

Highland Park Environmental Commission

Meeting of December 19, 2001

Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Jonathan Abrahams, Arnold Henderson, Laurel Kornfeld, Loren Muldowney, Wendy Rosen, Councilwoman Carolyn Timmons
Absent: Anthony Puniello
Guests: Nancy Johnson, NPP Coordinator; Richard Marx; Blaine Rothhauser of Thonet Associates; Leora Wenger; Eugene Young

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:20 PM.
2. The minutes of the November 28, 2001 meeting were approved.
3. Correspondence
 - a) We received notice from the Middlesex County Department of Planning to municipalities within the Lower Raritan-Middlesex County Water Quality Management Area informing us that the county Planning Board passed a resolution on Dec. 11 recommending the adoption of amendments to the Lower Raritan-Middlesex County Water Quality Management Plan Revision and Amendment Procedures.
 - b) We received notice of a public hearing by the Middlesex County Planning Board on the Middlesex County Pedestrian-Bicycle Path Plan. The hearing will be on Feb. 12, 2002 at 4 PM in the Middlesex County Planning Board Meeting Center, 1st floor, 40 Livingston Avenue, New Brunswick. The purpose of this hearing is to receive comments from the public and interested parties regarding the plan. After the hearing, the county Planning Board will consider adoption of the plan as an element of the Middlesex County Adopted Transportation Plan and Middlesex County Comprehensive Master Plan. Arnold recommended we have someone at this meeting and write a letter with our comments on what we want to see in Highland Park.
 - c) We received a copy of a DEP Suspected Hazardous Substance Discharge Notification dated Dec. 7, 2001 regarding soil contamination by gas and oily waste found at 1010 Raritan Avenue and informing us that a cleanup of this area is in progress.
4. Site Plans
 - a) Leopoldine Binder
321 Harper Place
Docket No.: #33-39-01
Block and Lot: B-33, L-39

The applicant seeks to construct a two-and-one half story 16 X 20-foot wood frame addition onto a single-family home on a 37 X 100-foot lot. She is seeking three variances—one for side-yard setback, one for maximum lot coverage, and one for maximum impervious coverage—and claims that the small size of the lot prevents compliance with the ordinance. The addition would increase maximum impervious coverage from its current 33% to 43%.

Comments: Reduce impervious coverage to conform with the zoning ordinance. This could be done by reducing the size of the addition or removing some of the paved area.

5. Old Business

- a) Biosurvey. Blaine Rothauser of Thonet Associates brought four final copies of the biosurvey report and presented an extensive slide presentation on his findings of the existing flora and fauna at the site both last spring and in mid-December. In his presentation, he divided the area studied into several biologic zones, described how it is rich in biodiversity, and discussed the cost and potential for restoration efforts. He added an addendum to the final report listing additional species he found in December including a Northern Harris Hawk, which is a threatened species. We now have to submit two copies of the final report to NJDEP. Blaine agreed to do this presentation again for the Borough Council at no additional cost, and we will make plans for an appropriate date and time.
- b) Greenway Environmental Education Center Presentation to Middlesex County. Discussion of this was postponed to our next meeting due to most of the meeting time being spent on discussion of the biosurvey.
- c) Open Space and Inventory Plan. Discussion postponed as above.
- d) Amendments to Zoning Ordinance. Discussion postponed as above.
- e) Environmental Commission Website. Arnold will forward text content for the website to Leora Wenger and Jonathan. Leora will study Blaine Rothauser's interactive map of the biosurvey area. She suggested scanning hand drawn maps onto a computer and placing landmarks on these maps. Our problem is that we have no base maps to use. DEP has aerial photos of the entire state, but in order to use them, we would have to buy the workstation and software, which are very expensive. Arnold questioned whether we can download and transfer GIS maps from DEP even if we are unable to manipulate them.

6. New Business

- a) Meeting dates and times. We will continue our schedule of meeting on the third Wednesday of every month at 8 PM in 2002.

7. The meeting adjourned at 11:18 PM. Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, January 16, 2002, at 8 PM in Borough Hall.