

**FRANKLIN LAKES ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION  
MINUTES – December 21, 2015**

**In Attendance:** Carole Holden, Larissa Symbouras, Michael Colombo, Don Scine, Skip Williamson, and Moira Murphy. Green Team member Bob Clark. Recycling Coordinator Liz Morris.

**Absent:** Gary Sheppard, Sue Barbuto, Council Liaison Ann Swist

The December meeting of the Franklin Lakes Environmental Commission was called to order at 7:08 p.m. and held in the municipal building on Monday, December 21, 2015. The minutes of the previous meeting were not read, but were approved as written.

**Chair's Report:**

The chair handed out a list of the Commission's 2015 accomplishments. She had heard nothing from Lily Mastrodimus in the last month, but had hoped she would.

For the next year, since recycling has really started rolling and now we don't have to do too much, Liz suggested that maybe we can focus on water. Mike agreed that a very odd weather pattern is impending, and that the anticipated drought may be longer and more severe than it was in 1997/98. He suggested that maybe by having the information now, we can prepare ahead of time so we can avoid an outright ban on water use. The water table is already down 5-10'.

He suggested that we start by cueing the mayor into the existing ordinance to be enforced. He also suggested that we start educating people in the weekly eblasts about water usage to encourage them to conserve before this becomes a horrible drought. In California, if you get caught watering your lawn, your fine is double your normal water bill. Don commented that it goes to education. We need to make people realize there are other ways to treat your space than a traditional lawn, such as perennials and meadow grasses. Mike pointed out that there are also ways to maintain a good lawn before the drought happens. Liz pointed out that Mike's idea is good for a solution in the short term, Don's in the long term, and that we need to do both. Mike will be providing water tips once a month or so, such as trying water saving faucets and appliances and not running the water when you're brushing your teeth. In that way, he'll attempt to head off the actual drought if we can.

The potential for a water conservation mascot was raised. Larissa will talk to Eric about ideas.

Spring cleanup is April 16, 2016, and the motto is "Pride in Franklin Lakes is Picking Up." Discussion was held regarding potential procedures, aside from contacting schools and getting kids/families involved. It was suggested that we set out to clean by the schools and ball fields, which would be Board of Education property, rather than

municipal property, and therefore have fewer resources. The suggestion was that a Commissioner or two could each go to a school or field to oversee the cleanup volunteers. Moira suggested that the police could be involved, and that the DPW could pick up the trash recovered at the different schools. Don suggested we ask the schools to sponsor the cleanup rather than the Commission directly, to encourage the kids to be in the good graces of their respective principals. Bob suggested that the same could be done with getting the sports teams involved having them clean where they play. Liz thought it was a great idea, but that we'll hear they're all too busy. She suggested that we could perhaps get the recreation department to tell the teams that the EC is doing this and they can be part of it by cleaning up their fields, go through clubs in schools, and do it that way with us overseeing it. It was pointed out that high school kids want to get community service credits. Even if schools do sponsor the effort, we'll help and oversee it all. The idea of active involvement by business for sponsorship was also raised, perhaps offering their logos on the back of the shirts handed out.

Companion animal management plan: We need public education on caring for animals, what it means to have animals, licensing (which decreases the threat of rabies and means more money for the town).

Wyckoff has a rabies clinic; Carol Tyler, the head of an animal control company, goes with several volunteers to the recycling depot, where people line up with their dogs and cats for rabies vaccinations and information on licensing of the animals. Franklin Lakes is looking to increase compliance. In Wyckoff animal control knocks on residential doors and if she hears barking & the house doesn't have registered pets, she knows they're in violation.

We also need to make a move to cut down on feral cat colonies through trap and fix. A question was posed as to whether this could be handled through animal control.

After the new year, our sub-team needs to get a handle on the plan and each take a piece. Try to work with RBARI, raise funds, try to get the community involved in helping to get them thinking about issue of companion animals and how to choose them, as well as how to deal with wildlife.

### **Member Reports:**

**Water** – Michael – Nothing to report

**Public Education and Outreach** – Sue – N/A

**Energy** – Skip – N/A

**Recycling** – Liz & Don –

Don: Don circulated an article about septic packaging, what it is. He also informed the commission regarding assembly bills that will be passed expanding the Electronic Waste

Management Act, expanding the amount of material that's mandatory and requiring manufacturers and retailers to take back whatever items they sell and possibly impose a deposit on all electronic items (future waste) when they're sold (a tax to make up for them having to take back for disposal whatever they sell). Liz commented that we in Franklin Lakes use a company called Erevival that still comes and takes our waste electronics away for free.

Wyckoff is sending out letters to recruit students to apply to be on their environmental commission/green team. They only need one and are taking one. It was suggested that since they're sending the letters to the area FLOW high schools, we should get in on this by asking Wyckoff for any Franklin Lakes applicants they may receive.

Liz:

Recycling: Liz put together a list of what she does –

1) Create data collection systems. We have the tools in the town to deal with this, but it's up to Liz to make sure info comes in from waste management. She was doing monthly reports and making sure people are up to date. As an aside, we had another good month this month. As a follow up, information regarding our recycling performance can now be put on town's performance dashboard, which has a new section on recycling. Our garbage tonnage has dropped so much that the town may be able to budget a smaller amount for garbage pickup.

2) Education and enforcement – two town fairs, women's club, valley auxiliary, green fair. Every month there's now something about recycling in the eblast. She's working on drip feeding information to the residents. She's created flyers and posters, and put an informative slip into annual tax mailing. In the next week or two the next newsletter's going out, and there will be two pages of "what do I do with...?" She's gotten press coverage about Stop & Shop winning the recycling award, and instituted the enforcement program. She's found that the shred days are easy to set up, and we get 3 free per year. She uses them as an opportunity to talk to people, especially in encouraging people to bring plastic bags. She gives them reusable bags to reinforce the message. Plastic bag recycling is way up according to Stop & Shop. With regard to enforcement, Gaeta is stickering the garbage cans that are in violation. 40 stickers have apparently been dispensed, but Liz has only received one call, so it's not really showing much of an effect yet. Liz has talked to Sandro at Gaeta who said it takes time for the recycling guys to get down what they need to do. We're not there yet in terms of knowing how many are being stickered twice. Recycling rates have moved from 19% in September 2014 to 26% in September 2015 (over the 12 months of each year).

3) Tonnage grant submission. Recycling has always asked for numbers on tonnage from the Building/construction department to submit for the grant. Now the building department has been good about getting and enforcing the submission of the information; they won't give a certification to the builders until they get the appropriate forms back.

4) When Liz first joined, there was a move to improve recycling center. Now it has new padding, fencing, and a commingled container. It looks a lot better. Next up, we will be able to hopefully gate it when closed and man it over the weekends. A gate will have to be positioned before the town gas pumps, so it'll have to have a remote and be motorized, which makes it significantly more costly, into five figures.

Residential recycling: 770 tons of cardboard recycled, 90 tons from the DPW. Most of the recycling at the DPW isn't broken down, so the next step is to look into a compactor.

Textiles: The idea is to put three clothing bins at the recycling center. Liz discussed it with the mayor & council on December 1. Up to 200 tons of textiles could be collected, which could make up to \$120,000, plus would mean \$12,700 saved from the waste stream, plus the tonnage grant. The organization that looks the most promising is Planet Aid – teachers aid, farmers clubs in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Using them would take a bit of the bureaucracy out of getting bins because it's a nonprofit and the town wouldn't need to take bids. The organization clears the site if it gets messy, they empty the bins, etc. It would be a maximum of 30 days to have them removed if it doesn't work out.

**Planning Board** – Gary – N/A

**Environmental Contaminants/Bees** – Larissa – N/A

**Old Business**

N/A

**New Business**

N/A

**Action Issues**

See above.

The next meeting is set for January 19, at 7 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Larissa Symbouras