

## Highland Park Environmental Commission Minutes: Meeting of January 16, 2008

Present: Steve Barnes, Jon Erickson (Council liaison), Gabor Grunstein, Arnold Henderson, Anthony Puniello, Allan Williams,

Absent: Jonathan Abrahams, Joan Ehrenfeld, Loren Muldowney, Mike Rosenberg

Guests: Ann Foss (Columbia University), Jill Septrion, Deanna Turrano (prospective members of EC or STAC)

**1. Opening of meeting.** 8:10 p.m. As this was the commission's first meeting in the Eugene Young Environmental Education Center, the meeting opened with a brief tour of the building. Guest Ann Foss from Columbia University then spoke of her Master's thesis project to study Highland Park's methods and progress toward environmental preservation and sustainability, and members recounted some of their experiences in this.

**2. Minutes of December.** Approved.

**3. Correspondence.** None.

**4. Site plans.** None available for comment at the meeting. One plan was taken the next day from the mailbox and reviewed by Arnold Henderson, marking it as an individual No Comment. It was rezoning to allow internal work on a single-family house for an upstairs tenant (Zoning Board of Adjustment):  
Raymond Mahon  
227 Volkert  
Block 61, Lot 30

### 5. Old Business

Environmental Education Center. Continuing issues:

- Is the center fully ready to be used by the public? We have a certificate of occupancy, but the Borough Administrator may still be investigating insurance or other legal issues. Jon Erickson will enquire.
- Someone from the Borough needs to discuss with Green Acres staff what, if any, soil coverage needs to be added to the overall 3-acre site beyond that already laid in the immediate vicinity of the center building. This should be addressed before much can be done for landscape plantings. Jon will enquire.
- Cabinets and countertop need to be unpacked from cartons by DPW and assembled. Borough Administrator Karen Waldron will ask DPW. Arnold's white desk and bookcase in the pump house could be donated to occupy the place where the sink connections are on the wall, pending sink purchase.
- Funding must be found for solar panels, and it is not known if the Borough has any leads. We've asked Loren Muldowney if she could investigate with PSE&G, but it is not yet known if she can.

Meadows Loop Trail/Recreational Trails Grant/Partners for Wildlife. Steve Barnes represents us for both the trail work and the separate Partnership for Wildlife Program replacing invasive species in the same area. Steve and Allan Williams have used a 300-foot surveyor's tape to measure the currently tentative full loop trail (as Arnold has marked it with blue streamers). It is a little over 3000 feet, and they are placing pink flag markers at measured points and will map the trail with GPS. The Edison Wetlands Association sent Steve a draft of a request for proposal (RFP) asking for bids by consultants to design a more elaborate future trail, with parts wheelchair-accessible, boardwalk sections, and a gazebo or other structure as a focal point and gathering place where trail meets river. Although this would be more elaborate than the benches or stone circles envisioned in our earlier ideas for gathering points, the meeting thought it worth pursuing if EWA can find funding for whatever is designed. Steve will reply to EWA, making clear that Highland Park at this point must first complete the work we have promised under the \$10,000 Recreational Trails Grant (awarded 2005, for completion August 2008). Much or all of our matching labor (to bring the project total to \$12,500) has already been done (DPW and volunteers). We still need to purchase equipment using the grant funds and to finish promised work by deadline.

Community Wildlife Habitat Program. Steve Barnes announced that the next Highland Park Mirror would carry an article on the program. Three workshops start with Steve's talk on invasive species January 30. The Mirror has allotted space for an article each month. Irene Marx will be helping in the program, with focus on a youth group and on senior citizens needing help with yard plantings for the Backyard Wildlife component of the community program. A web site is up and will be expanded and linked to our environmental site [www.leoraw.com/hpeny](http://www.leoraw.com/hpeny).

Trash collection/recycling. New procedures are being worked out for more efficient collection.

Erosion—Mill Brook between Grant and Harrison. Susan Edmonds and other residents have arranged with Rutgers Cooperative Extension to conduct a hydrologic study, then recommend stream work.

**6. New Business.** None.

The meeting adjourned at 9:58 p.m. Next meeting February 20, 2008, 8 p.m., Environmental Education Center.