

Highland Park Environmental Commission

Meeting of April 18, 2007

Minutes

Present: Jonathan Abrahams, Steve Barnes, Gabor Grunstein, Arnold Henderson,
Anthony Puniello, Michael Rosenberg Allan Williams

Absent: Joan Ehrenfeld, Mary Ellen Tuccillo

Guests: None

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:10 PM.
2. The minutes of the March 21, 2007 meeting were reviewed and approved.
3. Correspondence:
 - a) We received a notice that 433 Cleveland Avenue LLC is applying to NJDEP for a Letter of Interpretation to determine if regulated wetlands are present on their property.
4. Site Plans:
 - a) Raceway Petroleum
60 Raritan Avenue
Block 5 Lot 1
The applicant is requesting approval to add an 8'x10' shed behind the existing convenience store.
No Comments.
 - b) Ephraim and Devora Zinkin
487 Harrison Avenue
Block 155 Lot 7
The property is a single family home on a 100'x115' lot. The applicant is building an addition to the front, rear, and sides of the existing structure, and is seeking 2 variances for maximum lot coverage 33% (allowed 30%) and maximum impervious coverage 43% (allowed 40%)
Comments: To make up for the loss of impervious coverage, the applicant should consider restoring 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) Parikh Real Estate Holdings
24 North Third Avenue
Block 162, Lot 39
This is the former Bernstein's dress shop currently vacant. The applicant plans to renovate and improve the building (no change in footprint) and use the front for retail stores and the rear for a medical office.
Comments: All outdoor lights should be shielded to direct light downwards. The pervious asphalt is a nice feature. How does the applicant plan to clean and maintain the asphalt to preserve the permeability over time?
5. Old Business Items
 - a) Earth Day Celebrations – This Sunday April 22, is Earth Day and a full day of activities is planned. The Grand Opening of the Environmental Education Center will take place at 2:00 PM with many invited guests. The Grand Opening of Centennial Park will follow at

3:00 PM. At 3:30 PM there will be a presentation by Rutgers landscape design students of possible plans for the International Garden. At 4:00 PM, Edison Wetlands Association will lead a tour of the Meadows Trail. The Environmental Education Center is being prepared for the opening. The Borough will donate furniture (table and chairs) for the building. Storage cabinets will be purchased. The roll-up garage door facing the river will be replaced with a clear door so that the building will be see-through. Potential soil contamination is still an issue for portions of the property. Hopefully we will continue to have full access to the entire property. A meeting with Edison Wetlands will be scheduled to discuss the extent of the soil contamination and possible solutions.

- b) Midland Ross (Honeywell Site) Remediation – Honeywell Corporation, the current owner of the contaminated Midland Ross site, has all but one permit before they can begin work at the site. The roadway from River Road into the site has been opened and widened to accommodate trucks and to avoid residential roadways. A work trailer has been brought in and tree removal may begin next week. This would be followed by 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 air monitoring network was set up and is currently collecting background data. If air quality in the vicinity of the work exceeds certain levels, the job will be halted until conditions are abated.
 - c) N.J. Community Water Watch – Did a cleanup at the Native Plant Reserve on April 14. Planning a cleanup at The Meadows at 10:30 AM on Earth Day.
 - d) Environmental Film Series – The Environmental Commission has hosted a series of 3 films about current environmental topics. Additional environmental films are planned for the fall.
 - e) 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.
 - f) Rezoning of Borough owned properties for Conservation – The Environmental Commission submitted a memo (prepared by Arnold Henderson) to Borough Council recommending rezoning of certain Borough owned properties adjacent to the Southside Bikeway, South 7th Avenue, Buck Woods Ravine, and Crowells Road. The Environmental Commission’s recommendation is to change the zoning from residential to conservation/recreation.
 - g) Highland Park Community Habitat Program – The National Wildlife Federation has a program for communities to get certified as a Community Wildlife Habitat. The first meeting of the project team (chaired by Steve Barnes) was held earlier tonight. The first step will be to determine team goals and prepare a project work plan.
6. New Business Items
- a) Unwanted Circulars - The Commission discussed the problem of unwanted newspaper circulars. What can we do to stop the delivery of these unwanted newspapers and circulars? They cause litter on the streets and sidewalks and clog our storm sewers.
7. The meeting adjourned at 9:50 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will be on Wednesday, May 16, 2007 at 8 PM in Borough Hall.