

Highland Park Environmental Commission Meeting of July 17, 2002 Minutes

Present: Arnold Henderson, Anthony Puniello, Wendy Rosen, Michael Rosenberg
Absent: Jonathan Abrahams, Laurel Kornfeld, Loren Muldowney
Guest: Eugene Young

The meeting opened for informal discussion at 8:15 PM, then was officially called to order with a quorum at 9:25 PM.

The minutes of the June 19, 2002, meeting were approved with one change. Item 5 b concerning the list of open space requests sent to the county should end (p. 2) with "is being sent by the borough."

Correspondence

- The East Coast Greenway newsletter describes a potential link by ferry to Staten Island from New Jersey's biking/hiking route in Perth Amboy.
- A copy of the stream encroachment permit application for New Brunswick's HOPE VI-Phase 2 project describes 76 living units and some other buildings to be constructed on the site of razed apartments on New Brunswick's side of the river.
- "Wetlands Watch" from the Edison Wetlands Association describes Senate testimony by Robert Spiegel urging cleanup of the Chemical Insecticide Corp. Superfund site.
- The NJ Coastal Management Program sent four copies of a flyer on coastal management.

Review of New Site Plans: none.

Old Business

- **Open Space Plan.** No changes were suggested to text, but one or more maps are still needed. Arnold Henderson will ask the borough planner, Susan Blickstein, if she has suggestions concerning the general scope and approach of the plan. We discussed the plan's possible incorporation by reference into the Revised Master Plan now being prepared.
- **Trail Grant Status Report.** Our new DEP contact is Larry Miller 609-984-0041. He received our written request to revise our work plan so as to keep the grant in the "multiple use" category (as it had originally been treated). Arnold gave him additional information by phone and will send a revised letter as he requested. The work will now be resurfacing and providing runoff control and native plantings for the connecting path from the Southside Bikeway to Donaldson Park along the DPW fence, upgrading it for bikes, wheelchairs, and strollers. Any grant funds left over will be used for plantings and improvements uphill at the junction of the DPW segment with the paved Southside Bikeway, the footpath into The Meadows, and the resting area with its recently installed benches.
- **Greenway/Environmental Education Centers.** The selected landscape architect, MKW Associates, has submitted a draft contract. It is now being reviewed by the borough attorney. The Environmental Commission noted that contract language now seems to prohibit Highland Park from reusing MKW's drawings for future work, or at least from turning the drawings over to a competing contractor. We prefer a wording that more clearly allows us to use the base map or other drawings for our own

purposes, such as marking locations for future plantings, signs, etc., or posting drawings on the web site or other public display.

- **Proposed Changes to Donaldson Park–Comments to Middlesex County.** We reexamined the February 2002 drawing from Schoor DePalma and decided to send a list of our comments and questions to Mayor Frank as talking points when she meets with Ralph Albanir, head of the county Parks Department. Arnold will send Gene Young a copy of the list we made at an earlier meeting, Gene will add his comments, and Gene will deliver it to the mayor.

ANJEC Awards to Environmental Commissions. These are annual awards for projects completed. We previously received one (honorable mention) for the 1992 Natural Resource Inventory. We decided to submit this year the new Highland Park Environmental web site, whose posted content will include the Open Space List and Open Space Plan. Mike Rosenberg and Arnold will write the application.

Environmental Web Site. We decided that the Draft Open Space Plan could now be posted (as the Open Space Inventory already is), provided that the *Plan* was clearly distinguished as a draft, with public comment requested (via email to the site). The "wish list" submitted to the county can also be posted, as this is now a public document, provided we can get a suitable electronic form from the borough.

Announcements from Council. Gene Young reported these environment-related announcements from the last meeting of the Borough Council:

- Council voted to proceed with condemnation of the River Road limo lot for a new park.
- Gary Minkoff will serve the remainder of Kim Ricketts' term on the council and become the new liaison to the Environmental Commission and Shade Tree Advisory Committee. Our current liaison, Elsie Foster-Dublin, will, however, keep contact with us and help him ease into the position over the next six months.
- The Main Street USA award to the borough will provide training and technical assistance in revitalizing the downtown.
- The street tree planting of 105 trees has been completed. Residents and business owners wishing new trees in future plantings should contact the Department of Public Works (Linda Monte) at 732-247-9379.

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 PM. There will be no August meeting. The next meeting will be September 18, 2002.