIFICATION TYPE	PERMIT/CERTIFICATON REQUESTED	PERMITTING/ CERTIFYING BODY
10/23/2017	Hudson County Chromate - Honeywell International Inc., Study Area 3-Site 071 and Communipaw Sites (068, 069, 070, and 130)	NJDEP, Bureau of Remedial Action Permitting	Approval of Remedial Action Work Plan	Remedial Action Work Plan	NJDEP, Bureau of Remedial Action Permitting
10/23/2017	295 Thomas F. McGovern Drive	Dresdner Robin	Notice of Submission	Form TWA-1 – Treatment Works Application	NJ DEP, Div. of Water Quality
10/19/2017	Senate Place Apartments, 25 Senate Place	NJDEP, Bureau of Remedial Action Permitting	Approval of partial Termination of Deed Notice	Termination of Deed Notice	NJDEP, Bureau of Remedial Action Permitting

*Copies of notices made to the Environmental Commission are available for review by the public for up to one year at the office of the Division of Planning, 30 Montgomery Street, Suite 1400, Jersey City, 07302.