

**Highland Park Environmental Commission**  
Minutes of March 17, 2004

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

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:25 p.m.
2. The minutes of the February 18, 2004, meeting were approved.
3. Correspondence:
  - The Borough gave notice that our 2004 budget would be \$550, as last year.
  - The East Coast Greenway Association newsletter discussed the latest plans for the final route of this Florida-to-Maine hiking and bicycling trail, passing along the Raritan through Highland Park to Edison and beyond.
4. Review of New Site Plans
  - Kong t/a Kam Soon Auto, Woodbridge Avenue. This submittal was a partial revision of earlier plans. We commented that we appreciated the increased landscaping and grass, with the attendant reduction in impervious cover. Consider adding a dry well to take roof runoff and further decrease runoff, particularly since impervious cover still exceeds the required 80% maximum. The applicant could consult the Green Community Working Group on a possible green or solar roof and available grants.
5. Old Business
  - Trail Grant Status Report. The trail to Donaldson Park from the Southside Bikeway now has its fence fully in place, along with retaining wall and drain; next steps are resurfacing the path and planting native shrubs and other plants alongside as the basis for a nature trail.
  - Greenway Environmental Education Center. The mayor is investigating additional funding sources.
  - Green Community Working Group. No report.
  - Francis Parker Memorial Home Expansion. No new information.
  - Endangered Bird Species in Highland Park. Gary Minkoff will consult the borough attorney as to how this information may best be appended as an update to the Natural Resource Inventory. The list is already on the environmental web site as a news item. These are species observed by Joanne Williams (who reports species to the NJ Audubon Regional Lists) and reported to the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife, Endangered and Nongame Species Program. Endangered: Peregrine falcon, pied-billed grebe, least tern. Threatened: bald eagle, Cooper's hawk, black-crowned night heron, savannah sparrow, red-headed woodpecker.

- Community Water Watch's Earth Day Cleanup April 18. The Environmental Commission is sponsoring the cleanup in Highland Park. Volunteers are to meet at the community gardens in Donaldson Park. We are uncertain exactly which areas are to be cleaned, but there was earlier discussion of cleaning the stream running by both the gardens and our trail to Donaldson, and then cleaning trash along the riverside trail in The Meadows.
- Proposed Land Use Ordinances. The Planning Board has submitted to Borough Council its recommendations, and ours should be submitted soon. Changes we will suggest in the Steep Slopes Ordinance included adding language referring to the environmental and scenic value of slopes and recommending lower levels of permitted disturbance on slopes. We also will ask whether language can be included to prevent repeated disturbances by a series of projects at the same site, so that a landowner in one year might be allowed a 20% disturbance, then a further 20% in another year, and so on, defeating the protection. For the Stream Corridor Protection Ordinance, we will ask that the section on prohibited activities be clarified so as not to hinder valid restoration and rehabilitation projects.

6. New Business

- Annual Street Fair: April 25, 11:30-4:30 (setup at 11).
- Volunteer Appreciation Night: April 28, 7:30 p.m., in the Community Services Building (formerly Senior/Youth Center).

7. The meeting adjourned at 10:25 p.m. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, April 21, 2004, at 8 p.m. in Borough Hall.