

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of December 17, 2003
Minutes

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

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:10 PM.
2. The minutes of the November 19, 2003 meeting were approved.
3. Correspondence: None
4. Site Plans
 - a) Francis Parker Memorial Home Expansion, revised
443 River Road
Docket No.: # 189-3-03
Block and Lot: B-189, L-3

In this latest revision, Parker responds to 43 items raised by CME Associates. They submitted a revised Stormwater Management Report, a revised Topographic Survey, a Highland Park Fire Truck Access Plan, tax bills, and a draft Developers Agreement with Piscataway regarding sewer services.

Loren will look into the zoning of the Kaplan property and all the properties changed two years ago from RMT-E to RA-E.

Comments: The trees at the rear property line are special areas of concern. We need to see the new tree survey. We are also concerned about removal of the trees by the Phillip Crockett House and with any other area where trees could be saved. The Zoning Board should check Parker's revisions against our November 19, 2003 list of comments. We would like to have the maintenance plan for the stormwater management system shown to the Environmental Commission and to CME. The lights in the site plan are still the old style. The light should shine downwards in a cone shape to prevent outward light spillage.

5. Old Business
 - a) Trail Grant. Loren reported that we have an extension on this project, and DEP will send us a letter confirming this. She was at the site yesterday. DPW workers are building a retaining wall along the corner stabilizing the slope and have improved the grade. They are 80% done with this but are temporarily stalled because of the weather.
 - b) Greenway Environmental Education Center. The Working Group on the Environmental Education Center met earlier today and looked at drawings by Sage and Coomb, the architectural firm hired to design the Center. The drawings feature a shade structure on one side set with solar panels. There will also be a storage area, a restroom, and a large open space. The main building will have a glass wall facing south and a V-shaped sloped roof tipped toward the sun. The solar panels are tied into the grid. One goal is to have the runoff from the roof water the plants at the site. The flat part of the roof will be a green roof that will retain some of the water. The back wall of the main structure is against a berm and retaining wall, constructed to look like a stone cliff. The Working

Group will next meet on January 26 at 2 PM. At that time, they should have a cost estimate for the project. After the January 26 meeting, they will begin working on specifications for the structures.

- c) Green Community Working Group. Loren, who is a member of this group, reported that they met yesterday for the first time. She said that much of the group's activity centers on the borough's schools, which will be getting an energy audit. The group will also work on obtaining LEEDS certification for the Environmental Education Center through funding from the state Board of Public Utilities. A design studio course at the Bloustein School will focus on ordinances to make Highland Park greener. Arnold suggested they look at our Community Forestry Management Plan and Street Tree Master Plan to improve our tree ordinances. The Green Community Working Group should also look at these documents. The documents will be recommended to the class although the students will mostly focus on the schools' energy audit. Arnold has suggestions for green ordinances, and Loren recommended we direct ordinances that need revision to the Working Group. Laurel will compile a list of environmental ordinances submitted to the Council several years ago for distribution to the Working Group. She will also contact Anne Barron asking that an information packet on the 100-foot buffer issue containing a copy of the text of both the old (RMT-E) and new (RA-E) ordinances be sent to the Commission. Gaby will get a price from Kinko's for batch scanning so we can make electronic copies of these ordinances for the Commission's web site.
- d) Buck Woods. Gayle Mittler of the Fund for Highland Park is open to working on obtaining funding for the purchase of Buck Woods.
- e) Salt/Sand Dome. Gary reported that Highland Park is entering an agreement with Rutgers University to save money on salt/sand storage. This is part of the borough's emphasis on environmentally preferred purchasing. However, there are still issues of inventory fulfillment needs and timing that need to be further worked out.

6. New Business

- a) Leaf Pickup. Jon reported that someone inquired via the web site about a leaf pickup that was supposed to happen in mid-December but did not take place on schedule. People apparently put leaves out for recycling and they were picked up with regular garbage. We will report this to Linda Monte. Leaves are supposed to be picked up on Wednesdays in November and December. During those months, leaves cannot be put with regular trash; during the other months they can be. This is because the composting facility is open only during November and December. We need to make sure DPW looks at the pickup schedule when there are holidays.
- b) 2004 Meeting Schedule. We need to see the meeting schedules of the Zoning Board, Planning Board, and courts to plan our meeting dates. Our next meeting will be on January 21, the third Wednesday of the month. Laurel will send The Home News Tribune a notice of this meeting.
- c) Web Site. When we have the December minutes, Jon will post all of our meeting minutes for the second half of 2003 on the web site. Arnold suggested we also put our previous annual reports on the site.

- 7. The meeting adjourned at 10:33 PM. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, January 21 at 8 PM in Borough Hall.