

## Highland Park Environmental Commission

Meeting of July 18, 2007

### Minutes

Present: Jonathan Abrahams Gabor Grunstein, Arnold Henderson, Michael Rosenberg,  
Councilwoman Fern Goodhart

Absent: Steve Barnes, Joan Ehrenfeld, Anthony Puniello Mary Ellen Tuccillo, Allan  
Williams

Guests: Ellen Leibowitz, Hagit Mano, Karen Swaine

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:20 PM.
2. The minutes of the June 20, 2007 meeting were reviewed and approved.
3. Correspondence: The American Museum of Natural History's Center for Biodiversity and Conservation sent us a copy of their publication titled Protecting Nature in Your Community. We will put it in the environmental file in the library.
4. Site Plans: No site plans to review.
5. Old Business Items
  - a) Environmental Education Center - The EEC building has not been officially turned over to us and there is still a lengthy punch list of items that must still be completed. Ellen Leibowitz and Hagit Mano presented a proposal to run a privately owned school (Highland Park Enrichment Center) out of the Environmental Education Center. This proposal would offer environmental programming to pre-school and school-aged children from Highland Park and surrounding towns. There was a general discussion about the use of the building by various groups and there is a need to develop a policy for using the building. When the building is finally available, schools could use it from time to time for field trips or special classes, but we must keep it available to all groups. We will look at the current procedures used for reserving rooms at the Senior/Youth center. This is not exactly the same situation since no borough employees are present at the EEC on a regular basis, but the Community Services staff might be able to assist by handling reservations for the building.
  - b) Midland Ross (Honeywell Site) Remediation – Mike Rosenberg spoke with a Honeywell Corporation representative and gave the following report. All of the contaminated soil has been removed and the restoration phase has started. Clean fill is now being used to backfill the excavated areas. No air quality exceedances were reported during the project. The data is still being posted at the North Second Avenue entrance to the site and on the Borough's website. Steve Barnes and Karen Swaine met with Honeywell and will come up with some recommendations for the steep slopes and site restoration at the conclusion of the cleanup.
  - c) Recreational Trail Grant Meadows – Still need to widen the trail and remove partially buried drums and other debris that are obstacles to hikers. The Edison Wetland Association's engineering consultant will prepare a report with recommended actions.
  - d) Rezoning of Borough owned properties for Conservation – The Environmental Commission submitted a memo to Borough Council recommending rezoning of certain Borough owned properties adjacent to the Southside Bikeway, South 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Buck Woods Ravine, and Crowells Road. The Environmental Commission's recommendation

is to change the zoning from residential to conservation/recreation. Fern will discuss this further with the Public Works Committee.

- e) Highland Park Community Habitat Program – The National Wildlife Federation has a program for communities to get certified as a Community Wildlife Habitat. The Environmental Commission is sponsoring this project in Highland Park. The registration process is almost complete.
- f) Route 18 Pedestrian Trail. If anyone has specific comments, submit them to Arnold Henderson and he will forward them to Middlesex County. This trail does not run through Highland Park.

6. New Business Items

- a) Fern Goodhart recommended to the Public Works Committee that the Borough adopt a new policy for pickups of bulk trash. The current system is being abused by private contractors and this is costing Highland Park taxpayers a lot of money. The Environmental Commission supports a new policy for collection of bulk trash.

7. The meeting adjourned at 10:45 PM. There is no meeting in August. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will be on Wednesday, September 19, 2007 at 8 PM in Borough Hall.