

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of July 21, 2004
Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Jonathan Abrahams, Gabor Grunstein, Arnold Henderson,
Laurel Kornfeld, Loren Muldowney

Absent: Tony Puniello

Guest: Mary Ellen Tuccillo

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:20 PM.
2. The minutes of the June 16, 2004 meeting were approved.
3. Correspondence
 - a) We received notice of a DEP workshop on site remediation in Trenton on Tuesday, July 27 from 1-5 PM.
 - b) We received notice from the Middlesex County Urban Forestry Advisory Committee of their symposium titled "2004 Symposium on Liability and the Forestry Management Plan," to take place on Saturday, October 16. Those wishing to attend must register by October 13.
 - c) We received two bills for work on the trail to Donaldson Park. One is from Bartel Landscaping and the other is for plant tags. Both were submitted to Loren.
 - d) We received a letter from Jeff Tareila Environmental Consultants regarding wetlands delineation for Block 133-T, Lot 40—the Highland Park portion of a lot whose house is in Edison.
4. Site Plans
 - a) Kenny Song
179 Woodbridge Avenue
Docket No.: # 118-4, 5 & 7-04
Block and Lot: B-118, L-4, 5 & 7

This is a resubmission of a site plan to the Planning Board containing two amendments. One is a proposal to add an extra floor and a service bay while the other is a letter from the landlord of the building giving the applicant (his tenant) seven parking spaces including one for handicapped parking.
No Comments.

- b) Morgan Lincoln Group
26 Lincoln Avenue
Docket No.: #183-23-03
Block and Lot: B-183, L-23

This revised application to the Zoning Board includes a letter responding to concerns expressed in a May 18 letter from Borough Planner Susan Blickstein. It includes several pages of comments on various issues. The applicant is seeking a variance to build townhouses three stories high where the ordinance permits only two and a half stories.

Comments: Use lights that do not shine out horizontally. Downward-directed cones would avoid shining in the eyes of pedestrians and drivers, especially drivers coming

down North Adelaide directly towards the site. Second, the mature street trees at the site should be preserved. Additionally, the driveways should be pervious.

c) Highland Park Conservative Temple and Center
201 South Third Avenue
Docket No.: # 33-1-04
Block and Lot: B-33, L-1

The temple is seeking a variance to house a day care center. No Comments.

d) Fifty-Five Raritan Investors, LLC
55 Raritan Avenue
Docket No.: # 173-53-04
Block and Lot: B-173, L-53

This application to the Planning Board is for the vacant building that formerly housed Berman's Hardware, which sits on a 150 X 180-foot lot. The applicants propose interior division of this single tenant building so it can be used by multiple tenants. They will retro-fit the building including putting in a new façade and also re-do the parking area. They are requesting a waiver from having to do an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Comments: Plant trees in the parking area. Put some along the drive, the north edge, and the east edge. Preserve some of the ground in the front for flowers and shrubs. Direct runoff partly into landscape areas and partly into dry wells. Design the landscape areas without curbs to receive the runoff from the parking area. Roof runoff from the building can go into dry wells. We request the applicant present a stormwater management plan in which an entire two-year storm is retained on the site.

Gooseneck lights in front are okay if they are well shielded so there is no horizontal shine except towards the building.

Consult with Main Street about the design of the storefronts. We prefer awnings large enough to shade the storefronts. Signs can be placed on the awnings if desired.

5. Old Business

- a) Trail Grant Status Report. The trail is complete. The grant report will be written and sent by the time of our next meeting. Loren determined how much of the grant we spent on buying plant markers and tools for the maintenance of the trails and how much was left after these purchases.
- b) Greenway/Environmental Education Centers. The borough has received an additional \$100,000 grant for the Environmental Education Center. Arnold corresponded with the Native Plant Society and suggested that Highland Park is a good place for their activities.
- c) Green Community Working Group. The group has not met in a while; however, their projects are still moving forward, including the Cool Cities grant for planting trees in parking lots.

6. New Business

- a) Tree Replacement from the Route 18 Extension. Arnold spoke to Frank Wong, head of Rutgers University's Buildings and Grounds Department about this. Rutgers has funds to replace the acreage lost at the Route 18 extension site. Wong does not want the trees planted on Cedar Lane. Arnold suggested planting

- them at River Road along the Native Plant Reserve where the Rutgers bikeway runs. Mike suggested planting them along the bikeway into Johnson Park.
- b) Application for a Private Pier in New Brunswick. Mike received a letter from the New Brunswick Environmental Commission regarding an application to DEP to construct a recreational pier, bulkheads, and a power-boat lift station across from Donaldson Park. The proposal includes a retaining wall and walkway. The New Brunswick Environmental Commission asked for the DEP comment period on this application to be extended from 15 to 60 days. They copied Denise Nichols of the Middlesex County Improvement Authority (MCIA), the Baykeeper, and the Riverkeeper with this request. Arnold noted that someone already has a dock down there. We questioned whether wake-making motorboats will be allowed in this area. Mike has a call in to Scott Yeda, chair of the New Brunswick Environmental Commission, for more information.
 - c) Grant for Meadows Trail. Arnold would like to apply for a grant to construct a dirt trail around the Meadows. The deadline for the next grant application is December 18.
 - d) Laurel reported that Nancy Hazard of the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association (NESEA) contacted her expressing interest in holding the Tour de Sol, an exhibition of green vehicles, in Highland Park during the spring of 2005. We discussed the possibility of holding this in conjunction with one of the Cruise Nights. Arnold noted that if such a fair is held in Donaldson Park, we need to know when the park will be torn up for its scheduled improvements. Meanwhile, we will let Nancy know that we are enthusiastic about this idea.
 - e) Laurel noted that legislation allowing for fast track of development permits in certain areas of New Jersey was recently signed by the governor and recommended we sign on to a petition sponsored by various state environmental groups opposing this law. Arnold questioned whether we could get the borough to make a general statement against it. Laurel will email a copy of the petition to Commission members.
 - f) Laurel found out about a new book titled Nature Friendly Ordinances published by the Environmental Law Institute and suggested we purchase it for the borough. Arnold noted that the book explains the principles behind environmental ordinances. Laurel will talk with Jane Stanley at the library and request that the library purchase this book.
 - g) Salt Dome. Gary sent notice that Council has approved expenditures for a salt dome, which will be purchased before this winter.
 - h) New DPW Trucks. Gary sent notice that DPW has recently purchased two new trucks that can be retrofitted with a side tank to hold liquid calcium chloride, which can be used as a de-icer. The borough plans to use that this winter.
7. The meeting adjourned at 11:05 PM. There will be no meeting in August. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, September 22, 2004 at 8 PM. The meeting will be held on the fourth Wednesday of September, as the third Wednesday is Rosh Hashanah.