



**Virtual Meeting
Hawthorne Environmental Commission - Minutes
January 8, 2026**

Call to Order: Rayna Laiosa, Mary Mahon, Pat MacDonnell, Holly Cowen, Rob Meier, and Mike Mariani

Guests: Melissa Lambert and Kathy Blundo Serafin

Join Zoom Meeting

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- I. Attendance and Acceptance of Meeting
 - a. Hawthorne Environmental Commission/Green Team – Minutes December 11, 2025
Motion by: Rob Meier, 2nd Motion by: Holly Cowen

- II. Hawthorne Planning Board – Robert Meier January 6, 2026 Reorganization, Discussed Izabella Learning Center-Hawthorne located at 258 Hawthorne Avenue – child care/pre school nursery, and the applicant will continue testimony at next Planning Board meeting in February 2026

- III. Green Team Meeting
 - a. Community Garden – 2026 Growing Season – Rayna will announce three (3) garden beds will be made available end of January/February2026
 - b. Next Green Team Meeting: Monday January 26, 2026 at 7:30 pm

- IV. Kids to Kids Newsletter - Winter’s Kids Newsletter on Jane Goodall. – December 14, 2025 sent to Hawthorne Schools, Borough Website, Hawthorne Library, Facebook pages, Tap Into Hawthorne, and Gazette.

- V. Native Plant – Sidewalk and Curb Area Discussion -
 - a. **November 2025 Discussion** - A Hawthorne resident requested clarification on planting Native Plants between the sidewalk and the curb - grassy area. She received a warning for the plantings. Rita will take a photos and send them to Rayna for review. Rita will research for the appropriate native plants to be planted between the sidewalk and the curb.
 - b. **December 2025 Discussion** - It appears 3 neighbors are planting native plants on 2nd Avenue. On November 14, 2025, Rita sent photos to Rayna – it appears that some of the native plants have been pruned while others just withered. Discussion -types of native plants and the appropriate height. Rita provided a list of native plants – ground cover, carexes, and grasses. Source: https://npsnj.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/BBP_Going_Native_Northern_NJ_Edition_2022.pdf Discussed a 12 inch growth height seemed to be acceptable but it appears some of the plants may grow several feet higher. Maureen was asked to check with Nick, Lincoln Landscape, and verify actual native plants that could be suitable in this area.
 - c. **January 2026 Discussion** – International Property Maintenance Code BO444-25 Sidewalks, Curbs & Driveway Aprons: Maintenance & Repair- PM 302.4 - Weeds - Premises and exterior property shall be maintained free from weeds or plant growth in excess of 7” (seven inches). Noxious weeds shall be prohibited. Weeds shall be defined as all grasses, annual plants and vegetation, other than trees or shrubs provided; however, this term shall not include cultivated flowers and gardens. Note from Hawthorne’s Property Maintenance Department - A cultivated flower is a flower that has been improved or specially bred through cultivation. A cultivated garden is a garden where the soil has been loosened and weeded to improve the soil's structure and promote plant growth. Rayna will work with the Building department to understand PM 302.4 in the context of native plants in the sidewalk, curb, and driveway aprons.

- VI. Terra Cycle -
 - a. **December 2025 Discussion** - Kathy came to Rayna about cigarette butt pollution on Diamond Bridge Avenue at the recent Help the Hawthorne BEE Defeat Litter event. At the Sustainable Jersey award ceremony in November 2025, Rayna met Paula, Environmental Chair in Medford NJ. The Medford Environmental Commission worked with Terra Cycle and collected and sent cigarette materials free of charge to be recycled. Kathy will call Paula and gather information on the box size container for the cigarette materials and how Medford runs their recycling operation. Maureen suggested one box at the municipal building. Liquor stores and restaurants are being considered for next phase. Let’s do an initial phase at the municipal building. Based on the Terra Cycle’s website, it states that one (1) box is \$133.
 - b. January 2026 Updates - Kathy is waiting to hear back from Paula and Terra Cycle.

- VII. 34th Annual Cel Earth Bration – Saturday April 18, 2026 – Hawthorne High School
 - a. School Use Application submitted November 2025
 - b. Brainstorm discussion on our theme and T-shirt design
 - i. Hawthorne a Hidden Gem – (Meaning Inclusive of Hawthorne’s Sites, Places, and Activities)
 - ii. Hawthorne Highlights – Your Favorite Highlights
 - iii. Hawthorne Love Where You Live
 - iv. What I Love About Hawthorne
 - v. Why I Love Hawthorne
 - vi. Our Hawthorne Pride
 - vii. Hawthorne Neighborhood

- viii. Our Hawthorne Neighborhood
- ix. A Better Tomorrow For Hawthorne – recycle more, clean up litter, clean air and water, conserve water,
 - x. Revitalization of downtown, maintaining “home friendly atmosphere” – city moving to country; city style – country charm; train station, shops and restaurants – Why did you move to Hawthorne?
 - xi. Choosing Hawthorne’s Lifestyle; Choosing Hawthorne’s Environment
 - xii. Hawthorne, Your Choice and Lifestyle
 - xiii. Choosing Hawthorne’s Sustainable Environment
 - xiv. Choosing Hawthorne’s Sustainable Lifestyle
 - xv. Everyone contributing – small steps to big steps
 - xvi. Hawthorne’s Sustainability is Healthy Living
 - xvii. Hawthorne Sustainability = Healthy Living
 - xviii. **Think** Globally, **Act** Locally

Co-Pilot Generated Themes

- 1. "Earth in Our Hands"
- 2. "Sustainable Futures"
- 3. "Nature's Call: Act Now"
- 4. "Green Living, Blue Planet"
- 5. "Protect, Restore, Thrive"
- 6. "From Awareness to Action"
- 7. "Innovate for the Earth"

- VIII. Update on Issues and Commissioners Concerns:
 - a. Council Meeting January 20, 2026 – Rayna will present Hawthorne’s Sustainable Jersey Silver Re-Certification Presentation – All are welcome to attend.

**Next Virtual Hawthorne Environmental Commission Meeting
Thursday February 12, 2026 at 7:30 pm**