

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of November 20, 2002
Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Jonathan Abrahams, Arnold Henderson, Laurel Kornfeld,
Anthony Puniello, Wendy Rosen

Absent: Loren Muldowney

Guests: Gabor Greenstein of the NJ Farm Bureau Water Quality Program,
Julie Hajdusek, Watershed Specialist for the Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:15 PM.
2. The minutes of the October 16, 2002 meeting were approved with the following corrections:
 - a) The third sentence in Item 5b) is changed to read, "The firm expressed a desire to make environmentally-compatible projects."
 - b) In Item 5b), the sentence about Kevin Wolfe is changed to read, " Kevin Wolfe, the architect hired to design the building, has renovation experience." The rest of this sentence is removed.
 - c) In Item 5e), omit the sentence "Tony reported that there is no checklist."
 - d) In Item 5e), the sentence about Anne Barron's reference to the DEP wetlands map is changed to read, "Anne said that DEP has an aerial wetlands map for the area indicating wetlands may be downstream."
3. Correspondence
 - a) We received a memo from the Borough Clerk inviting members of the Environmental Commission to a Borough Council meeting on December 3 at 8 PM, at which time the Council will publicly recognize the Commission for receiving an ANJEC award for its web site.
 - b) We received a letter from Schoor DiPalma notifying us that the Middlesex County Parks Department is applying for a permit from DEP under the Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act. The permit will establish the boundary of freshwater wetlands in Donaldson Park.
4. Site Plans
 - a) Lindsay & Gabriel Kotliar
423 Becker Street
Docket No.: #85-24-02
Block and Lot: B-85, L-24
The applicant proposes a two-story addition to the front and rear of the house. A variance is being requested for front-yard setback.
No Comments.
 - b) David & Maryanne Levitt
125 Harper Street
Docket No.: #16-19-02
Block and Lot: B-16, L-19
The applicant proposes to enclose a small porch and to add a kitchen and an 11 X 11-foot deck to a single family house. Variances are being requested for side yard setback and for minimum distance between structures.
No Comments.
 - c) Morgan Lincoln Group
26 Lincoln Avenue
Docket No.: #183-23-02
Block and Lot: B-183, L-23
This is a previously-viewed proposal to construct five attached houses on a vacant lot. A letter to the Zoning Board providing additional information is attached as a supplement to the application. The

applicant is seeking a use variance because the property is zoned for commercial offices, and the company wants to construct residential housing.

Comments: Same comments as last time.

d) Geshar Progressive Hebrew School

417 Denison Street

Docket No.: #144-153-02

Block and Lot: B-144, L-153

This building is presently used as an office building. The applicant seeks to use a large room in the basement for a school and is requesting a use variance for the school.

No Comments.

5. Old Business

- a) Trail Grant Status Report. Loren Muldowney and Carol Avelsgaard are working on this. No one has yet determined the best way to deal with water that drains from the DPW lot and cuts through the path. Loren and Carol will ask for advice about this from the companies from whom we are seeking bids for this project. Council needs to obtain three quotes and then select one from the three. We currently have an extension on this project giving us until June for the trail to be completed. The path will include vegetation along the fence.
- b) Greenway Environmental Education Center. Mike, Loren, Ruth Bowers of the Shade Tree Committee, and Steve Barnes filmed a panel discussion on open space for Channel 71 titled "A Common Path" and a tour of three locations along the greenway. Arnold led the guided tour of River Road, Valley Place Ravine, and the Meadows. The program runs about half an hour. Arnold recommended we show the video at specific occasions such as the Street Fair, where many people will have the chance to see it. Mike suggested we make copies of the tape available and put one in the library.
- c) Environmental Commission Web Site. The Commission received an ANJEC award for the web site at the October 18 ANJEC Congress. Jon recommended we migrate our site to the borough's site when the latter becomes active. We could do this while still maintaining control of the content of our site.
- d) Buck Woods/Gabrielle Estates. Mike sent a letter to Chris Jones at DEP expressing the Commission's disappointment about the fact that DEP inspectors studied this site last summer without informing us. He requested a written response to the letter. In the letter, he recommended DEP do one additional soil boring in each ravine. He also asked if downgradient offsite conditions were taken into account when the DEP made its determination. Laurel will contact Anne Barron and Justine Bumby for more information about the pipe put in during the early 1980s.
- e) Salt Runoff From the Public Works Yard. No new information.

6. New Business

- a) Environmental Education. Julie wants to work on environmental education projects with Wendy and Anne Barron. Since Recreation Director Norm Arshan several months ago asked if we would be willing to do an educational presentation to students in the after-school program, Wendy will contact him to find out what type of presentation he wants. Julie reported that the DEP runs its own program, "Watershed Ambassadors," which trains volunteers to do biological sampling. Mike suggested that it would be a good idea for the Commission to do testing in all Highland Park brooks, and we discussed setting up a Commission water quality monitoring system. Water Watch did sampling in the stream coming from Buck Woods, and Arnold said he obtained their report. Julie also informed us that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department has grants for restoration of streams and stream banks, which we might be interested in obtaining.
- b) Integrated Pest Management. The Board of Health is looking into ordinances adopting Integrated Pest Management. Board members David Ehrenfeld and Mitch Rosen are researching this. Wendy reported that she is chairing a new district-wide Safety Committee being established by Irving and Bartle Schools. Arnold recommended we create a packet on Integrated Pest

Management and pesticides, which we could present to the library. He also informed us that some towns have ordinances requiring that landscapers be licensed by the municipality. These towns set up their own provisions for the licensing. ANJEC may have model ordinances on Integrated Pest Management, and Laurel will contact them for sample ordinances. Mike recommended we copy and distribute a recent article on this subject that appeared in ANJEC Report. Other resources mentioned include an IPM Institute and contacts in the ANJEC Report article. Arnold raised the possibility of combining an Integrated Pest Management ordinance with a revision of our noise control ordinance. We need to find out the cost of the decibel-measuring machines required by the current noise ordinance and see if the borough could add this to the budget to purchase its own sound/decibel meters. Gabi will research this information.

- c) Drought Update. Restrictions have been eased, but there is still a significant groundwater deficit. Wendy reminded us that last spring, ANJEC Report had a good article about preventive measures that can be taken regarding the drought. She is writing an article for the borough newsletter on this subject. Arnold recommended she include the web address for state drought information and the address of the Environmental Commission's web site in the article. Laurel is doing an article on storm drains, and Arnold suggested this be connected with the requirement for people to curb their dogs. He suggested we do either one general article about watershed protection or two or three smaller articles on subtopics such as the drought and storm drains.
 - d) Water Watch Forum on Watersheds and Runoff. Arnold received information from Jesse Roehrich of Water Watch about this program, which will take place on December 4 from 7-8:30 PM at Rutgers. The forum will specifically address state efforts at watershed protection. Gabi reported that under new stormwater rules, DEP will require permits from towns for controlling stormwater. Eventually, there will be specific requirements for these permits.
 - e) Middlesex County Bicycle Pedestrian Task Force. Arnold reported that he has been invited to join this group.
 - f) Draft Open Space Plan. Arnold sent a copy of our draft Open Space Plan to DEP. The state returned his copy and responded saying that if we want the plan to be official, we need a system map of open space, potential open space and public access to these lands in the borough. This information must be recorded and adopted by the Planning Board, which must certify that the Open Space Plan is consistent with the conservation elements of the local Master Plan. The local Governing Body then has to adopt a resolution approving the Open Space Plan. Tony will take a copy of the state letter to a meeting of the Planning Board scheduled for tomorrow night.
 - g) Middlesex County Mosquito Commission. The county Mosquito Commission removed 38 tires from open space areas in the borough this season—mostly from the Meadows and Valley Place Ravine.
 - h) Valley Place Ravine. The county has opened the stream and culvert at Valley Place Ravine.
7. The meeting adjourned at 10:45 PM. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, December 18, 2002.