**Washington Township Green Team**

**Ad Hoc Committee Meeting**

**Monday August 6th, 2018 6:30pm Minutes**

**Washington Township Municipal Building**

Members Present: Chairman Dan Ross, Paula Ross, Patty Homer, Denise Spina-Belsky, and David Belsky

Members of the public: David Mauillo, Ron Weissman, Sara Catherine Lichon, and Suzi Zahn

Others Present: None

Called to Order at: 6:38pm

1. **Introduction of our two guests Ron and David:**

* **Overview of Ron’s Project, and scope of work**: Ron introduced himself to the group and explained to our newer members that he has been providing assistance to the Green Team by volunteering his time over at the pollinator meadow at Harrington Fields in exchange for our assistance with strategizing the planned installation of a smaller pollinator garden at a historic property in Basking Ridge that he has been working on getting township approval to rehabilitate. He also explained to the group some of the challenges he has been straddled with so far, and mentioned the various groups he has so far reached out to, in order to gauge their interest in potentially partnering on this endeavor. Dan also mentioned to the group that Ron has generously donated a wooden stand for our meadow’s rain barrel, and is looking into also providing a rain gauge as well, so that we might participate in the CoCoRHaS precipitation monitoring database program as well. Dan thanked Ron for his time, and the group asked a few questions regarding the work he has currently undertaken at the property.
* **Overview of “The Physics Show” by David:** David introduced himself to the group, and gave a brief discussion of what the show encompassed, and how it came to be. He explained what types of experiments were typically conducted, and highlighted the ones that were particular crowd favorites such as the exploding balloons, and gravity defying objects. Patty and David informed the group that it would be their preference to have a booth next to the Green Team booth where David could perform on-going acts throughout the festival, and one or two larger performances in front of the main stage in between the musical acts. David plans on following up with the township’s fire marshal to be sure that he is satisfied with the provisions we are taking to be in compliance and will follow any additional instructions or guidelines he might have.

1. **Old Business**:

**Harrington Fields**- Dan informed the group about all the recent progress at the fields, that the rain barrel was now installed and fully functional, and that the snow fence would soon be coming down so as to allow added access for the far side of the meadow to be weeded. Dan also mentioned that Denise had informed him that she suspected the weed we had originally thought was mugwort, was more likely ragweed, of which she was highly allergic. Given the news, Denise informed the group that she had also followed up with a meadow specialist and learned that if indeed the emerging weed was ragweed it should only be a nuisance at worst, and would not need to be completely eradicated as would have been required if it were mugwort instead. According to what we have learned “in the first year a meadow typically sleeps, then it creeps the next year, and finally leaps in the third.” Encouraged by the prognosis but dismayed that it would take longer than anticipated the group agreed to persevere with the meadow for the follow two years until nature could ultimately take its course. Dan and Paula informed the group that it was our intention to establish a few more work days for the remainder of the season to get out and attempt to curb the spreading of the ragweed regardless, and that dates would be forthcoming. Paula explained to the members of the public in attendance why we had done the meadow the way we did, and how we wanted to avoid using herbicides and stay chemical free, which had unfortunately resulted in an explosion of undesirable weed growth. Dan mentioned to the group that he would like to see a fall seeding take place in which we could hopefully harvest some native seeds from the surrounding meadow and member’s gardens and complement what we had growing this season. Paula also informed the group that she has been in contact with the DPW and they are aware that we are looking to install the two TREX benches soon and will need assistance with securing them to pads on the ground. Dan told the group that the plan is still to have an official ribbon cutting/ butterfly release ceremony sometime in the early fall to commemorate all of the team’s hard work this season.

1. **Future Business or Activities**:

**Sustainable Jersey:** Dan mentioned to the groupthat there may some fall initiatives that the group may wish to pursue but at the moment there was nothing new to report.

**Green Market:** Dan informed the group that the first four weeks have been a large success considering that it is our first attempt, and we are obviously still growing as a marketplace. Dan informed the group that he had finished creating a Facebook Page for the Market and we were steadily growing in “likes.” The Market officially opened with five vendors, and Dan hopes that it will continue to grow each week so as to remain fully sustainable. In an attempt to grow the page, Dan informed the group that he intends to showcase one vendor each week, and announced that we will also be offering a space to a select non-profit or charitable cause each week as well with the weekly vendor fee waived. Dan informed the group that each week, we are also picking up about 5-10 more patrons coming to check us out, and the new banners had been put up out by the roadside, to hopefully help with these efforts even more. Dan also mentioned that there had been some discussion about whether or not the Market would run in the event of rain, and that we should decide what our contingency plans might be in the event of severe weather, and the need to cancel the Market. Dan also mentioned that we should continue to seek out potential Market sponsors, and that we should continue looking for anyone that might be interested in joining the forthcoming Markey Committee as well.

**Partnering with Schools**: Nothing new to report.

**Green Festival Updates:** Paulainformed the group that she had recently reached out to The Nature Conservancy of NJ as a potential exhibitor, and was currently waiting to hear back from them, and Dan mentioned that he had likewise also reached out to Audubon and Green Mojo consulting once more. Denise mentioned that her daughter had been working on a plastics awareness campaign poster for the festival which featured “the good, the bad, and the ugly,” and fostered awareness that all plastics are not created equally and some were environmentally worse than others. Other display items for the table, including alternatives to common plastics were discussed and will be featured at our booth at the festival. The group agreed that more sponsors should ideally be targeted for the festival, and Dan mentioned that the group should try to ascertain what specifically we could offer to the sponsors at various levels of commitment; bronze level, silver level, gold etc. Paula reminded the group of the two upcoming meetings with the rest of the Green/ Fireworks and Foodtrucks Festival Committee; on August 14th and again on September 4th to finalize any remaining logistics. She also told the group that we should continue to advise any new vendors to limit the amount of plastic they bring with them, and to avoid bringing balloons as give-a-ways. Patty requested that as a list of exhibitors and vendors is finalized that she receive a copy so that she could complete the Festival Passport Game and feature all of the vendors prominently.

**Sponsors:** Nothing new to report. More sponsors will continue to be sought in the next few weeks.

**Upcoming Initiatives:** Danreminded the group that in the near future we will be working with the ad hoc trails committee to install the interpretative path and signage around the meadow, possibly even as soon as the upcoming spring/ summer. He also reaffirmed his desire to work with the local school districts on achieving sustainable actions, hopefully this upcoming school year. Paula pointed out that the Fall Clean Communities would be coming up sometime in October, and that it would be a great opportunity for the group to gain some exposure while helping out the community. Dan asked if anyone had any new ideas for upcoming projects, or opportunities to collaborate with any other committees?

**Fundraising/ New Grants:** Nothing new to report or discuss.

**Outreach:** Dan made a pitch to Sara Catherine and Suzi to possibly join the Green Team, and took down their contact information to send them the Township Volunteer Application. Both said that they were interested, and that they would also be interested in assisting with future volunteer events as well. Dan mentioned that the group’s efforts have been getting into the local paper a lot lately, and that there is also a need to promote the Green Team and explain what we do and who we are. Dan mentioned that the Facebook page is up to 526 likes now, up from 500 the previous week, so we are continuing to grow and expand. He also mentioned that the Market’s page is up to 85 likes now, so it too is slowly growing. Dan informed the group that he would continue working on getting publicity for the market, and that he would like to get us into Edible Jersey next season if at all possible as well.

**Open Discussion:** Sara Catherine and Suzi introduced themselves to the group in greater detail and also explained how they had heard about the group and why they wanted to become more involved. Dan thanked everyone for coming, and for the very productive meeting.

1. **Call to adjourn:** 8:26pm