

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of January 17, 2001
Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Jonathan Abrahams, Arnold Henderson, Laurel Kornfeld, Loren Muldowney,
Anthony Puniello, Councilwoman Elsie Foster-Dublin

Absent: Wendy Rosen

Guest: Eugene Young

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:20 PM.
2. The minutes of the December 20, 2000 meeting were approved.
3. Annual Reorganization and Election of Officers
 - a) Chair. Jonathan nominated Mike, and Loren seconded the nomination. Mike was unanimously elected Chair for 2001.
 - b) Vice Chair. Tony nominated Arnold, and Jonathan seconded the nomination. Arnold was unanimously elected Vice Chair for 2001.
 - c) Secretary. Mike nominated Laurel, and Tony seconded the nomination. Laurel was unanimously elected Secretary for 2001.
4. Correspondence
 - a) ANJEC sent us notice of their Stormwater 101 Course, which will be held at the East Brunswick Public Library on February 7. There is no charge for the course, and Mike encouraged all Commission members to attend. Jonathan suggested we pass this information to other Boards that might be interested, especially the Planning Board.
 - b) We received notification from PSE&G informing us of their application to DEP for a freshwater wetlands modified statewide General Permit #1. PSE&G is requesting authorization to continue repairing, replacing, and maintaining natural gas distribution mains within public rights of way in the PSE&G natural gas service area. A map on the back of the letter illustrates the areas covered. The full application can be reviewed at the Borough Clerk's office or at the county Planning Board office.
 - c) We received a copy of the Middlesex County Strategic Planning Newsletter, which contained notice of a Public Meeting on the Middlesex County Strategic Planning Process to be held on Wednesday, January 31. This meeting is for the public to participate in developing plans for future growth and infrastructure in Middlesex County.
 - d) We received a copy of ANJEC's latest publication, "The Open Space Plan," a resource paper that describes what an open space plan contains and how to go about creating one. An open space plan must identify all public and private open space in town, describe the various parcels of land, and contain a vision of what is planned for them. Arnold suggested we begin drafting such a plan for Highland Park. We would need a list of all open space in town, including block and lot numbers, square footage, and acreage. The next step would be matching coded areas on the Master Plan with the same areas on the borough tax map. Tony said he will bring up the topic of an open space plan with the Planning Board when they discuss revision of the Master Plan. He suggested using conservation easements for areas within ten feet of a body of water. Laurel will obtain a list of borough open space areas from Anne Barron. She will also make copies of the Brick Open Space Plan Ordinance for Arnold, Mike, and Elsie.
 - e) We received a copy of the Middlesex County Improvement Authority (MCIA) newsletter, which discusses properties the county is acquiring including Red's Marina and the Barwood Conservation Easement. The Barwood area is described in the newsletter as the Donaldson Park Extension. Mike called MCIA and found out that a Phase I environmental investigation was done on Red's Marina and will shortly be done on the Barwood property. A Phase II environmental investigation will soon be done on Red's Marina as well. Phase I involves a

general walk through to find hazardous sites, and Phase II involves collecting samples. Mike will send a written request to MCIA for copies of the Phase I and II investigations. He also suggested we submit our Greenway Feasibility Study to the county. Gene recommended sending the Planning Board a copy of the memorialization of the Sullivan Way approval, and Arnold said we should send the EIS map from before the memorialization was done. Arnold also said that Bruce Kuczynski wanted the borough to acquire a Palm Pilot with a Global Positioning System (GPS) attachment. This could help us determine exact property lines. Elsie will look into whether any action was taken on this. She also suggested the county may have GPS equipment that Highland Park could borrow.

5. Old Business.

- a) Bucks Woods. Mike distributed our recent memo regarding Bucks Woods to the Mayor and Council. If Jack Morris does file an appeal, there will be a notice published in the local newspapers.
- b) Matching Grants. We have no new information about the Cultural Resources Survey but will be informed by NJDEP as to whether we received the grant by March 15. For the Biosurvey, Mike sent letters to five environmental consulting firms asking them to submit proposals by February 5. These consultants are Thonet Associates, Inc.; Kupper Associates; Biostar Associates, Inc.; Amy Greene Environmental, Inc.; and Princeton-Somerset Group, Inc. Arnold added that the Naturalist Club at Rutgers and the Baykeeper could help by going through the area and compiling information for the consultants. We should review the proposals at our next meeting and select a consultant so that work can begin in the early spring.
- c) Environmental Ordinances. Laurel brought in copies of model and actual ordinances from ANJEC on a variety of topics. At our next meeting, we will list about 10 topics and determine whether Highland Park has an existing ordinance on each one. Then we will prioritize several items and recommend Council pass ordinances on these. Laurel will give Arnold a copy of each open space ordinance she received from ANJEC. She will also have ANJEC send us more copies of the Open Space and Stream Corridor Protection publications. Additionally, she will ask ANJEC to send Elsie a copy of all the ordinances she was sent.

6. New Business

- a) Environmental Agenda for the New Millennium. Arnold brought in a revised copy of this and suggested we prioritize the items on which we wish to concentrate. Laurel said Highland Park has two noise ordinances—one by the borough and one by the Board of Health. She will bring several copies of each one to the next meeting.
- b) Replacing Street Lights. We currently rent our street lights, and the Governing Body is looking into redoing them. We recommend using the full cut off type of lights and possibly providing a mechanism for individual homeowners to have shields put on the lights near their homes. Elsie said the Mayor and Council have obtained brochures on different types of street lighting. Arnold said there are official illuminating engineering guidelines being drawn up by the Society of Illuminating Engineers, and these are available on several web sites. Gene said we should send our recommendations to the Borough Engineer.
- c) Arnold informed us that a free CD Rom of the New Jersey State Plan is now available.
- d) HERP Training Course. This free course, sponsored by NJDEP Wildlife, will be held on March 10 from 10 AM-1 PM. It will train volunteers to identify amphibians and reptiles. Volunteers are needed for this, and they could move us ahead on the biosurvey. Those interested should respond by March 5. Arnold will attend this course.
- e) Arnold informed us that the Shade Tree Advisory Committee obtained a grant for a Tree Management Plan. This is a document we will send to the state. Kevin Scibilia wrote a draft of the plan, and copies were distributed to Commission members to read and make comments. The plan describes how the borough will handle tree issues. Gene said that this management plan is required for monies from specific tree programs, monies currently not available to the borough. Commission members should send Arnold comments within the next week.
- f) Computerized Tree Inventory. Our tree inventory was prepared several years ago and is now in a database that is awkward to use because of a software problem. Bruce Kuczynski did the

first round of revisions, and the computerization of the tree inventory is still in progress. Computerization will allow us to track things such as specific trees that become hazards.

- g) High School Environmental Club. Arnold suggested Laurel inform the club's advisor about the HERP Training Seminar and have him/her ask students if they would be interested in attending.
 - h) Environmental Commission Web Site. Loren said her husband offered to set up at no cost, an Environmental Commission web site. We agreed to do this on a trial basis. Information on the site will include meeting dates, minutes, and names of Commission members. Loren will send the URL to us by email.
7. The meeting adjourned at 10:40 PM. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, February 21, 2001 at 8 PM in Borough Hall.