

Montclair Environmental Commission

March Meeting Minutes – Draft

March 5, 2025 | 7:30 PM

Location: Montclair Municipal Building

Attendees: Suzanne Aptman (Chair), Bill Martens (Vice Chair), Ruchi Misra (Secretary), Keith Brodock, Gray Russell, Alison Tribus, Deputy Mayor Shin Andersen

Approval of Minutes

- **January 2025 Minutes:** Approval postponed to the April meeting.
 - **February 2025 Minutes:** Approved (yes: 6 no: 0).
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Reports / Updates

(Items requiring input, decisions, follow-up action and items resolved)

A. Skip the Stuff (STS) ordinance

- Montclair's STS effort officially launched on March 1st.
- Materials—decals, table tents, posters, employee guides, eco-friendly alternatives—were distributed to all 200+ restaurants to support customer and employee awareness and education. Reminder emails were sent to all businesses as well. Press and social media followed.
- Initial feedback from participating businesses has been overwhelmingly positive.

B. Climate Vulnerability Assessment

- Montclair's Planning Board is updating the Climate Change Related Hazard Vulnerability Assessment (CCRHA), which will be presented at their March 17th meeting. MEC members are invited to attend. Keith, Suzanne, and Ben were part of the original drafting several years ago.
- A public hearing is planned for May or June.
- The current assessment mainly addresses heat and flooding preparedness.
 - MEC decided to send an initial recommendation that a more comprehensive wildfire management plan is needed.
- Susan reported on a conversation with Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill regarding a coordinated regional effort in Legislative District 34 to address flooding and watershed management (Second River tributaries in Montclair, Bloomfield, Glen Ridge, Nutley). Montclair will be part of the task force.

C. Complete Streets Ordinance

- Montclair's Complete Streets Policy, originally adopted by resolution in 2009, will be formalized as an ordinance.
- Key changes include:
 - Establishment of an oversight board, consisting primarily of town staff (engineers, police, planning), citizen groups, and council representation.
 - Appointment of a Complete Streets Director to ensure accountability.
 - Implementation of a project review checklist and prioritization process for transportation projects.
- The ordinance will likely be presented at the April 8th meeting when the new Town Manager starts. Suzanne requested that MEC be part of the ordinance review. She will share draft ordinance for MEC members to provide comments.

D. Prohibiting Certain Invasive Plants

- NJ Senate Environment Committee reintroduced a bill, S1029, in February 2025 aimed at prohibiting the sale and propagation of invasive plant species. NJDEP announced their support for seeing this pass before summer 2025
- MEC decided to pause drafting a local ordinance and see if this bill will advance before the summer.
- Key points from the bill:
 - A one-year plan for enactment
 - No propagation after 13 months
 - Sales of invasive species prohibited after 48 months

E. Municipal Community Solar Program

- The Council committee reviewed the materials and recommendation prepared by MEC and is very interested in pursuing this program. As next steps Council members will get final questions answered and review the formal proposal/contract and resolution.
- Some outstanding MEC questions were addressed:
 - The PSE&G bill does clearly highlight the community solar savings so that subscribers are aware.
 - Montclair has approximately 5,000 Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) households, representing about 30% of the community.
 - We can contract with a solar developer who can serve all 5,000 LMI households right away or through subsequent RFPs.

Next Meeting: Wednesday April 2, 2025 at 7:30 pm