

**Highland Park Environmental Commission**  
Meeting of April 21, 2004  
Minutes

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

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:10 PM.
2. The minutes of the March 17, 2004 meeting were approved.
3. Correspondence
  - a) We received a letter from resident Sylvianne Roberge expressing concern about the proposed New Brunswick Landing Project (this project includes dredging of the Raritan River as one of its aspects).
  - b) We received a letter from Schoor DiPalma about the Parker Home application, informing us that the applicant is applying to DEP for treatment works approval. This will allow them to hook up to Piscataway's sewer system.
  - c) We received a letter from the Middlesex County Urban Forestry Advisory Committee requesting proposals for the Middlesex County Urban Forestry Program 2004 Tree Planting Project. The Shade Tree Advisory Committee is handling this.
4. Site Plans
  - a) Debbie and Kenneth Blatt  
103 North 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Docket No.: # 132-40-04  
Block and Lot: B-132, L-40  
The applicant is seeking approval from the Zoning Board for a fence on a corner property. The fence in the back and along half of the side yard of this property is six feet high where only a four-foot fence is allowed  
No Comments.
  - b) Carol Turner  
520 Magnolia Street  
Docket No.: # 41-17, 18-04  
Block and Lot: B-41, L-17 & 18  
The applicant is seeking a use variance to convert the second floor of a two-family residential home to a psychologist's office.  
No Comments.
  - c) Nicholas Stefanchik, Jr.  
264 South 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Docket No.: # 63-3, 4, 5-03  
Block and Lot: B-63, L-3, 4, 5  
This is a revision to an application previously submitted, based on comments by the Planning Board. In this revision, the driveway is being redone to reduce impervious coverage. The proposal is for a two-story home on lot 3.01.  
No Additional Comments.

5. Old Business
  - a) Earth Day Cleanup with New Jersey Community Water Watch. We held the cleanup on Sunday, April 18. About 30 people came and worked for approximately two hours. They mostly covered the Meadows area, where they collected about 15 bags of trash and eight tires. The tires will be picked up for recycling by the county's Mosquito Control Commission. Jesse Roehrich of Water Watch would like to do another cleanup in a few weeks. Mike reported that an additional cleanup was done by a student group several weeks ago at Valley Place Ravine.
  - b) Land Use Ordinances. The new land use ordinances were voted on and approved at last night's Borough Council meeting. One of the ordinances gives conservation status to the Rutgers Ecological Preserve. The Environmental Commission commends the Mayor and Council for passing these ordinances.
  - c) Trail Grant Status. The plants are going in soon, and we expect them to be done within a few days. Some are evergreen, and some are not. There are a total of 10 species, all of which are native. We discussed options for watering these plants. The possibilities include asking DPW to water them, asking one of the neighbors to do it, or forming a neighborhood committee for this task. The plants have to be watered every few days after they are first planted and after that, about once a week.
  - d) Annual Street Fair—Sunday, April 25. Set up is between 11 and 11:30 AM.
  - e) Volunteer Appreciation Night—Wednesday, April 28. The event will be at 7:30 PM in the Senior/Youth Center. We will display the environmental tips brochure, our annual report, and bound copies of some of our other reports. We will also display photos of the Environmental Education Center proposal.
  - f) Greenway Environmental Education Center. Additional funding is being sought for this project. Councilman Jon Erickson is getting information on this through Acting Borough Administrator Nick Trasente.
  - g) Green Community Working Group. The group will meet tomorrow. The Environmental Commission has several concerns we would like them to consider, such as the fact that good noise and light design practices do not always get put into practice in borough buildings. The Green Community Working Group is looking to use dark sky friendly lights. Our ordinance says lights should side spill or up spill. We should be in compliance with this. Arnold has a handout illustrating good lights and bad lights. Tony suggested we review our lighting ordinance for the Zoning Officer, Main Street, Planning Board, and Zoning Board. We should send these and Arnold's handout to individual members of these boards. Tony also recommended we create a fact sheet on lighting to give to applicants. Laurel recommended sending Arnold's handout to Main Street's Design Committee. We agreed to send these groups a letter along with a copy of our ordinance and Arnold's handout. Tony added that these should also be provided to Zoning Officer Tim Coyle since many projects never go before the boards.
6. New Business
  - a) New Brunswick Landing Project/Raritan River Strategy Plan. We received a copy of this plan several weeks ago. It is being coordinated by MCIA. The plan is for the whole riverfront from Raritan Bay all the way to Highland Park. The study was prepared by HDR Engineering for Middlesex County and the MCIA. The report contains a section on each town, including Highland Park, addressing how each community fits into the greater master plan. The plan includes dredging the river eight feet to bedrock below the low water line, 60 feet wide, and sinking pilings of concrete to make a channel. This would be done up to the old New Brunswick police station. The study recommends putting pilings in the river extending 120 feet from

the tow path and also putting them closer to the Albany Street Bridge. Included in the project is a 72-foot floating dock that will be removed and stored in the park during the winter. Also proposed are two docks in Highland Park—the existing one at Donaldson Park and a second one at Red’s Marina. The plan is only for transient use—there would be no fueling or waste dumping. MCIA is seeking \$7 million in Green Acres funds for this project; their application was received by Green Acres on February 15. Lee Simon and Sylvianne Roberge came to the meeting to express concern about this project. They have contacted Green Acres and found that Green Acres will fund this project for recreational purposes. The \$7 million being sought from Green Acres does not include money for maintenance. The justification for the project is based on a survey of boaters conducted by the consultant. This survey involved interviews with 12 people in charge of marinas on the Raritan and 21 boaters at the marinas. Lee and Sylvianne said they would like to see Highland Park take a stand against heavy motorized boat traffic along the river. Arnold said he is concerned about sandbars, which are environmentally important because birds use them. We also received a letter from Richard Dawson in New Brunswick expressing opposition to the dredging. Mike will discuss these concerns with Gary. Tony will look further into whether Green Acres funding can really be used for this project.

- b) Mosquito Control Commission. Arnold reported that he wrote a thank you letter to the Mosquito Control Commission for removing tires at the Meadows on March 23.
  - c) Buck Woods. We received an email from Anne Barron of Save Open Space reporting that SOS is working with the Fund for Highland Park to raise money to buy Buck Woods and is looking for members of the Environmental Commission to help with this project. Laurel is interested in working on this and will contact Anne.
  - d) Cool Cities Initiative. This is an initiative by the governor to put trees into cities to cool hot spots. Arnold reported that Highland Park is on a list to get more trees under this program. Mike Ambrosio is leading this project.
7. The meeting adjourned at 10 PM. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, May 19 at 8 PM in Borough Hall.