

**Highland Park Environmental Commission**  
Meeting of September 22, 2004  
Minutes

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

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:10 PM.
2. The minutes of the July 21, 2004 meeting were approved with one correction: Item 6A) should read "Rutgers has funds..." instead of "Rutgers has donated money..."
3. Mike announced that Mary Ellen Tuccillo has been officially appointed to the Environmental Commission.
4. Correspondence
  - a) Notice of the 31<sup>st</sup> annual ANJEC Congress, which will take place on Friday, October 15 at Mercer County Community College.
  - b) A copy of a letter from Borough Clerk Janet Potenza to the East Coast Greenway Association transmitting a copy of a borough resolution of support for the East Coast Greenway and the routing of the portion that passes within the borders of Highland Park.
  - c) A copy of a letter from DEP to Schoor DiPalma, consultants for the Parker Assisted Living Facility. Recently, DEP received information in support of a revision to the Lower Raritan/Middlesex County Water Quality Management Plan for several projects. DEP has approved the revision, which is for connection of the sewer system to the systems of both Piscataway and Highland Park.

5. Site Plans

- a) Harold and Sharon Hoffman  
11 Sparkel Avenue  
Docket No.: # 111-5-04  
Block and Lot: B-111, L-5

The applicant is applying to the Zoning Board seeking a variance for a wooden rear deck off the kitchen of a single-family home on a 90 X 70-foot lot. The deck is already there; a variance is needed for rear yard setback and maximum impervious coverage. No Comments.

- b) Rober and Nancy Marcik  
410 South 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue  
Docket No.: # 17, 6, 7, 9-04  
Block and Lot: B-17, L-6, 7 & 9

This is an application to the Planning Board for a proposed subdivision. One of the new lots is conforming while the other is non-conforming. The property is currently a large lot made up of three lots that have one owner. The applicants are seeking variances for minimum lot size, minimum lot depth, minimum lot width, minimum front yard setback, and minimum side yard setback.

Comments: There should be a before and after impervious coverage calculation for the lot with the existing house (proposed Lot 6.01).

c) Wachovia Bank  
400 Raritan Avenue  
Docket No.: # 36-1-04  
Block and Lot: B-36, L-1

This is an application to the Planning Board for façade improvements to the front of the bank including two new windows, a new front, and a new roof header.  
Comments: We prefer that the sign contain light letters on a dark background to avoid glare.

d) Isadore and Elke Weintraub  
32 South 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Docket No.: # 40-11-04  
Block and Lot: B-40, L-11

The applicants propose to rebuild a home destroyed by fire. The proposed home is slightly larger than the existing one. They are seeking a variance for side yard setbacks, as they are changing one side yard from conforming to non-conforming. They are also seeking a variance for a 9-foot front yard setback where the ordinance requires 20 feet. This was the front yard setback of the former house. No Comments.

e) Tony Szemeretta  
313 South 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue  
Docket No.: # 24-16-04  
Block and Lot: B-24, L-16

The applicant is constructing a dormer on the third floor to expand the second-story residence of a two-family house. He is seeking a use variance because the two-family house is in a single-family zone. No Comments.

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

The applicants are submitting revised plans based on comments received. They submitted a detention design plan that includes new seepage pits and a new roof drain outlet to a new seepage tank. The seepage tank is 96 inches with an 8-inch lid. It connects all roof drains in a detention basin. There is a cross connection between the dry wells. The applicants did not adopt the Shade Tree Advisory Committee's recommendations regarding landscaping.  
Comments: See previous comments of the Environmental Commission and Shade Tree Advisory Committee on lighting and landscaping.

## 6. Old Business

- a) Trail Grant Completion Report. Loren completed the report, which is being submitted to Larry Miller of the Department of Natural Lands Management at DEP. The Commission commends Loren for her excellent work on this project.
- b) Greenway/Environmental Education Centers. Two new grants have been received. We have an additional \$250,000 grant from Middlesex County and a \$100,000 grant from the state Livable Communities Program. The borough is now drawing up plans preparatory to going out to bid for construction of the center.

- c) Green Community Working Group. The group met last week. Gary Minkoff reported on some of their projects at last night's Council meeting including a study done by a Rutgers class with the schools last year.
- d) Raritan River New Brunswick Side—Various Proposed Docks/Piers. Mike reported that he spoke with Scott Yaede, chair of the New Brunswick Environmental Commission about this. Yaede said the applicant for a private pier has already received all the DEP permits he needs and that a neighbor of the applicant plans to apply for a similar dock.
- e) Tree Replacement—Route 18 Extension. Arnold sent Rutgers a request for trees to be replaced in the Native Plant Reserve, along with a map. Rutgers will need DEP approval for placement of the trees.

## 7. New Business

- a) Mike met with Bob Spiegel of the Edison Wetlands Association, which has requested a meeting with us to discuss the lower portion of the Highland Park landfill and the possibility of getting brownfields funding to clean it up and turn it into a greenfield. Arnold recommended the borough zone the ends of the landfill as conservation so we can have paths across the Meadows. We agreed to invite Edison Wetlands to our next meeting to discuss obtaining grants to clean up this site. In the meantime, we would like Bob to email us some of the information with which his group is working.
- b) Mike noted that we received two letters about locations in Highland Park with soil or groundwater contamination. The first is Ubry's Service Station, 115 Raritan Avenue, where the five monitoring wells on the site found some groundwater and soil contamination including PCBs. DEP is asking Ubry's to submit a remediation plan within 180 days of the letter, which was dated August 2004. The second site is McKinney Oil, 205 Woodbridge Avenue, regarding a removed underground storage tank. McKinney requested a no further action letter; DEP turned down their request and are asking for more data on groundwater quality.
- c) Arnold reported that ANJEC has sent a letter about a program urging mayors to sign on to a letter to the governor urging him to establish habitat protection for endangered species. He recommended the Commission write a one-paragraph letter to the governor saying we have several species of endangered birds in Highland Park. We feel that a habitat protection program needs regulations about what kinds of reviews would need to be done to show habitat is protected. Tony will find contact ANJEC to find out more about this process.
- d) Laurel reported that there is a web site representing efforts by a group of environmental organizations, including ANJEC, to fight "fast track" legislation, at <http://www.savenj.net>. Tony will find out how we can officially submit areas that we want listed as other than high priority for development areas. We are currently in Planning Area 1. Tony added that developers who choose the fast track option have to pay higher fees.
- e) Laurel distributed copies of an article describing the Tour de Sol, an annual exhibit of green vehicles by the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association (NESEA). NESEA has expressed interest in holding next year's Tour de Sol in Highland Park. We need to find out exactly when Donaldson Park will be torn up for improvements, as it will be unavailable then.
- f) Mike was informed that the library will purchase a copy of the book Nature Friendly Ordinances. Arnold noted that the book's first use will be by the Shade Tree Advisory Committee, which wants to explore a stronger tree ordinance.
- g) Laurel reported that copies of our minutes through the first half of 2004 have been placed in the library.

- h) The Board of Health has adopted an updated Annotated List of Health-Related Ordinances. Laurel will email Jon the latest copy for placement on the Commission's web site.
  - i) Arnold reported that Egyptian geese were last seen in Donaldson Park on August 30. He added that borough resident Joanne Williams, who is a bird watcher, reports birds sighted in the borough to the Audubon Society. Arnold also said he will be getting a CD showing the process of Egyptian goslings' growth (these are not Highland Park birds).
8. The meeting adjourned at 10:50 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will be on Wednesday, October 20, 2004 at 8 PM in Borough Hall.