***STRATHMERE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION***

**Minutes of the General Meeting**

**Friday, July 7, 2023**

 The meeting was called to order by Janice Connell, President, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. Attending the 7:00 p.m. meeting at the Strathmere Firehouse were Janice Connell, President; Juliette Schlucter,

Vice-President; Rosemarie Whelan, Secretary; Donna Diefenderfer,

Member-at-Large; and Jessica Kohles, Newsletter Editor.

 Approximately 25 members and guests were also present at the meeting.

**AGENDA**

**Welcome/Introduction of Board**

 Janice Connell warmly welcomed everyone to the meeting.

 Following this, members of the Board greeted and introduced themselves.

**Secretary’s Report**

 Rosemarie Whelan stated that the minutes of the August 13, 2022 meeting had been posted online for members to review. She then asked for someone to make a motion to accept them. Paul Trumbull made a motion to approve. This was seconded by Jessica Kohles. The motion carried.

**Treasurer’s Report**

 Donna Diefenderfer gave the report in Terence Buckley’s absence.

 Membership dues have increased 57% from last year.

 The Net Ordinary Income shows -$2,857.55; however, we have $2,000 to be deposited. Also, unsold inventory is not included here. If it were, a profit would be shown.

**Bergus-Laurence Service to Strathmere Award**

 Juliette Schlucter stated that the SIA wanted to continue the legacy of Elizabeth Bergus’s extraordinary service to Strathmere by introducing the Bergus-Laurence Service to Strathmere Award.

 Juliette requested that members go to the website to access the Nomination Form and cast a vote.

 The eligibility and nomination process is as follows.

 All active members of the Strathmere Improvement Association are eligible to nominate candidates for the Award.

 Nominees must be 16 years or older.

 Candidates must have shown a commitment to either improving the quality of life in Strathmere or improving the experience of residents or visitors to Strathmere.

 Nominations will be accepted through July 30th.

 The SIA Board will review the nominations and choose the recipient.

 The Award winner will be announced at the August 5th meeting.

**Proposed Bylaws Revision**

 Proposed revisions to the bylaws included adding two additional Executive Officer positions. These included a Communications Officer and a second Member-at-Large position. The bylaws draft was posted on the website. Comments from the members are welcomed and will be considered. A vote is to be taken at the August annual meeting.

**Piping Plover Project Update – Deborah Rivel**

 Deborah reported that no nest was successful this year, and that they are working closely with Fish and Wildlife.

 A new nest has hatched at 14th St. in Ocean City, and they are seeking help in monitoring that nest.

 Deborah also stated that they are aiming to do more outreach this year.

 On June 29, a program took place at the Schiavo Library, where a new banner, given to the Strathmere Plover Project by the Strathmere Improvement Association, was shown. Selfies could be taken with a plover on the banner. Also, plover eggs were painted and pledges were signed to “Be a Good Egg.”

 On July 6, Deborah Rivel, the founder of the Strathmere Plover Project, gave an overview of the project at the Schiavo Library.

 Safety Day at the Firehouse on July 30 will also showcase the Strathmere Plover Project.

**Township Happenings**

 Paul Dietrich, Upper Township Chief Engineer, has resigned. He has held that position for 24 years. Paul has accepted a position in Cape May. An engineering consulting firm will be utilized for Township Engineering needs. Due to the costs associated with this, the Twp. Business Administrator, Gary Demarzo, advises to go to him directly.

 The Upper Township Green Team is seeking volunteers.

 There has been a Code Enforcement Officer and State Police presence in Strathmere during the weekends.

 The Pumping Station, on Bayview Ave. at the playground, is on track. The target date for completion is September.

 Upper Township has sent out a beach safety reminder to stay away from the cliffs that have formed at the edge of the sand dunes along Strathmere’s beaches. The cliffs are unstable. Beach replenishment is still scheduled for August.

**Accomplishments of Focus Groups**

 There were 58 recommendations with these results.

 33 are completed

 5 are planned for completion by year’s end

 2 are in the planning stage

 10 are to be prioritized for 2023 onward

 5 are continuing

 **Quality of Life**

 Accomplished

 Biannual 100 beach plums to be planted to protect dunes

 Support of UT Beach Patrol

 Increased engagement with Upper Township officials

 New signage at beach entrances

 Next Steps

 Work with UT on parking and posted speed solutions

 Work with the Cape May County Bridge Commission for bridge toll relief – (They were empathetic, but

 offered no solution.)

 **Conservation, Environment and Flood Mitigation**

 Accomplished

 Supported the expanded Piping Plover Project

 Planted beach plum saplings on dunes to minimize erosion

 Distributed native plant document to Strathmere residents

 Developed the Pollinator Garden Plan for Strathmere

 Add information on Marine Mammal Stranding Center to SIA website

 Next Steps

 Initiate implementation of Pollinator Garden Project

 Partner with conservation groups like Conserve Wildlife to protect marine life

 Provide recommendation to UT to draft landscaping plan ordinance

 **Noise and Dark Skies**

 Accomplished

 Drafted Excessive Light Ordinance for UT

 Contributed to the development of the Noise Reduction

 Ordinance

 Next Steps

 Broader outreach in partnership with the UT Green Team

 **Ordinance Enforcement**

 Accomplished

 Provide feedback to the Parking Committee regarding parking concerns, mini parking spots, inconsistent

 ticketing, availability of towing company

 Encouraged residents to attend Twp. Committee, Zoning and

 Planning Board meetings

 Encouraged residents to submit applications to the Zoning and

 Planning Board so they can be considered for vacancies

 Next Steps

 Continue to encourage residents to attend Zoning/Planning Board meetings

 Continue to encourage residents to submit applications to the

 Planning and Zoning Boards

 Continue providing feedback to UT on their increased enforcement efforts

 **Playground**

 Accomplished

 The SIA and the SFEC visited all playgrounds in Upper Twp.

 Conducted analysis, researched playground safety standards, and completed report of

 recommendations for renovation/improvement Provided draft design and pricing

 Developed fundraising plan

 Next Steps

 Obtain trademark for “The Playground Project” and incorporate the SIA. Develop agreements with the Township: Memorandum of Understanding and

 Resolution to initiate the project.

 Apply for grant money and initiate fundraising.

**Pollinator Gardens**

 A pollinator garden is designed to contain plants to provide food and shelter to animals (bees, birds, butterflies, small mammals, etc.) that pollinate plants that support the local ecosystem.

 Resources for pollinator gardens include –

 Nature’s Best Hope by Douglas Tallamy

 Rutgers has resources that can also be accessed

 Schiavo Library program on Aug. 31

 Gardens can be certified by National Wildlife Federation

**Next Meeting**

 Greg Bennett, Strathmere artist, will be our speaker. The meeting will take place on Aug. 5th at the Strathmere Firehouse at 10:30 a.m.

Rosemarie Whelan

Secretary

**Program**

***How to Create a Pollinator Garden for Butterflies, Hummingbirds, Bees and More***

**Patricia Sutton** - **Educator, Naturalist and Author**



 The following are points from Pat’s presentation when creating a pollinator garden and gardening for wildlife.

 Wildlife benefits when we plant native plants. The most important native plant is an oak.

 Holes in host plants are a good sign, as pollinators are eating them.

 As many pollinators are insects, do not use any insecticides.

 Native plants treated with neo-nix (neonicotinoid) will kill pollinators.

New Jersey passed a law banning the selling of neo-nix.

 Carpenter bees are an important pollinator.

 When you start gardening for pollinators, keep these points in mind.

 Butterflies need sun; therefore, place plants in sunlight.

 Plant in masses – three of each.

 Offer nectar spray through late fall

 Dandelions – butterflies will benefit from these.

 Support nurseries that carry native plants. Nurseries in New Jersey that sell native plants are Goshen Gardens, Summersweet Native Plants, and Prairie Nursery.

 Pat suggested reading author Heather Holmes, who has written four books about beneficial pollinators and their relationship to plants.

 Pat also suggested visiting the website,jerseyyards.org where topics such as *Create a Jersey Friendly Yard* and *Jersey Friendly Plants* can be accessed.

 If your garden isn’t large, Pat recommended Kate Brandes’s book, *Native Plants for the Small Yard.*

 We have eliminated millions of insects. Oliver Milman’s *The Insect Crisis* discusses this.

 What a most informative and interesting presentation Pat gave!

patsuttonwildlifegarden.com