

Matawan Environmental Commission October 13, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Present:

Daniel Wieczorek (Commission Chair)
Meredith Comi
Adam Fernandez
Malini Guha
Anthony Washington
Michele Devanny
John Lazar (Council Chair)

Absent:

Ginny Sanzo
Sharen LaPorta
Diane Doolittle
Dan Carroll

Guests:

Scott Carew (Borough Business Administrator)

Meeting was an Open Discussion of the Following Topics

Introduction and Discussion with Scott Carew

Scott is the new Business Administrator for Matawan. Matawan is the 4th town he has been Administrator for, his most recent position having been with Moorestown (Burlington County) which has a highly active Green Team and Environmental Committee - Moorestown has achieved Silver Certification (highest level) through Sustainable Jersey for three consecutive years. Introduced Scott to the members of the Environmental Commission and reviewed their backgrounds and roles in the Commission. Scott is looking forward to contributing to the efforts of the Matawan Environmental Commission.

Green Team

Discussion of the importance and value of creating a strong Green Team, especially for working on the multiple initiatives for Sustainable Jersey. Need a combination of community leaders in town government and town commissions, key decision makers and committed/active volunteers – a well-rounded group to meet the multiple goals, objectives and needs of the town.

Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) & Budget

Discussion with Scott of the critical importance of Matawan having an NRI (Commission Member Adam Fernandez chairing the project on behalf of the Commission) and the necessity of there being a line item in the town budget for it. The 2021 Budget planning has begun and it is important to Scott to facilitate the priority projects for the town committees, as well as create synergy between the various groups.

The Environmental Commission is committed to set a priority financial focus on the NRI, which is estimated to cost between \$10,000 and \$15,000. An NRI is a town investment and provides value to the town as it documents various aspects of what's happening in the town, inclusive of cultural and environmental resources. An NRI documents what the town has and what the town needs in order to qualify for various grants and alternative funding opportunities.

Power Aggregation

Discussion of the benefits of power aggregation, combining with other towns and bargaining for the power price for the town. Power aggregation was discussed in last year's Sustainable Jersey Summit. One benefit of power aggregation is the potential savings of power costs to town residents, as well as the ability to bargain for more sustainable power sources, which may not always be lower in cost, but will be more aligned with the goals and initiatives of a sustainable town. However, it is noted that an NRI is needed as a basis to move forward with any project initiatives such as power aggregation.

Student Positions on the Matawan Environmental Commission

Discussion of the possibility of having 2 of the alternate commission seats filled by Matawan students. Would need to develop methods and protocols for keeping student members active and passionate, and not just filling seats on the commission – keep them engaged and aligned with the Commission's missions, they can be quite helpful and can get much accomplished along with the rest of the Commission. Commission Member Michele Devanny will talk to the environmental teacher in Aberdeen for some guidance on how they navigate the student roles in the Aberdeen Environmental and Shade Tree Advisory Board and to engage Matawan resident students in the roles of the Environmental Commission. Consideration for the possible standardizing of the student roles between the Aberdeen Board and Matawan Commission, since it's a shared school district and can be a more streamlined mission for the education providers.

Community Garden

Various ideas and concepts as to what a community garden should be and what it should entail, how it should be managed and what to do with what is produced from the garden.

2021 Commission Appointments

Discussion of possible residents who may be interested in an appointment/ alternate position on the commission for 2021

Respectfully Submitted,

Ginny Sanzo
(via meeting transcript)