

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of September 19, 2007
Minutes

Present: Jonathan Abrahams, Steve Barnes, Anthony Puniello, Michael Rosenberg,
Allan Williams, Councilwoman Fern Goodhart

Absent: Gabor Grunstein, Arnold Henderson, Joan Ehrenfeld, Mary Ellen Tuccillo,

Guests: None

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:25 PM.
2. The minutes of the July 18, 2007 meeting were reviewed and approved.
3. Correspondence: None.
4. Site Plans: No site plans to review.
5. Old Business Items
 - a) Environmental Education Center – The punch list of items that we were waiting for is now complete. We should have a certificate of occupancy and full possession of the EEC building within a couple of weeks. There was continued discussion about the use of the building by various groups and there is a need to develop a policy for using the building. Signs are still needed to identify the building. The Department of Public Works will need training for how to weed the green roof. We should consider starting a fund called either Friends of the Environmental Education Center or Friends of the Native Plant Reserve. People could make contributions to the fund and we could charge a user-fee to groups from outside of Highland Park that want to use our building. Someone will have to be the keeper of the building's key and we can use the current procedures for reserving rooms at the Senior/Youth center.
 - 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 backfilling of the excavated areas is complete. No air quality exceedances were reported during the project. Honeywell paid the borough \$49,000 for new plantings.
 - 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 grant may not allow funds to be spent for drum removal activities. Chapin Engineering, the Edison Wetland Association's engineering consultant prepared a letter report with recommended actions. Recommendations included, clearing the trail of brush, eliminating trip hazards, removing surface debris, and modifying the trails' path. The report also recommended pursuing long term funding to implement the full project.
 - 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 7th Avenue, Buck Woods Ravine, and Crowells Road. The Environmental Commission's recommendation is to change the zoning from residential to conservation/recreation. Fern spoke with Mark Watson who is meeting with the Economic Development Committee. This item can be considered with new Master Plan review.

- 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 complete and we will be the third community in New Jersey registered. The next steps will be to prepare a brochure and to develop a web site which can be linked to the Environmental Commission web site. We all should certify our own backyards.
- f) Recycling/Trash Collection – Fern made recommendations to the Public Works Committee that included more frequent recycling pickups, less frequent trash pickups, and a new policy for pickup of bulk items. The current pickup method of bulk items is being abused by private contractors and is costing Highland Park residents a lot of money. The Environmental Commission supports this initiative.

6. New Business Items

- a) Alan Williams reported on a meeting of the Raritan River Technical Advisory Committee that he attended. The subject of the meeting was TMDLs for total nutrients, and will only apply to non-tidal areas of the River.
- b) The Friends of the Rutgers Ecological Preserve is organizing a dusk hike of the preserve on Sunday October 7, at 4:00 pm. The Highland Park Environmental Commission is a cosponsor of the event and all are encouraged to attend.
- c) The new tree protection ordinance will be discussed at the October 2, Borough Council meeting. The ordinance includes provisions for protection of some privately owned trees.
- d) Steve Barnes attended an EPA Brownfields Grant Writing Workshop. Included different types of grants available and how to apply. The deadline for this year is October 12. We may be able to apply for these types of grants in the future.

- 7. The meeting adjourned at 10:25 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will be on Wednesday, October 17, 2007 at 8 PM in Borough Hall.