**Washington Township Green Team**

**Ad Hoc Committee Meeting**

**Monday November 5th, 2018 6:30pm Minutes**

**Washington Township Municipal Building**

Members Present: Chairman Dan Ross, Interim Treasurer Paula Ross, Denise Belsky, and David Belsky, Valerie Walsh.

Members of the public: John Daily and Gertrude Daily

Others Present: None

Called to Order at: 6:41pm

1. **Old Business**:

**Harrington Fields Pollinator Meadow:** Dan opened the meeting by welcoming the two new members of the public to the meeting, and asked what their interest was in attending?They informed the group that they had heard of the Green Team and were simply curious to learn more about us and what we did.Dan then askedPaula to give the latest updates on the meadow and bring everyone up to speed on the project.

Paula informed the group that she had planted 23 more native plants, and was currently in the process of collecting more native seeds to disseminate after the field is mowed for the season. She said she spoke with the township DPW and they will mow the meadow for us when they are able. Paula also explained to John and Gertrude the planning process behind the meadow, how we chose to go truly organic, and what expectations could be for the next few seasons. She followed that with the explanation that as we understand it, meadows “sleep in the first year, creep in the second, and finally leap in the third.”

Paula also mentioned to the Daley’s that we have the new TREX park benches and will be putting them out sometime in the spring or summer of next year. Dan briefly recapped the group’s efforts thus far in competing in the TREX recycled film challenge. Paula told the group that she had brought home the rain barrel and put it away for the winter.

**Paper Shredding/ Clean Communities:** Dan askedPaula to give a re-cap on the final numbers from both events. Paula stated that she had heard back from the DPW and the paper shredding had been a success once again. In total; 7690lbs of paper were shredded and recycled, in all 243 boxes had been dropped off by 91 residents for the October 13th event.

Dan thanked the group for the great turnout we had for our Clean Communities contribution; six members from the green team and 1 volunteer from the public collected 13 bags of trash, 8 bags of recycling, and other various car parts, fire extinguishers and other oddities. Dan recapped why the GT had decided to do the clean up, both as a way to generate awareness for the Green Team, help do our part to keep the township clean, and to potentially attract new members through the highly visible campaign.

**Market at Long Valley-** Dan explained that moving forward, the GT will be searching for a new market manager this year, and we will begin promoting early this winter. There is still some discussion to be had as to whether or not the position will be purely volunteer, as it had been the first year, or if funding would be possible. Dan assumed that in all likelihood it will likely be a mix of volunteering and a partial paid stipend. How much we can afford to pay and how exactly we might finance the position is still up for debate. Dan asked the group if anyone had a particular date in mind for kicking off the 2019 Market? A consensus was not reached, but April or early May were thrown around as possibilities. Paula explained to the members of the public the limitations of the field we were in and lack of lights.

**Partnering with Schools**: Although there was officially nothing new to discuss, Dan explained what the Sustainable Jersey for schools initiative was, and recapped the idea about possibly partnering with the school district to install a rain garden out front of the Middle School, and other initiatives the school has already been taking. Dan mentioned that collaborative efforts have been limited thus far due to ongoing labor disputes and other complications. Paula asked if the projects she has been working on with the art teacher might count for some SJ points. Dan thought maybe towards the creative team action? He also mentioned the need to look into the anti-idling signage Paula had observed in some greater detail.

1. **New Business:**

**Sustainable Jersey:** Dan explained the premise of Sustainable Jersey to the members of the public,how points are obtained, what the benefits of certification are, and some of the actions the Green Team is currently looking into working on. Dan explained what we have done so far, and that we are currently looking into advancing a solar friendly ordinance here in town.

**Treasurer’s Report/ Voting on October’s Minutes:** Paula listed the expenditures and how much we have remaining in our budget for the year. Vote was taken and minutes were approved for October’s month meeting.

**Fundraising/ New Grants:** Valerie mentioned that she would look into whether or not the Environmental Commission has the ability to raise funds, as a township committee, and if that might extend to us as well?Dan once again brought up his interest in possibly perusing the “Roots For Rivers Grant” and asked if the group might be interested but the deadline is Dec. 14th. Finding the appropriate floodplain to plant the trees, and identifying possible township partners for the project remain two key challenges.

**Miscellaneous:** Atthe request of Environmental Commission Member Merv Haines, several members of the green team assisted with the collection of 871 chestnuts from the township’s grove of hybrid trees and sent them to PSU for analysis. The monitoring project is part of the township’s ongoing efforts to further the research on chestnut blight resistance and contribute to the science of reestablishing this once predominant hardwood tree to our eastern forests.

Paula brought up the fact that Spotted Lantern Fly (SLF) has the potential to inadvertently be imported on freshly cut Christmas trees, especially those coming in from out of state. Paula informed the group that she had done some preliminary research and Lowes gets their trees from a grower in North Carolina, and Home Depot gets their trees from Canada, so neither should pose a direct threat, but we should always be aware of where our trees are sourced from. Dan explained the threat behind the SLF to the members of the public and recapped where they are predominantly coming from. Dan explained that their host tree is the invasive tree of heaven, and all efforts should be made by homeowners to remove this invasive tree.

Paula mentioned to the group that we had recently heard from the township that we are getting low on carry-in carry-out bags in our county and township parks, and more will need to be ordered. Dan informed the group that the cost will be $155 for 5 cases and a vote was taken to see if everyone was on board to spend the money on the new bags, and improving the signage. Everyone voted yes on the question, and Dan said that he would reach out to the township administrator and let him know we had voted to proceed.

**Outreach:**  Dan mentioned that we are still looking to update the mission statement, improve the Facebook following, improve the public’s understanding of what the group is all about, and recruit more of a following. Dan asked if anyone happened to ask the Daley’s how they heard about our meeting tonight, but no one had thought to ask. The group decided that If they attend another meeting we will need to inquire, so we can learn how to improve our outreach.

**Open Discussion:** Valerie mentioned that she had an idea for a project for an upcoming event which would involve creating nesting materials, which birds could pull from in order to build their nests. They could be handed out in the spring, and the natural materials and old scraps of clothing would keep the birds warm, while repurposing some of the materials. The group agreed it would be worth looking into further.

**Call to adjourn:** 7:38pm