

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of March 21, 2007
Minutes

Present: Jonathan Abrahams, Steve Barnes, Arnold Henderson, Michael Rosenberg
Allan Williams
Absent: Joan Ehrenfeld, Gabor Grunstein, Anthony Puniello, Mary Ellen Tuccillo
Guests: Karen Swaine

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:10 PM.
2. The minutes of the February 21, 2007 meeting were reviewed and approved.
3. Allan Williams was welcomed as a new member of the Environmental Commission.
4. Correspondence:
 - a) We received the 2007 Schedule of Household Hazardous Waste drop-off days from the Middlesex County Division of Solid Waste Management. There are 7 dates scheduled for the year with the next date being April 21.
 - b) We received a notice from Raritan Basin Watershed Alliance about a training course on Stormwater Rules for Municipal Representatives.
5. Site Plans:
 - a) Kenneth Bobrowski
114 North Fourth Avenue
Block 159 Lot 27
The applicant is requesting approval to use a portion of the attic as living space.
No Comments.
 - b) Morris & Natalia Bekerman
42 Lincoln Avenue
Block 183 Lots 11 & 12
The property is an 8-unit apartment building. The applicant, without obtaining a variance, has recently paved the area in front of the building to create a property that has 100% impervious coverage. A maximum of 80% is permitted in this zone.
Comments: The 100% impervious coverage does not conform with the surrounding neighborhood. The applicant should be required to remove the non-conforming asphalt and restore the area with vegetation and landscaping. The applicant should also consider installing a dry well to accommodate runoff from the rest of the property.
 - c) 405 Cleveland Avenue LLC
405 Cleveland Avenue
Block 170, Lot 10.01
The applicant seeks a use variance to be able to use an existing structure for cheerleading instruction, karate, martial arts, and a 4,900 square foot mini-storage facility.
No. Comments.

6. Old Business Items

- a) Environmental Education Center Construction Update. The Environmental Education Center is being prepared for its grand opening on Earth Day (April 22). The Borough will donate furniture (table and chairs) for the building. Storage cabinets will be purchased. Potential soil contamination is still an issue for portions of the property. What will be the delineation between the old dirt (fill material) and new clean soil placed above it? In some areas, the new plantings may be limited to shallow-rooted plants because of compacted soil conditions. We need to get the plants established to hold the new soil in place. Edison Wetlands Association has a source of good fill that we may be able to use as a cap for portions of the site. Plans are now in the works for the Earth Day Grand Opening the Environmental Education Center, Centennial Park, and the Meadows Trail.
- b) Midland Ross (Honeywell Site) Remediation – Honeywell Corporation, the current owner of the contaminated Midland Ross site, presented to Borough Council last night, a plan for the removal of contaminated soil from the site. Honeywell’s plan involves removing 20,000 cubic yards of soil contaminated with PCBs, lead, arsenic, and PAHs. The soil will be trucked off the site via the old road leading directly to River Road, thereby avoiding residential roadways. Honeywell also presented a Health & Safety Plan and an Air Monitoring Plan. An air monitoring network will be set up to determine air quality in the vicinity of the work and if certain levels are exceeded, the job will be halted until conditions are abated. Another presentation will be made for the public on March 26, at 7:00 PM at the Senior Center. STAC will write a letter to Honeywell about plantings and restoring the property to natural conditions at the conclusion of the project.
- c) A landscape design class of Professor Seiko Goto at Rutgers discussed including several places in Highland Park for student design projects. These locations include a proposed international garden on South 7th Avenue and the Environmental Education Center on River Road.
- d) YM-YWHA Property. The YMHA has announced that they will sell their Highland Park property. They are planning to continue their request for rezoning the land. The Environmental Commission still supports the proposal of Freeholder Polos which offered Middlesex County assistance in purchasing a portion of the property as open space.
- e) Environmental Film Series – The Environmental Commission is hosting a series of films about current environmental topics. The second film, shown on February 24, was “Winged Migration” a film about migratory birds. Approximately 35 people attended the screening. The third film “Affluenza” will be on March 24, at 8:00 PM in Borough Hall. Randy Solomon will lead a group discussion after the movie. At least one additional environmental film is planned. Future dates and movies still need to be finalized.
- f) The Borough hosted an Environmental Summit on March 5. Various environmental groups in town including the Environmental Commission presented information about projects they are working on.

- g) Recreational Trail Grant Meadows – Arnold Henderson met with Don Rish to show him locations for proposed additional trail activities. Bob Spiegel of the Edison Wetlands Association is looking for additional grant funding for the Meadows trail.
 - h) Rezoning of Borough owned properties for Conservation – Arnold Henderson will draft a letter to Borough Council regarding proposed rezoning of certain Borough owned properties adjacent to the bikeway, South 7th Avenue, and Crowells Road.
 - i) Highland Park Community Habitat Program - The National Wildlife Federation has a program for communities to get certified as a Community Wildlife Habitat. We will start by encouraging backyard wildlife habitats. Steve Barnes is putting together a project team and will have a first meeting in April. The first step will be to determine goals and prepare a project work plan.
 - j) The solar energy display in Borough Hall is still not working.
7. New Business Items
- a) The Highland Park Street Fair is scheduled for May 20th. The Commission will have a table display again.
8. The meeting adjourned at 10:15 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will be on Wednesday, April 18, 2007 at 8 PM in Borough Hall.