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Florence, New Jersey 08518  
April 4, 2024

The regular meeting of the Florence Township Environmental Commission was held on the above date in the Municipal Complex, 711 Broad Street, Florence, New Jersey. The meeting was called to order at 7:02 P.M. followed by a salute to the flag. The following statement was read: "I would like to announce that this meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Adequate notice has been provided to the official newspapers and posted in the main hall of the Municipal Complex".

Upon roll call the following Commissioners were found to be present:

David Mudge

Paul Ordog

David Yansick

John Pagano

Also Present: Ted Lovenduski, Shade Tree Commission Representative

ABSENT: Melanie Mieczkowski, Deepa Patel, Talaya Loftin, Saphan Pickett, Michelle Ryan-Krzykalski

#### OLD BUSINESS

Earth Day Event

Mr. Lovenduski stated that the township is having a clean-up day throughout the town on Earth Day. Mr. Pagano will be there as a Scout leader since the Boy Scouts are involved with this as well and offered to take some pictures for the Sustainable NJ certification.

#### MINUTES

A Motion was made by Mr. Ordog, seconded by Mr. Yansick to adopt the minutes from the March 7, 2024 meeting as submitted. Motion unanimously approved by all members present.

#### CORRESPONDENCE

A. Letter from South and Caldwell dated 3/14/24 re: TWA Permit for Florence Associates

A motion was made by Mr. Ordog, seconded by Mr. Pagano to receive and file this document. Motion unanimously approved by all members present.

#### OTHER BUSINESS/PLAN REVIEW

There is an update about the Xerces grant and we are on the waitlist for that. This is the grant for plants for the pollinator garden. The results of the PSEG grants will be available at the end of April or early May.

Chairman Mudge suggested the Commission review the township ordinances regarding plantings this year and update them like the lighting ordinance. He really wants to enforce the concept of planting native species. He also wants to restrict the use of ornamental plants especially in developments. The Bradford pear tree is an invasive species; Mr. Lovenduski said they are actually illegal to sell now. He also added he would like to restrict planting trees on the strip between the street and the sidewalk. It causes problems with the sidewalks and eventually the

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trees end up getting removed. They should be planted on the front lawn area instead. Chairman Mudge agreed with this. Mr. Yansick asked if we can have a recommended list of types of trees that are allowed in developments or a list of restricted trees. Chairman Mudge said we should recommend species of trees and shrubbery that are native to New Jersey. Mr. Lovenduski stated that Tree City puts out a list of recommended street trees.

Mr. Pagano asked Mr. Lovenduski how problematic is it when plantings die after the maintenance bonds have been released. Mr. Lovenduski said the township is dealing with this issue currently on Railroad Avenue where the new warehouse was built. About 50-60% of the plantings have died since they were put in. That warehouse is currently operating on a temporary certificate occupancy and has been since they opened. Once they are covered under their maintenance bond, they are required to replant it. Chairman Mudge said it is important to have trees there since they are acting as a buffer between residences and the development.

Mr. Lovenduski asked the Commission about the orchard they had talked about at the March 7 meeting. At the last meeting, Council Representative Loftin mentioned possibly planting an orchard at the triangle downtown between Foundry Street, Bodine Street and West Third Street. Mr. Lovenduski said for the Commission to think about what kind of fruit trees they would want to plant in that area. First step would be to see if the soil is compatible for fruit trees. Mr. Lovenduski wanted to caution that fruit trees can be messy. Fruit trees can also attract small animals like rats. It can also be hard to maintain the grass with mowers with pieces of fruit on the ground. A small orchard would complement the community garden as well as the pollinator garden. Chairman Mudge said that there shouldn't be more than 50% of fruit trees in the orchard. Mr. Lovenduski said that the Shade Tree Commission is planning to plant crape myrtles along the new walking path too.

There will be some work starting on the garden beds in the community garden by replacing the treated wood with cedar.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public in attendance.

#### ADJOURNMENT

It was the Motion of Mr. Pagano, seconded by Mr. Ordog to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 p.m. Motion unanimously approved by all members present.

MRK/amh

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Michelle Ryan-Krzykalski, Secretary