

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of January 15, 2003
Minutes

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

Absent: Wendy Rosen

Guests: Gabor Grunstein, Julie Hadjusek, ShayMaria Silvestri

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:15 PM.
2. The minutes of the December 18, 2002 meeting were approved.
3. Correspondence
 - a) We received NJDEP's Newly Revised Grant and Loan catalogue.
 - b) We received a letter from Anne Barron on behalf of the Edison Wetlands Association regarding the group's visit to the Native Plant Reserve on January 6. The Edison Wetlands Association would like to participate in the development of the Environmental Education Center on River Road.
 - c) Save Open Space sent the Commission a copy of a letter they sent to Jack Morris of JSM stating that the group has filed an appeal of the DEP's 1997 Letter of Interpretation (LOI) wetlands decision for Buck Woods. SOS is asking for DEP's wetlands experts to obtain access to the site and do another wetlands delineation. Members of Save Open Space will do a delineation for the nearby offsite properties.
 - d) We received two flyers from the Middlesex County Department of Solid Waste Management with schedules for drop-offs of hazardous waste and of paint/paint-related products. The yellow flyer lists the 2003 schedule for Household Hazardous Waste Collection events, and the blue flyer lists the 2003 schedule for drop-offs of paint and paint-related products for recycling.
4. Site Plans. There were no site plans to review.
5. Old Business
 - a) Draft Master Plan. Mike submitted the Commission's comments on the draft Master Plan to Planning Board Chair Alan Kluger. We contacted Alan by phone, and he said the Master Plan Committee is now working on changes to the December draft. The Planning Board's next meeting will be on January 23, during which time the public will have the opportunity to present comments. This will not be the official public hearing on the Master Plan, and the Board will not vote on it that night. The Board will not hear any site plan applications at this meeting. There will be two presentations that night—one by Jean Kolva about historic issues and the other by Professor Ted Stiles about the Rutgers Ecological Preserve. Loren presented her comments on the Master Plan, which are the following: The Commission's Open Space Inventory and Plan should be mentioned in the Master Plan, especially in the conservation and open space element; the Biosurvey should be mentioned in the wildlife section; zoning for the Rutgers Ecological Preserve should be conservation; a thorough evaluation of the landfill site should be done to determine if

any work, especially digging, should be done at the site; and information from the Raritan Basin Commission should be in the Master Plan. The Raritan Basin Commission wants to prioritize open space acquisition to protect water quality. Our region is part of the Lower Raritan Watershed Management Area. Arnold emphasized that we should make sure that educational uses for the Rutgers Ecological Preserve do not include the building of dorms or other structures. A law passed in 1988 states that the Preserve is of statewide importance and that anything Rutgers does with the site is subject to local planning and zoning. Aileen Coffey is trying to get a copy of the original Board of Governors 1970s resolution that created the Preserve.

- b) Trail Grant Status Report. Arnold sent a copy of the letter previously sent to DEP to Bill Young of the Native Plant Society, a potential bidder for work at the site. Loren and Carol Avelsgaard asked Young how he would portray this project as something that could be sensibly bid upon. Young will research this, and the borough will seek the required three price quotes. Loren said she has corresponded with Young who went to the site and now wants photos of it. The current vision is to firm the surface of the trail adjacent to the DPW building to the edge of Donaldson Park and do plantings alongside the trail. The next step in this project is to get the three price quotes, take them to Borough Administrator Richard Kunze, and choose one company based on the price quotes and on how well we think that company can do the job.
- c) Greenway Environmental Education Center. Mike reported on the meeting at the site with MKW at which they were shown the site. We now have a submission from MKW's architect. The Edison Wetlands Association and Steve Barnes could get involved with this project. Both have access to grants. Edison Wetlands could support the Commission in its grant applications as well as advise us on applying for grants.
- d) Environmental Commission Web Site. Mike will send Jon the minutes of our 2002 meetings to put on the site. Jon has recorded recent bird sightings on the site, has put up new photos, and has put in new links to birding sites. Gary reported that there has been progress on the borough's web site. There is currently a borough intranet through which borough employees can email one another. The next step is to bring that network into contact with the outside world. The network will have high-speed routing and connective capabilities. Gary suggested Leora design a questionnaire to upload so we can get feedback on the site. He also said we should scan the recycling schedules sent by the county and put them on our web site. Laurel suggested we place copies of this survey on our table at the Street Fair. Jon recommended we hold a public meeting to present the site and ask for feedback. Arnold said we should ask Leora to link to the official Middlesex County web site. Laurel will send Jon the Board of Health Annotated List of Health-Related Ordinances to place on the web site.
- e) Buck Woods/Gabrielle Estates. We sent a letter to DEP about the fact that the Commission was not informed when inspection of the site was done in 2002. Mike received a response in the form of an undated letter signed by Chris Jones. In the letter, Jones claims that a review of the file states that the Commission was notified there would be a re-examination. However, we were not informed of the date the re-examination would be done. Jones attached the data collected at the two inspections on June 20, 1997 and September 23, 2002. He also stated that the Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act rules do not require that the boundaries of the property be marked and argued that the

collected data supports the DEP's determination that the wetlands were accurately delineated on the LOI map.

- f) Integrated Pest Management (IPM). Laurel brought information received by the Board of Health on IPM and pesticide regulations. Arnold reported that a new state law requires schools to use IPM. He explained that a good IPM specialist uses chemical pesticides only as a last resort. There is a state IPM training program through which IPM specialists are certified. We discussed recommending that the borough hire only certified IPM specialists for borough property. Gary said that buildings and grounds are handled by Public Works, and Arnold added that the library contracts with a landscaper. Laurel will find out if there is a web site-listing people who have gone through the state IPM training program.
- g) Salt and Sand Containment. Gary reported that this was discussed at a Council Public Works Committee meeting last night and that the process of obtaining a structure is underway. It will be a shelter with a roof and impermeable walls. Curbing is not a desirable option because it would create a mechanism that would turn the water into ice.

6. New Business

- a) Tony reported that there will be an archeological survey in Highland Park related to the Middlesex Water Company's building of a parallel water supply line across the Raritan River.
- b) Julie and Arnold attended a workshop on Imap, which is software on the DEP web site with which viewers can see maps. By clicking on "GIS View" at the DEP web site, people can see GIS maps of their neighborhoods. Arnold picked up a disk that shows land use and land cover for the whole state as of 1997. The site address is <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/gis/imapnj/imapnj.htm>.
- c) Mike said he received a note from Wendy who spoke with Recreation Director Norm Arshan about doing an after-school environmental education program. Norm gave her a list of potential dates for this and said he will consider other dates if those on the list do not work for her. She is looking to do a program for about 20 kids from 3-5 PM.
- d) Julie and Gabor said they did a stream walk of the Crowells Road stream and presented photos from the walk on their laptop. We congratulated them and asked them to contact Water Watch about what they could do to remove garbage from along the stream. One of Water Watch's objectives is doing stream cleanups. They can probably remove the lighter items. The county plans on removing the tires in a few months to prevent the formation of standing water. We can flag the tires that need to be removed. Arnold suggested we put a news article and pictures of the stream walk on our web site. We can later add news articles about Water Watch's involvement and the eventual removal of the concrete and heavy debris.

- 7. The meeting adjourned at 10:40 PM. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, February 19, 2003 at 8 PM in Borough Hall.