

Highland Park Environmental Commission

Meeting of March 19, 2008

Minutes

Present: Steve Barnes, Arnold Henderson, Michael Rosenberg, Allan Williams

Absent: Jonathan Abrahams, Joan Ehrenfeld, Gabor Grunstein

Guests: Nicholas Carby-Denning

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:15 PM., in the Environmental Education Center.
2. The minutes of the February 20, 2008 meeting were reviewed and approved.
3. Anthony Puniello has resigned from both the Environmental Commission and the Planning Board. We need to find a replacement to replace Anthony and we need to choose a member to serve as our liaison to the Planning Board. Also Arnold Henderson would like to have someone replace him as Vice-Chairman of the Commission.
4. Correspondence: None
5. Nicholas Carby-Denning came to speak to the Commission about the Conserve Our Ocean Legacy (COOL) Campaign. The organization is part of Environment New Jersey. Nicholas told us about legislation that was passed in 2007 that will prevent over-fishing of the oceans in Federal waters. COOL will be hosting an informational event on April 3, at Rutgers main campus.
6. Site Plans:
 - a. Simeon and Adriana Ardelean
19 South First Avenue
Block 13, Lot 31
The applicant is requesting a use variance from the Zoning Board to convert a first floor office into residential use. This property is in the CBD zone, but is not on Raritan Avenue and is surrounded on 3 sides by properties in the RA zone.
No Comments
 - b. Qing Guo Lin
145 Woodbridge Avenue
Block 99, Lots 6 and 22
Applicant is seeking site plan approval from the Planning Board for a permitted change of use. They plan to convert a hair salon to a Chinese restaurant. The house has an apartment upstairs that will remain. Planned site modifications are all indoors. No change to the overall footprint.
No Comments
7. Old Business Items
 - a) Environmental Education Center – Signage to identify the building is still a priority. The working group for the Environmental Education Center will be meeting on March 30, to review needs and priorities.

- b) Recreational Trail Grant Meadows – The lower meadows trail restoration project was initiated by a 2004 grant from the Federal Highway Administration under the National Recreation and Trails Program which is administered by the NJDEP. The grant was for \$10,000 and designated for restoring and enhancing a loop walking trail. The required completion date for the project is August 31, 2008. Equipment needs to be purchased and the trail still needs to be widened and partially buried debris removed. Integrated pest management is being used by the US Fish and Wildlife Service for invasive species removal. These invasive plants are capable of overgrowing the trail and blotting out desirable native species. The Commission felt that we should continue with the project and meet the August deadline for completion. There was a discussion about modifying the grant proposal. Karen Waldron will speak to NJDEP about potential modifications. The trail will need additional signage and a determination must be made about ADA compliance and handicapped accessibility. We need to find out if the entire trail must be handicapped accessible, just a small section of it, or if we can just declare the entire trail to be inaccessible. Alan Williams and Steve Barnes will meet with DPW this week to review needed tools and planned activities.
 - c) Highland Park Community Wildlife Habitat Program – Steve Barnes announced that the Highland Park Mirror will have an article on the program. A new web site is up and running and is linked to the Environmental Commission web site. Steve Barnes is presenting a series of three workshops. The first one was held on January 30 and was about invasive species. The second called “How’s Your Habitat” was held on February 27th. A third workshop about stream restoration is planned for March 26.
8. The meeting adjourned at 10:15 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will be on Wednesday, April 16, 2008 at 8 PM.