

**Avalon Environmental Commission**  
**August 15, 2023**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm by Chairwoman Rothman.

Pledge of allegiance.

Chairwoman Rothman read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement.

Roll call:        **Present:** Dave Coskey, Kevin Coyle, Joe Dvorak, Steve Malyszka, Brian Reynolds, Donna Rothman, and Victoria Deever

**Absent:** Chris Amacher, Claire Driscoll, and Jamie McDermott

A motion to approve the minutes from the July 18, 2023 meeting was made by Steve Malyszka and seconded by Brian Reynolds. Approved by all.

Jamie McDermott entered the meeting at 4:01 pm.

**Review of 3<sup>rd</sup> Iteration of Survey to query environmental interests:** Donna Rothman distributed the document and requested a review of same to identify any edits that should be made, or suggestions as they relate to the layout or content. A recent conversation with ALHOA revealed the organization's willingness to distribute the survey amongst its members when finalized. After a final review and approval by the Environmental Commission, the survey will be forwarded to Borough Administration for review, approval, and dissemination to the public.

Brian Reynolds suggested placing the survey on the website to promote additional participation by all residents and visitors, with Donna Rothman making note that she will request that be done when the survey is finalized. Donna Rothman added the Borough Administration wishes for the Environmental Commission to focus on educating the public, and expressed hope this survey will help evaluate the interest of residents and visitors not only as it pertains to the desire to be educated, but the topics that should be addressed in future educational sessions.

A review of the format was undertaken by the present members of the Environmental Commission with minor changes suggested and agreed upon. Further discussion took place regarding the background of each question chosen to be placed on the survey, the distribution of the survey, and the expected response. Overall, the present members were pleased with the format and concept. Joe Dvorak suggested gathering the metrics of data surrounding the survey with the help of AHLOA, while Steve Malyszka suggested approaching the Library for help with the distribution of the survey.

**New format and legend for Plant List:** Donna Rothman announced she, Victoria Deever, Denise Cifelli, and Chris Miller from USDA are working to reformat the Acceptable Plant list, and the work is still ongoing at this time. It has been determined that the current format of the Plant Lists utilized by the Borough are difficult to use and understand; therefore, the primary focus of this project is to simplify the format into a more user-friendly document for both the Borough and the public.

**Potential Sign for 100-year-old Oak at Armacost Park:** Donna Rothman mentioned the existence of an oak tree located within Armacost Park, which is a descendant of a 560-year-old tree. She evaluated the members' interest in placing a commemorative plaque near the tree for public education while noting According to Dave Coskey, Scott Wahl has given verbal approval for the plaque. All present members approved of the concept.

**Pollinator Garden recommendations for 2024:** Donna Rothman gave a brief history of the Pollinator Garden and the maintenance thereof since its creation and recommended changing the classification of the area to a “meadow”, with the placement of new signage in the area showing the evolution of plant growth within the meadow. Such a change would also allow mother nature to take its course and lessen the required maintenance.

Steve Malyszka voiced the opinion that the Borough’s landscaping contractor should be responsible for maintaining the pollinator garden, and that pathways should be constructed throughout the garden to allow for the separation of plants. He further suggested the Borough contract an independent landscaping architect to evaluate the Pollinator Garden.

Detailed discussion took place concerning the purpose of the garden, the status of the landscaping contract, whether the garden serves its originally intended purpose, the visual aesthetic and its interpretation, and existing issues in the garden and potential solutions for each.

**Resignation of Chris Amacher:** Donna Rothman announced the resignation of Chris Amacher from the Environmental Commission, and reported she has submitted a recommendation for a new member to the Mayor for his approval and potential appointment.

**Upcoming Speakers:** Donna Rothman gave a reminder of all upcoming speakers and programs, including lectures and educational sessions given by Doug Tallamy, Pat Sutton, and The Wetlands Institute and encouraged all to attend.

Dave Coskey suggested changing the timing of the educational sessions to promote attendance, with Donna Rothman noting that the offered timing of these programs can be included in a survey question.

**Armocost Park:** Dave Coskey reported he and Joe Lomax are coordinating with a videographer to obtain video footage of the Park as it currently exists.

**Bay Park:** Kevin Coyle noted that Tom Thornton has indicated that all DEP permits for the improvements at Bay Park Marina are in process at this time, with some approvals having been received. All remaining approvals are expected in the near future.

**Tree Committee:** Joe Dvorak explained that procedures are still being drafted by the Borough for the Tree Memorial Program.

**Other Updates:** Donna Rothman announced the recent home garden tour was well attended and received positive feedback from attendees.

**Public Comments:** None.

Adjournment at 4:38 pm.