

Highland Park Environmental Commission

Meeting of December 18, 2002

Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Jonathan Abrahams, Arnold Henderson, Laurel Kornfeld, Anthony Puniello, Councilman Gary Minkoff

Absent: Loren Muldowney, Wendy Rosen

Guests: Gabor Grunstein, Julie Hajdusek, Leora Wenger

1. The meeting was called to order at 9:15 PM (after a public meeting on the draft Master Plan).
2. The minutes of the November 20, 2002 meeting were approved.
3. Correspondence: There was no correspondence.
4. Site Plans: There were no site plans to review.
5. Old Business
 - a) Master Plan. We agreed to send comments to the Planning Board on the new draft Master Plan. We recommend that the borough rezone the Rutgers Ecological Preserve and the South Sixth Avenue landfill including associated uplands and wetlands as conservation. We also recommend adding the riverside greenway to the Master Plan's Goals section and having the Master Plan incorporate by reference our various studies over the years, such as the Greenway Feasibility Study, the Natural Resources Inventory, and the Livingston Manor Study.
 - b) Trail Grant Status Report. Carol Avelsgaard of the Shade Tree Committee is working on this project. Employees of the Public Works Department could follow the designer's instructions and build the path themselves. The grant money could then be used for construction materials and landscaping along the sides of the trail. Ideally, we could have a borough resident do the design at no cost instead of hiring a consultant. Leftover money could then go toward plantings.
 - c) Environmental Education Center. The Working Committee on the Environmental Education Center met earlier this evening with representatives of MKW, the landscape architecture firm working on this project. The group discussed the preliminary concept for the site and scheduling the work. Arnold agreed to supply MKW with information from past conceptualizations of the Center. The Working Group and MKW representatives will do a site walk on January 6, and MKW will subsequently submit a schedule for the work.
 - d) Environmental Web Site. We need the software to convert Word documents to Adobe Acrobat in order to put the 2002 meeting minutes on the web site. The software costs about \$250, but Gary said we can get it for a lower price. Jon recommended the Environmental Commission and Shade Tree Advisory Committee purchase the software jointly, using money from both groups' budgets. He and Gary will speak with Nick Trasente about this possibility and about initiating a purchase order. Arnold commented that if we put in a purchase order request, we can still purchase the software in the new year with money left over from the 2002 budget. Gabor said he owns this software, which the Commission could use in the short term. Jon suggested we explore what other software we could use and possibly put in a purchase order for it in 2003. We also discussed the need for a permanent repository for the web site. Leora currently has enough space for our site. Gary said that for the long term, we will need to either get onto the borough server or onto an affiliated server.
 - e) Buck Woods/Gabrielle Estates. Anne Barron has filed a legal appeal on the NJDEP wetlands delineation. Save Open Space is arguing that because there is a live stream off the property and springs within it, there should be a buffer area that is left undeveloped. We need to know the rules on intermittent streams and on wetlands that are buried under fill but still contain wetlands

soil. Julie will research this issue. Gabor reported that the state's proposed new stormwater rules mention intermittent streams. These proposed rules, will be published in January 6 New Jersey Register. This will be followed by a 90-day public comment period.

- f) Integrated Pest Management (IPM). Mike distributed copies of a State press release reporting that Governor McGreevey signed a law requiring schools to implement IPM. The schools' IPM policy must be consistent with the DEP model. Since the Board of Health is currently considering IPM and/or some type of pesticide regulation, Arnold suggested they adopt the state's schools model for the borough. He also suggested the Board of Health write to the County Parks Department advocating that county parks implement IPM since the schools will now be doing so. The Environmental Commission can write a letter of support for the two above proposals to the Board of Health. The next step will be public awareness about IPM. Laurel will keep the Commission informed of the Board of Health's ongoing efforts in this area.
6. New Business
- a) DPW Salt Containment Structure. Gary reported that there is a misconception that the borough cannot afford a salt containment structure. The structures used along the Garden State Parkway are very expensive, but they are not the only option. Some structures have temporary domes while others have permanent domes. The question is what we can afford within the borough budget. This is a capital item, and Nick Trasente, Richard Kunze, and Lloyd Young are exploring the various options. After they come up with an affordable structure, the borough will begin the process of creating a bonding ordinance. By conducting the bonding process more deliberately, the borough can save a lot of money. In the meantime, Arnold recommended we cover the salt mound with a tarp and hold the tarp down with tires. Gary will ask Lloyd to see if we can do this. Gary invited Gabor to attend the Council's next Public Works Committee meeting, which will be on January 14.
 - b) CEPS North Side Staging Area. Gary reported that CEPS is continuing to search for an appropriate staging area during its work on the water-relining project on the North Side. They have not yet found a suitable site. CEPS understands that whatever site is chosen will need to be restored once the project is completed.
 - c) Stream Monitoring Program. Julie and Gabor would like to start a stream-monitoring program in Highland Park that would tie into education. They would also like to create field maps of borough streams. The goal of the project is to create understanding of how an urban watershed works. Julie plans to write a grant proposal for the creation of a stream-monitoring project for which she would be responsible. The Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association monitoring program costs about \$6,000 a year. Julie agreed to write a draft proposal and send it to Mike. Arnold suggested she arrange the terms of the grant so that the time teachers spend on the project and the supplies they use count as a match. For the component of involving the community, she could work with volunteers, including people from Rutgers and Americorps. Gary suggested that such a project could become a model for environmental sensitivity education projects in other towns. Mike recommended Julie include Wendy in this project since she has expressed interest in both stream monitoring and environmental education.
7. The meeting adjourned at 10:55 PM. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, January 15, 2003 at Borough Hall at 8 PM.