

**Highland Park Environmental Commission**  
Meeting of September 20, 2006  
Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Jonathan Abrahams, Arnold Henderson, Laurel Kornfeld,  
Mary Ellen Tuccillo

Absent: Gabor Grunstein, Loren Muldowney, Anthony Puniello, Joan Ehrenfeld

Guests: Tina Weishaus, Allan Williams

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:17 PM.
2. The minutes of the July 19, 2006 meeting were approved.
3. Correspondence
  - a) We received copies of two applications from Menlo Engineering to the DEP seeking an LOI for wetlands delineation. One is from Efreem Gerszberg at 459 Lincoln Avenue, and the other is from 433 Cleveland Avenue, LLC.
  - b) We received information from the US Fish and Wildlife Service on riparian buffers.
  - c) We received a copy of the Summer/Fall brochure of the Municipal Land Use Center.
  - d) Keep Middlesex Moving, the county's transportation management association, sent notice of International Car Free Day in Middlesex County on September 22.
  - e) ANJEC sent us a publication titled, "Remediating and Redeveloping Brownfields in New Jersey: A Guide for Municipalities and Community Organizations."
  - f) ANJEC sent us two copies of their publication, "Site Plan and Subdivision Review: Environmental Analysis." We will place one copy in our folder at the library.
4. Site Plans: None
5. Old Business
  - a) Environmental Education Center. Construction is moving forward. A plastic cover, which appears to be a liner, has been placed on the roof. The contractors have installed the stone surface for the inner courtyard. They are starting to work on the roof but still need to put in the windows and the shade structure. The footings for the shade structure are already in place.
  - b) Water Watch Projects. The new fall intern contacted Arnold informing him that the group is having an organizational meeting on Friday. That day at 1 PM, Arnold will lead several people on a tour of the Native Plant Reserve. He will also take them to Valley Place Ravine, Reds Marina, and the Meadows.
  - c) Donaldson Park Improvements. The new asphalt paths for bicycles and pedestrians are in place. The new boat ramp has not opened yet. A gazebo is supposed to be placed at the north end of the pond.
  - d) Raritan River Dredging. The dredging is completed. The second part was done under the watch of a full time DEP inspector. Mike will find out if there is a final report on the dredging project.
  - e) Rezoning of Y Property. The next Planning Board meeting on this issue will take place on September 28 at 7:30 PM in the Senior/Youth Center, at which time borough professionals will report on their study of the potential rezoning. Laurel obtained a copy of the 1986 Planning Board memorialization of the subdivision and site plan for River Ridge. There is no mention in it of a commitment by the Y to not sell any more of its property in the future.

- f) Recreational Trail Grant. Arnold met with representatives of the Edison Wetlands Association, and they decided where to place the new signs. The first will be at the top of the bikeway on South 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Another sign will be at the South 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue end. The big sign will be to the left of the trail entrance to associate it with the trail rather than the bikeway. Edison Wetlands printed the sign, and DPW put it up. Arnold also put up little signs at the bikeway. We plan to have an official unveiling of the signs. We would also like Edison Wetlands to do a larger version of the presentation they did to us this summer for the community as a whole. Although we have not yet discussed work that can be done beyond what we currently are budgeted for, we did note that Edison Wetlands has resources we don't have and may be able to help us obtain grants for such work.
- g) Rutgers Ecological Preserve. Mike contacted Sue Kozel, who has a web site at <http://www.savetherutgersecologicalpreserve.com>. She is advocating for the Preserve in Trenton, claiming the agreement to sell land to the football coach violates the Hanes Law. Sue has also discussed this issue with Ted Stiles, who manages the Preserve for Rutgers.

## 6. New Business

- a) Environmental Education Projects. Tina Weishaus reported that she has been appointed to the Green Community Working Group and discussed potential environmental education projects for the community. Some of these projects could be run at the Environmental Education Center. Tina knows the school district well and has set up a fall assembly at the high school on global warming. She suggested the idea of holding a Climate Crisis Day to generate public awareness. We began an extensive discussion of things the borough could encourage people to do individually to combat global warming. Ideas raised include a fluorescent light bulb campaign, maximizing plastic recycling beyond just items numbered one and two, presenting a slide show at the Environmental Education Center, enacting a dark sky ordinance to minimize light spill in town, having local stores sell green products, integrating environmental education into the school curriculum, establishing environmental clubs in the schools, holding a town-wide environmental forum, issuing pamphlets listing specific actions people can take to fight global warming, placing stickers on storm drains telling people not to dump anything into them, and various other initiatives.

Tina informed us she is going to Nashville for training on showing the slideshow that inspired Al Gore's film "An Inconvenient Truth" and said she will find out the specifics of presenting the slide show locally. She also noted that the book published alongside the movie lists approximately 20 pages of things individuals can do to combat climate change. These can also be found at <http://www.climatecrisis.net>. Arnold emphasized that we have to assure something concrete happens after we impart the information to the public. Mary Ellen proposed holding a town-wide environmental forum featuring discussion of what the borough is doing and then giving people the opportunity to break into groups to work on different projects.

Arnold noted that the Raritan River Festival, which is being held on Saturday, September 30 at Johnson Park, will be an entire day of education on global warming. Special focus will be given to small things that can be done, such as tire inflation. We agreed to set up a table alongside the New Brunswick

Environmental Commission at the Festival and will distribute pamphlets and brochures. We will also have a sign up sheet at the Festival for a task force to address these issues.

Thirteen municipalities in New Jersey have signed agreements to follow the Kyoto Protocol, and Mayor Jim Cahill of New Brunswick plans to sign on at the Festival, Tina noted. We would like to see Highland Park sign on as well. Arnold noted that the state's new stormwater regulations require public outreach on practical things individuals can do. PIRG will conduct energy audits of people's homes. PSE&G will tell people how to do their own audits and will also come to their homes for this. Tina suggested holding an Environmental Green Day Street Fair town wide. Laurel reported that the Board of Health is enacting a new noise ordinance and said she will bring a copy of the document to our next meeting.

7. The meeting adjourned at 10:02 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, October 18 at 8 PM in Borough Hall.