REAC-Green Team Joint Meeting Minutes 20190115

Attendance:

REAC: Bob Upton, George Wolfson, Christine Amundsen, Pam Perron, Michael Sedon (Village Council Liaison), Mary Mogerley (Parks & Recreation Rep), Robert Kearney (Village Staff Rep), Jennie Smith Wilson (School Board Rep).

Green Team: Justin Manger, George Wolfson, Bob Upton, Cathy Brienza, Michael Sedon (Village Council Liaison).

Other: Serena Iacoviello, Jamie Miller, Anthea Zito, Leslie Lello, Clare Hurst, Tom Lillis (RAEC), Miles Gabay (RAEC), Ryan Seaver (RAEC).

1. Introductions/Membership update:

We welcomed our guests Clare Hurst and the representatives of Ridgewood Agricultural & Environmental Club (RAEC) from RHS.

Bob reported that Lisa Summers’s term on REAC ended and she will not reapply due to other commitments but she will continue to work on our plastic bag and other efforts. The committee extends thanks to Lisa for her past and ongoing support of its efforts. Yingying has explained that her commitments have made it difficult to participate fully in REAC and offered to relinquish her membership if another candidate applies but meantime she will continue her membership and support us where she can which is much appreciated. Mary pointed out her term has ended but she will volunteer to continue in the same position. Our thanks to Mary.

Mike reported that the Village Council will be addressing the applications of Serena, Anthea and Jamie soon.

2. The minutes from the December meeting were adopted by consensus.

3. Plastic Bags:

Bob spoke at the Jan 9th Village Council work session to report to the Council that REAC has completed its outreach to various groups as noted last meeting and will propose that the Village pass an ordinance similar to Hoboken’s banning single use plastic bags and imposing a fee for single use paper bags. Copies of the Hoboken ordinance were provided to the Council members. Mike has requested that we can address the Council’s next work session Jan 30th but we have asked him to postpone to Feb 6th session due to the conflict with our first Permaculture event.

4. League of Women Voters Bottled Water Resolution.

Pam and other League of Women Voters Water Committee members spoke at the Jan 16th Village Council public meeting proposing the adoption of their resolution to discontinue the purchase of single-use PET water bottles using municipal funds. Bob spoke on behalf of REAC to support the proposal.

5. Ridgewood Agricultural & Environmental Club (RAEC).

The representatives from RAEC had contacted us to explore ways we might work together and in particular to explore sources of funds. They summarized the focus of their activities as promoting sustainable living/lifestyle. Their community garden at RHS provides fresh produce to Social Services. They are currently working with hydroponics but need about $400-500 to fund the project which has also created interest at BFMS. It appears there are obstacles to applying for a SJ Schools Grant in the current cycle but it was agreed this appears to be worthy of REAC financial support. The RAEC team will get back to us with a more detailed proposal.

6. Grants.

a. Opportunities:

i. George believes Ridgewood did not apply for the SJ grant program for floodplain reforestation initiatives.

ii. Ridgewood, Glen Rock & Wyckoff are applying jointly for a $20K SJ PSEG Municipal Grant. See below under 8cIII Food Waste Pilot. We do not have a suitable project to apply for a $2K grant in the current cycle.

iii. There is a similar SJ Schools grant program with deadline Mar 15th, 2019. See RAEC above & schools below.

b. Grant writing: Mike reported the Village grant writer declined to provide copies of previous applications due to ownership issues.

7. Suggested Uses for REAC Funds.

a. Grant program for schools: See schools, below, and RAEC, above.

b. Support for Tree Nursery: Still too early to know financial needs.

8. Sustainable Jersey:

a. Plans for Silver recertification.

Justin has distributed a spreadsheet listing the Actions completed for our Silver certification with some possible additions. The spreadsheet also lists which GT members championed the Actions last time and suggestions for this time with many left blank. Since this represents the principal responsibility of the Green Team it is important that GT members volunteer to lead these Actions. It was confirmed that we will lose the 30 points awarded last time for the operation of the digester/energy generation facility. Members are also encouraged to submit additional Actions for consideration. GT members should review the spreadsheet and fill in all the boxes in the “Leader (now)” column.

b. Addressing Climate Change.

This is best addressed through appropriate SJ Actions.

c. Gold Star Standard in Waste

i. Waste Reduction & Recycling Level Reporting: It is acknowledged that the targets for Recycling and Waste required for Gold may be hard to achieve in the near term and noted that this Standard is still evolving so we will nevertheless strive to move the parameters in the right direction.

ii. Food Waste Pilot: Ridgewood Recycling wants to participate in the pilot collection program offered by Community Compost Co (CCC) but needs funding for the pilot. Ridgewood Green Team is working with Glen Rock and Wyckoff Green Teams to jointly apply for a SJ $20K grant to support this program in the 3 towns.

iii. Composting Info Session: See Regenerative Environmentalism below.

d. Green Business Program

George & Pam have created a new questionnaire and made their first restaurant cold call with more to follow. Additional volunteers are needed to pursue this effort.

e. SJ Bergen Hub

i. “Styrofoam” Program: Justin & Bob are working within the SJ Hub Styrofoam Sub-Committee using the Hub Grant which was awarded. We have permission to use the Graydon parking lot for a collection event on May 18th for a Styrofoam Collection Drive (Save the Date!). Meantime we will be planning publicity and education.

ii. Next Hub meeting tentatively set for Leonia January 31st. Topic to be Clean Energy. After that Ramsey Feb 28th re. plastic bags. Again Justin & Bob invite others to participate in the Hub meetings.

9. Regenerative Environmentalism (Permaculture) Meet-Up Group.

Leslie has created and circulated publicity for the first event, the movie “Inhabit” on Jan 30th, with discussion. Events are also planned for Feb 20 & Mar 20 with the March program to be on composting.

10. Educational events

a. Time is running short to schedule our planned movie for children & parents at the library. Mike will review Schoolhouse Rock – Earth with his son and Bob will seek input from a teacher.

b. REAC and LWV plan a joint promotion of water bottle filling stations at the RBSA season opening April 27th. Pam says Ridgewood Water will provide refillable water bottles. Bob has e-mailed RBSA with no reply so far.

11. Schools

a. $1,000 grant for middle schools for a sustainable activity. No time to discuss this so carried forward to next meeting.

b. Christine continues to seek support for SJ for Schools.

12. Rebranding/By-Laws: Justin made a proposal that, because the role & names of our two committees (REAC & Green Team) require some explanation to the public, we rebrand our activities under one name Green Ridgewood with REAC becoming the Green Ridgewood Committee and the Green Team becoming a sub-committee as it is now. Bob expressed some concern that the roles of an environmental commission/committee and green team are understood by other environmental groups and the new nomenclature might confuse. He felt the existing REAC & Green Team identities could be maintained under a Green Ridgewood umbrella. Support mostly aligned behind Justin’s suggestion but it was thought George, who had had to leave, had some thoughts on this issue so we will check with him and also ensure no problems are created with ANJEC.

13. Master Plan: Mike says NV5 are ready to meet with us. We proposed Feb 19th at 7.00 PM before our regular meeting. To be confirmed.

14. North Bergen Liberty Power Plant: Pam and her team have finalized the resolution opposing the planned construction of this plant. She will present it to the Village Council on behalf of REAC as soon as Mike can get us on the agenda.

15. Ridgewood Daffodil Festival & Earth Day Fair: Date is set for April 14th. George & Bob attended the first planning meeting with Parks & Rec, Conservancy and DPW/Ridgewood Water.

16. Plaque for Andy Antista Tree: Waiting for installation.

17. Meeting time: Due to the proposed meeting with NV5 at 7.00 PM Feb 19th we postponed the planned discussion about changing our regular meeting time. Therefore the time of the next regular meeting is unchanged.

**18. Next Joint Meeting Date: Next meeting Tuesday Feb 19th, still at 7.45 PM.**