

**Highland Park Environmental Commission**  
Meeting of June 16, 2004  
Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Jonathan Abrahams, Arnold Henderson, Laurel Kornfeld,  
Councilman Gary Minkoff

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:17 PM.
2. The minutes of the May 19, 2004 meeting were approved with one correction: Item 6b should read "The Shade Tree Advisory Committee is considering whether to submit an application" for the Middlesex County Urban Forestry Committee \$16,000 grant.
3. Correspondence
  - a) We received a memo from the borough along with an attached events use form. The memo stated that boards and commissions are required to request authorization from the borough for events 40 days in advance.
  - b) We received a letter from New Jersey Community Water Watch sent to several of their partners in the community asking for feedback.

4. Site Plans

- a) Marjorie E. Krespach  
406 Harrison Avenue  
Docket No.: # 152-15-04  
Block and Lot: B-152, L-15

The applicant proposes to construct a garage to replace an old garage that was torn down, using the existing concrete floor. She is requesting a bulk variance from the Zoning Board for side yard setback. No Comments.

- b) Keith Klein  
215 Lawrence Avenue  
Docket No.: # 166-62-04  
Block and Lot: B-166, L-62

The applicant seeks to build a two-story addition to a single-family home on a 56 X 100-foot lot. The addition includes a garage on the first floor and living space on the second floor. He is seeking three variances from the Zoning Board—two for pre-existing side-yard setbacks and one for minimum off-street parking. The ordinance requires the home have two spaces for off-street parking, and the applicant is proposing only one.

Comments: This house is now part of a district on the State Register of Historic Places. Can the design preserve the character of the neighborhood by either preserving the existing façade or having a new façade that matches the time period the house was built?

- c) Westminster Management (Harper House)  
401 South First Avenue  
Docket No.: # 17-29-31-03  
Block and Lot: B-17, L-29-31

The applicant seeks approval from the Zoning Board for a sign. There are six apartment buildings on these lots. The area of the sign has been reduced from that in an earlier proposal to nine square feet, and the height has been reduced from four to three feet. Landscaping has been approved at the perimeter of the sign. No Comments.

d) Verizon/Highland Park 2 Alt Zoning  
320 Raritan Avenue  
Docket No.: # 31-24, 25-04  
Block and Lot: B-31, L-24 & 25

The applicant seeks to construct a wireless communication facility on top of Park Eye Center and Pyramid Books. The proposed facility includes an equipment shelter, transparent screening, a band to match the existing building, and an HVAC unit. The structure on the roof is slightly larger than allowed. The applicant is seeking a height variance and a use variance from the Zoning Board. No Comments.

#### 5. Old Business

- a) Trail Grant Status Report. The trail is now complete. The question is whether DPW will water the plants. Arnold brought in pictures of the site. He put in some ferns after the other plantings were completed, tagged every plant species, and put in several signs. Some of the signs give the history of the plants. Loren is in the process of completing the grant report.
- b) Raritan Riverfront Strategy Plan. We have no new information on this. We want to find out when we will have an opportunity to comment on the plan. Laurel will find out from the county what mechanism they use to inform people of public meetings. If they have a mailing list, we would like to be on it and be informed both when there is a new report out and when there is a public hearing on a particular issue. In addition to this, we would also like to be kept informed of developments regarding work at the Cedar Lane-River Road intersection.
- c) Greenway/Environmental Education Center. We have no new information on this. We did note that there is a \$16,000 Arbor Day grant from the county for tree planting, for which we are eligible to apply.
- d) Green Community Working Group. We have no new information on this. There was a conference on environmentally preferred purchasing at Rutgers on June 11 run by their Solid Waste Policy Group. At this conference, Gary presented a strategic overview of what we are trying to accomplish in Highland Park. He sent a copy of this report to the New Jersey League of Municipalities. ANJEC has a link to Priscilla Hayes, who organized this conference. We will ask whether she can email us any information from the conference, such as handouts distributed there.

#### 6. New Business

- a) Laurel reported that a descendant of the original Joyce Kilmer oak tree was planted on the front lawn of Highland Park High School as part of the Centennial Commission's commemoration of Joyce Kilmer Day.
- b) Jon reported that New York City is proposing changes to their noise code and light spillage ordinances and questioned whether we have such ordinances in place in the borough. We have a noise ordinance, but it requires the use of decimal meter readers. We also exempt all lawn equipment. Our light ordinance

applies only to parking lots. Expanding our light ordinance could be an issue for the Green Community Working Group to explore. Some towns require a license of any professional working in town on lawn care and impose certain conditions for granting the license. Jon questioned whether we could have a noise ordinance with a provision for the noise of lawn equipment, which would then go through an inspection process. Gary noted that with both of these concerns, there is an issue of enforcement. He suggested we consider the idea of a demonstration project for these areas. Demonstration projects, such as the solar panels that will be installed in Borough Hall, provide evidence that an idea is being implemented with some success. He asked Mike to determine how noise and light ordinances might work in the context of the Green Community Working Group. Mike recommended we look at expanding the light ordinance.

- c) Mike distributed volunteer pins awarded to Commission members at Volunteer Appreciation Night in April.

7. The meeting adjourned at 10:15 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will be on Wednesday, July 21, 2004 at 8 PM in Borough Hall.