

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of December 15, 2004
Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Jonathan Abrahams, Arnold Henderson, Laurel Kornfeld,
Anthony Puniello, Mary Ellen Tuccillo
Absent: Gabor Grunstein, Loren Muldowney
Guests: Allan Williams, Kara Van Blarcum of AmeriCorps and the NJDEP New
Jersey Watershed Ambassador Program

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:10 PM.
2. The minutes of the November 17, 2004 meeting were approved.
3. Correspondence
 - a) ANJEC sent us a letter regarding their 2005 Smart Growth Planning Assistance Grant Program for Municipalities. These are matching grants of up to \$20,000 funded through the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. Applications will be available in mid-January. The contact person is Kerry Miller at (973) 539-7547.
4. Site Plans
 - a) Mary and Albert Botteon
709 Madison Avenue
Docket No.: #153-12-04
Block and Lot: B-153, L-12

The applicants seek to construct a two-story addition on the rear of a single-family home on a 100 X 100 foot lot. They are seeking a D-1 use variance because the home is located in a professional office zone (on the corner of Madison and Cleveland Avenues).
No Comments.

- b) Bor-John, LLC
254 South Seventh Avenue
Docket No.: #46-32, 33-04
Block and Lot: B-46, L-32 & 33

The applicant seeks to construct four rental or condominium units 1200 square feet each on a 112 X 50 foot lot that currently has a vacant single family home. The proposal includes eight parking spaces in two four-car garages. Variances are being sought for excess height, side yard setbacks, use, hardship, and impervious coverage. The ordinance allows a maximum of 40% impervious coverage, and the applicant is proposing 55%.
Comments: Impervious coverage is excessive. Keep impervious coverage within the limits permitted by the ordinance.

- c) Seo Youn Park
175 Woodbridge Avenue
Docket No.: #118-4, 5, 7-04
Block and Lot: B-118, L-4, 5, 7

This is a vacant building in a commercial zone, which was an antique store at the time of acquisition. The applicant proposes to use it as an auto body repair and storage shop. A variance is being sought for deviation from conditional use standard. The applicant states that a site plan application is forthcoming.

Comments: If the application is approved, measures should be taken to avoid groundwater and stormwater contamination.

d) FBN Auto Sales
161 Woodbridge Avenue
Docket No.: #99-19, 20-04
Block and Lot: B-99, L-19, 20

This is an application originally submitted in 2002. The proposal is to demolish the existing building, shed, and porch on a 100 X 100 foot lot and to construct a new one-story building with dimensions of 10 X 25. A variance is being sought for deviation from conditional use standard. The lot is also undersized and lacks frontage. Comments made by Orth Rogers in 2002 are included in the application, including the need for a lighting plan.

Comments: Make sure the lighting conforms to the existing ordinance. Avoid offsite light spillage. See Orth Rogers Item 10C of the letter dated July 11, 2002.

e) St. Paul the Apostle Roman Catholic Church
502 Raritan Avenue
Docket No.: #40-1-5, 26, 27-04
Block and Lot: B-40, L-1-5, 26 & 27

The applicant is proposing to demolish one of the four buildings on the property and is seeking a D1 use variance because the church is in a commercial district. After demolishing the school building, the applicant proposes to add 17 new parking spaces including four for handicapped parking, change the convent building to a church office and meeting rooms, create a prayer garden behind the church, add a ramp for handicapped access, add a park like area in the front parking lot, add landscaping, and construct an underground detention system for stormwater. A Stormwater Management Report was submitted with the application.

Comments: A higher percentage of native species on the plantings list would be desirable.

5. Old Business

- a) Greenway Environmental Education Center. No new information.
- b) Green Community Working Group. The group had a meeting on Monday, December 13, but Mike was unable to attend. The meeting included a presentation by Rutgers students.
- c) DEP Matching Grant. We did not submit the application to update the Shade Tree Inventory. Mike noted that he put together a two and a half page proposal for the grant, which we can still use if we want to apply next year.
- d) Highland Park Redevelopment Study. There was a redevelopment workshop at the high school cafeteria on December 5, at which a lot of information was presented. The Planning Board will continue its hearing on the study tomorrow night, December 16. Arnold reported that he wrote a letter to Councilman Steve Nolan informing him that the landlocked properties by the brook on Cleveland Avenue (Lot 7.01) will have an Army Corps of Engineers culvert constructed on

the site. He also noted that there is a steadily used pedestrian path there and that the lot is also a wildlife corridor.

- e) Web Site. Laurel reported that Gary Minkoff wants the Environmental Commission to post the Board of Health flyer on pesticide use and lawn care on our web site. We need a soft copy of the document to do this. Laurel will contact Board of Health chair Lewis Fishberg to get a soft copy. Arnold said he already put the pesticide flyer in the environmental folder in the library.
- f) Proposed Raritan River Dredging. Laurel obtained the contact information for the Army Corps of Engineers and is waiting for a return call from NJDEP for contact information there. She will email the names and information for both the Army Corps and DEP to Commission members and also to Allan Williams.

6. New Business

- a) Arnold reported that the Shade Tree Advisory Committee wants to construct a trail around the Meadows and is applying for a National Recreational Trails Grant for this purpose. The grant is \$10,000 with an in-kind match. The money would fund both labor and a machine to create a natural path around the lower Meadows. Arnold included a support letter from the Environmental Commission in the grant application.
- b) Laurel noted that the Cenacle property has been sold to developers and that a recent Star Ledger article discussed the idea of “environmentally friendly housing” behind the retreat house.
- c) Because the recent school bond referendum generated a lot of discussion on solar panels, Mike would like us to research the issue of the viability of solar energy in New Jersey. Laurel will contact ANJEC to find out if they have any information on this. Arnold noted that Clint Andrews plans to teach another Rutgers course that will explore energy issues in Highland Park. He emphasized that it is important in such research to distinguish between different types of solar use and different technologies.
- d) Kara informed us that her goals as a Watershed Ambassador are to educate the public about non-point and point source pollution. She is in charge of Watershed Area 9 for the program. Her job includes doing presentations in schools and monitoring streams through visual and biological assessments. We have four or five stream locations in town she can monitor, and we will put together a list of them for her.

- 7. The meeting adjourned at 10:20 PM. The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, January 19, 2005 at 8 PM in Borough Hall.