

SUSTAINABLE HIGHLANDPARK



January 22, 2025 Meeting Minutes 7:00pm – 9:00pm

Rose DeLorenzo (chairing meeting), Tina Weishaus, Lisa Noss, Irene Marx, Claudia Farber, Sheree Neese Todd, Randy Solomon, Jake Callahan, Matthew Hersh, Paul Sauers, Irene Riegner, Tami S, Meli, Chris Perez

Opening

Tina - we have challenges we didn't have a week ago (new administration)

Tina is retiring as SHP chairperson but will still be involved

Topics for Discussion

- Mission Statement (to be voted on) - <https://forms.gle/SFcj848eZVZkFMxv7>

Sustainable Highland Park (SHP), the Borough's Green Team, is dedicated to educating and implementing sustainable actions and practices that improve the quality of life for all those who live, work and visit Highland Park, NJ. This includes environmental, economic and social initiatives. In our capacity as the Green Team SHP aims to help the Borough maintain and advance our Sustainable Jersey certification.

OR

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Tina - should we mention **social justice**? This was the conversation we had a year ago about the mission statement.

We'll vote between now and the next meeting. We'll continue the discussion via email.

- **Superfund Resolution** click to review, then to be voted on at <https://forms.gle/SFcj848eZVZkFMxv7>
 - Creating the legal framework for holding fossil fuel companies accountable: & they have to contribute to a fund allocated towards climate change adaptation projects. We're signaling to the Borough that we support this in Highland Park to indicate to the state that multiple boroughs support this, and hopefully this will put pressure on NJ will decide to pass this. This is a statement from constituents to our elected officials.

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- Matt Hersh to take this to the DPW and move this resolution through quickly for the February 5, 2025 Mayor & Council meeting
- Leadership transition, call for nominations - <https://forms.gle/SFcj848eZVZkFMxv7> - by Feb. 19
 - Sheree - there should be co-chairs for each committee and they should be part of a leadership team/executive committee that meets outside of the monthly meeting
 - Tina & Sheree are going to co-chair the Earth Day Fair
 - What structure are we looking at for SHP?
 - 2 co-chairs for SHP
 - 1-2 individuals for each committee
 - *Need to put more thought into*
- Jake Callahan - Asst. Borough Administrator (replaced Emma). Working on Sustainable Jersey certification
 - A lot of our actions expired on January 1. Want to get them back.
 - Some expired a few years ago. See if we can get them back
 - Ex: Green fair action expired 2-3 years ago, but we had one last year, so Jake needs to put together info for the application
 - Explore new ones. What are some easy ones to start with?
 - We currently have Silver certification (highest certification level). We can get gold in certain areas but there isn't a gold SJ certification.
 - Tina - We want to ensure that what we're doing matches the Sustainable Jersey actions so we get points
 - Matt - it's important for SHP to understand what actions need to be re-upped each year
 - Randy - every action has an expiration date, but something like an ordinance will continue. You need to show proof for each action and it takes time to track down everything. We need to document everything. Look at everything we're currently doing & look at the SJ actions. Think strategically about the 1 or 2 things we want to add each year.
 - Jake has a targeted list of actions for this year and will share it with us. Some actions need extra documentation
 - Meli - there should be more transparency from the borough so we can complete more actions. And more communication from the borough about what we're doing/accomplishing

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- Tina - there should be a committee of an SHP co-chair & 2 other people who meet with Jake & Matt and communicate back to us. There's been a gap in communication between the borough and SHP
- Sheree - recommends that we see an application for an action & also read all the SJ actions <https://www.sustainablejersey.com/actions/>
- Matt - we should identify 1 or 2 big actions at the start of the year
- **Highland Park is top 10 in the state!**
- Rose - recommends that we document the history of our SJ certification and it can possibly go on our website. *Meli can work with the high school to write a history of the environmental club at the HS (not a priority right now)*
- Next steps:
 - Find a time for Randy to meet with us before the next meeting to navigate us on the SJ website & share more about it
 - Jake to share his spreadsheet of actions with us
- Pertinent committee updates (will restructure at a future meeting)
 - Sunday, May 4th Earth Day Event Update (same day as the street fair) - Tina & Sheree working on & will organize a meeting soon
 - Programming Update - Lisa
 - THIS Sunday, January 26: Winter Workshop: No Waste Cooking - 2-3:30pm, Teen Center
 - Thursday February 14: Winter Workshop: No Waste Valentine's Day Arts & Crafts Night - 7-8:30pm, Teen Center
 - Repair Cafe, children's clothing swap in the works
 - Communications
 - New Website Status Update - Claudia & Lisa - we're working with Charles Metzger & we're starting on the new homepage and writing text. Need help with writing text for different program areas. We're aiming for an end of March launch. Claudia & Lisa to let the committee know what text we need
 - Discord Group Chat - Tami
 - Lisa to schedule a time to meet with KT & Tami next week
 - Newsletter Content - Matt could prepare a write-up about the Borough receiving a BPU? grant and using the monies to secure and electric powered garbage truck (did not receive the new truck yet)
 - Gas Powered Leaf Blower Task Force Update - upcoming meeting on Monday

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Topics Tabled for Future Meeting

- Clean-ups Update and End of Year Summary
- Councilperson Hersh report
- Adopt a Drain and Green Infrastructure Initiatives Update
- Native Plant Giveaways Update
- School Green Team Update
- Rain Garden Maintenance Crew Update
- Community Outreach & Apartment Sustainable Outreach Update
- Redevelopment Update

Committee Goals for 2025

- To be discussed, but you can add your goals to the Google Survey available at <https://forms.gle/SFcj848eZVZkFMxv7>

Next steps before next month's meeting:

- Get dates of Randy's availability to talk about Sustainable Jersey - Rose
- Jake is going to share a spreadsheet of SJ actions with us - Rose
- Everyone - **fill out survey by Friday:** <https://forms.gle/SFcj848eZVZkFMxv7>*
- Everyone - **[sign up for Discord](#) by Friday-** We switched from Slack and are moving to Discord for internal communications. It's much easier than email for things not to get lost since all SHP messages will be in one place.
- Finalize mission statement (options updated in both the agenda above and on the survey)
- Secure nominations and have new co-chairs, ideally by the next meeting - 2/26/25