

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of July 16, 2003
Minutes

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

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:20 PM.
2. The minutes of the June 18, 2003 meeting were approved.
3. Correspondence
 - a) The New Jersey Committee for the East Coast Greenway sent us a copy of their newsletter. Their next meeting will be on July 21 at the Rutgers Newark campus. Arnold reminded us that we need to pay attention to the designation of Johnson Park as part of this greenway.
 - b) We received a bill from ANJEC for our annual membership dues for 2003. We unanimously agreed to renew our membership.
4. Site Plans
 - a) David and Regina Feiler
1603 Central Avenue
Docket No.: #107-14.02-03
Block and Lot: B-107, L-14.02

The applicants are proposing to add a deck 16 feet 4 inches in depth and two sets of stairs of the same width as the house. The house is a single-family residence on a nonconforming 40 X 130-foot lot. They are seeking two variances for side yard setback and one variance for maximum lot coverage. No Comments.

- b) Steven Kolb
329 Wayne Street
Docket No.: #161-37-03
Block and Lot: B-161, L-37

The applicant is proposing to add a two-story addition to the rear and side of the house, which sits on a 50 X 150-foot lot and is seeking a bulk variance for side yard setback. The addition will include a new kitchen, family room, and master bedroom. No Comments.

- c) Francine Sinofsky
64 Cedar Avenue
Docket No.: # 5-15.02-03
Block and Lot: B-5, L-15.02

The applicant proposes to put up a six-foot fence from the rear of the house to the side yard. The property is a single-family residence on a 60 X 100-foot lot. She is applying for a bulk variance because the maximum height allowed for a fence on the side yard of a property is four feet. No Comments.

d) Sherie and Jesse Wolpert
133 Graham Street
Docket No.: # 18-3-03
Block and Lot: B-18, L-3

The applicants propose to extend the house, which sits on a 40 X 100-foot property, approximately 14 feet and add a deck. The proposed addition is two stories, and the dimensions of the deck are 14 X 10. They are seeking variances for side yard setback, maximum impervious coverage (going from 34-41%) and minimum distance between buildings (they propose 13 feet while the ordinance requires 20 feet). No Comments.

e) Carl Rudolph
201 Barnard Street
Docket No.: # 105-1-03
Block and Lot: B-105, L-1

The applicant is proposing to demolish the one-and-a-half story single-family home sitting on this 50 X 100-corner lot and construct a larger, two-story home using the setbacks of the existing structure. He will provide off-street parking for two vehicles. Variances are being sought for side-yard setback and side-front setback. No Comments.

5. Old Business

- a) Francis Parker Memorial Home. We submitted a second set of comments to the Zoning Board regarding this proposal. The next Zoning Board meeting will be on July 21. Laurel obtained a copy of the old Highland Park Code describing the RMT-E zone, which used to be the zoning for this property. The ordinance specifies leaving a 100-foot buffer between any development and environmentally sensitive lands. We need clarification as to whether there was an intent to eliminate this buffer when the RA-E zone was established for the Preserve. If the buffer's elimination was not intentional, we question whether the buffer provision can be put back into the RA-E ordinance. Tony will ask Borough Planner Susan Blickstein about the intention regarding the buffer when the zoning for this property was changed from RMT-E to RA-E. Laurel will give Gary and Tony a copy of the RMT-E description from the Highland Park Code. The Commission believes Parker should provide a tree save plan that is distinct from the landscaping plan and should put up protective fencing during construction.
- b) Trail Grant Status Report. No new information. We don't know if final drawings have been submitted by Schlesinger Associates.
- c) Environmental Education Centers. The Working Group for the Environmental Education Centers met on July 14 with the architect and a representative of MKW. The architect says it's impossible to have a closed room of any kind with the budget we have. Instead, current plans are to have an area with a roof, a table or two and glass cases under it, and a closet. There will be a wall of display cases and a large roofed area for gatherings across from it. Solar panels will be placed on the roof. The Working Group will next meet on July 28; plans will subsequently be drawn up and the project sent out to bid. The county has agreed to put a new restroom at the Highland Park end of Johnson Park.

- d) Buck Woods. We sent a letter to Chris Jones at DEP requesting that DEP come back to look at the property, specifically its water features. A topographic map of the site was sent along with the letter. We noted that Save Open Space is circulating a petition urging the borough to find funding to purchase Buck Woods. Arnold reminded us that Green Acres requires an assessment of any property to determine its market value before considering purchase of that property. We need to ask Borough Administrator Richard Kunze whether an assessment of Buck Woods was done. We also discussed the possibility of sending a letter of support for the Save Open Space petition to the borough.
- e) Raritan River Dredging Project. Mike found out that on September 23 at 7 PM in the New Brunswick Public Library, there will be a presentation to the New Brunswick Environmental Commission on the results of a feasibility study done by the county regarding dredging of the river. Laurel will contact Freeholder Director David Crabiel to find out what type of study is being conducted and if a report of the study is available for us to review.
- f) County Plans for the Intersection of River Road and Cedar Lane. No new information. Mike will contact the sponsors of the recent meeting about this for more information.

6. New Business

- a) Revising Ordinances to Fit the Master Plan. We discussed whether and how to start the process of revising ordinances to fit the Master Plan. This includes rezoning the Rutgers Ecological Preserve for conservation and writing new ordinances to protect stream corridors and steep slopes. Mike suggested we address the Rutgers Ecological Preserve first because that property is in imminent danger from the Route 18 extension, the Parker Home proposal, and possible development plans for the Castle. The Preserve is currently zoned RA-E for single family residences. We believe it should be zoned conservation to conform with the Master Plan. Mike will write a letter to the Council on behalf of the Commission asking for the Preserve to be rezoned to conservation. We noted that the state legislature passed a law requiring Rutgers University to follow local zoning.
- b) Green Acres Open Space List. Green Acres informed the borough that we need to send them a list of all municipally-owned open space. Planning Board Chair Alan Kluger, Susan Blickstein, and Richard Kunze have prepared this list.

7. The meeting adjourned at 10:45 PM. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, September 17, 2003 at 8 PM in Borough Hall.