

Highland Park Environmental Commission

Meeting of March 21, 2001

Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Jonathan Abrahams, Laurel Kornfeld, Tony Puniello, Wendy Rosen, Councilwoman Elsie Foster-Dublin

Absent: Arnold Henderson, Loren Muldowney

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:20 PM.
2. The minutes of the February 21, 2001 meeting were approved.
3. Correspondence—None
4. Site Plans

a) Pad Thai
217 Raritan Avenue
Docket No.: #162-28-01
Block and Lot: B-162, L-28

The applicant is appealing the denial of a building permit for an addition to a restaurant. The proposal is for the construction of a single-story addition, an upgrade of the restrooms to meet ADA standards, exterior façade changes, construction of a mezzanine and access stairs, and interior modifications to the vestibule and cash register area. The applicant is seeking a waiver of site plan approval. No Comments.

b) Nextel
501-505 Raritan Avenue
Docket No: #142-1, 2-00
Block and Lot: B-142, L-1 & 2

This is the same proposal we have seen previously to place 12 cell tower antennas and a 10 X 20 foot prefabricated equipment shelter on top of an apartment building at the corner of Raritan and North Fifth Avenues. The applicant has changed the antennas' height and made several other revisions.

Comments: Same as our original comments on this application in September 2000. Note: The application will be heard on March 26, by the Zoning Board. Wendy will attend this meeting and will bring along a copy of our comments from September.

c) Bertalan and Zsolt Hriczo
Hilton Street and Woodbridge Avenue
Docket No: #71-50, 51, 52-01
Block and Lot: B-71, L-50, 51, 52

This proposal is for the construction of a new two-story single family house. The applicant is seeking a bulk variance because the lot size is 4917 square feet, less than the 5000 square foot distance required by the ordinance for minimum lot size. Two parking spaces are also proposed. No Comments.

5. Old Business

a) Biosurvey. Mike sent a memo to Borough Administrator Richard Kunze informing him that we chose Thonet and asking him to start the paperwork on this project. Approval of the contract is being placed on the agenda for the next Borough Council meeting. Mike is also sending a progress report on the project to DEP. We hope to have Thonet start work on the biosurvey in April.

- b) Cultural Resources Survey. We have not yet heard from DEP as to whether we will receive the grant for this.
 - c) Proposed Amendments to Land Use Ordinance. All three amendments proposed by the Council were withdrawn because Schoor De Palma has a contract with Jack Morris, and former Borough Planner John Taikina works for Schoor De Palma. The Commission will write a memo to Council regarding the process by which the introduction of new ordinances is handled, specifically requesting that the Environmental Commission be given an opportunity for input earlier in the process of creating such ordinances and before a first reading of the ordinances is held.
 - d) Open Space Inventory. Tony found out that municipalities seeking grant money for open space purchase under former Governor Whitman's 1998 initiative are required to have Open Space Inventories. These must be presented to Green Acres in order for this money to be obtained. Laurel, Loren, and Arnold are continuing to work on researching open spaces in town in order to create such an inventory.
 - e) River Road Monuments. These are privately owned, but Tony said the Department of Transportation (DOT) has money for projects such as repairing these. We will look into finding pictures of the monuments as they looked 50 years ago as a first step to possible restoration.
 - f) Middlesex County Land Acquisition for Open Space. Mike wrote a letter to the Middlesex County Improvement Authority (MCIA) asking for copies of the Phase I and II environmental studies of Red's Marina and the Barwood property. He received a response from Wilentz, Goldman, and Spitzer, the law firm representing the MCIA, saying that their policy is to not release Phase I and II studies until negotiations with the property owners are complete. MCIA is a semi-autonomous agency of the county.
 - g) Environmental Education Center. A new subcommittee has been formed to work on the Center. This committee consists of Mike Rosenberg, Arnold Henderson, Ruth Bowers, and Eugene Young. They met once and discussed the idea of creating a series of stops along the waterfront instead of a single structure. Mike obtained some brochures featuring permanent and semi-permanent gazebos to consider for these sites.
6. New Business.
- a) Mission Statement. Mike distributed a draft mission statement for the Commission and will bring it in for further review at our next meeting.
 - b) Earth Day Cleanup. Laurel will contact the high school environmental club advisor to find out if there are enough students interested in doing this, possibly on Sunday, April 22.
 - c) ANJEC Seminars. Laurel reported that ANJEC is again holding Environmental Commission training courses this month. One will be held on Monday, March 26 in Rockaway Township from 6-9:30 PM.
 - d) Environmental Publications. Tony obtained copies of DEP's "Flood Hazard Area Control Act Rules," "A Guide to the Land Use Regulatory Program of the NJDEP," and "Stream Encroachment Administrative Checklist." He will give them to Arnold to put in the environmental folder in the library.
 - e) Environmental Ordinances. We will work on putting together a priority list for environmental ordinances to recommend to Council at our next meeting.
7. The meeting adjourned at 10:10 PM. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, April 18, 2001 at 8 PM in Borough Hall.