

## Highland Park Environmental Commission

Meeting of March 17, 2010

### Minutes

Present: Jonathan Abrahams, Steve Barnes, Joshua Fine, Michael Rosenberg, Karen Swaine, Allan Williams, Councilman Jon Erickson

Absent: Joan Ehrenfeld, Gabor Grunstein

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:15 PM in the Environmental Education Center.
2. The minutes of the February meeting were reviewed and approved.
3. Correspondence  
No correspondence
4. Site plan review

1177 Raritan Plaza LLC  
1177 Raritan Ave.  
Block 123 Lot 25

The applicant is applying to the Planning Board for site plan approval to demolish an existing structure (old paint store) and replace it with a new 2-story building. The proposed new building would contain 5,100 square feet of retail space on the first floor and office space on the second floor. 29 parking spaces are provided along with signage and new landscaping. The applicant proposes to remove 17 trees. Mike will email our comments to Joshua for the March 18, Planning Board meeting.

#### Comments:

1. Trees removed should be replaced with an equal number of trees that are native species.
  2. All external lighting should be shielded to direct light downwards.
  3. The storm water collection system should be designed as a retention system that discharges as much as possible into the ground rather than directly into the creek.
  4. Consider solar panels for the roof, or painting the roof white to provide better energy efficiency.
  5. For parking area, consider using permeable concrete, grass-pave, or other permeable materials.
  6. A final landscaping plan should be approved by the H.P. Shade Tree Advisory Committee to ensure biological diversity and proper use of native species.
5. Old Business
    - a. ANJEC Smart Growth Planning Grant –The Environmental Commission is applying for a grant to update the Borough's Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) which was

originally prepared in 1992 and has become outdated. The Borough Council recently approved a resolution to provide \$3,800 for the project. We will solicit proposals from 3 environmental consultants. Experience preparing NRIs for other towns will be important and we will request samples to evaluate. Mike, Allan and Steve are working on the application which is due to ANJEC by March 31.

- b. Sustainable Highland Park – The Environmental Commission will co-sponsor the April 22, Earth Day Extravaganza. The overall theme for the event is Sustainable Food and Sustainable Community. There will also be a Community health Fair at the same time.
- c. Environmental Education Center – CME has developed cost estimates for final remediation of the soil. The Environmental Commission has not received a copy of the NJDEP approved work plan and we do not know the contents. ICON Engineering has corresponded with NJDEP on behalf of the Borough. Karen Waldron to obtain cost information. Middlesex County may be able to help provide some of the signage.
- d. Meadows Project – Starting work plan for 2010. There are a couple of Eagle Scout projects that are being planned for the Meadows. They include construction of benches along the trail and 3 more boardwalks, additional signage, birdhouses and bat houses. Steve Barnes will meet with Jon Winter to review plan for construction of benches. Eleanor James a local landscape designer will help to design nice entrances to the trail.

#### 6. New Business

- a. Invasive Plants – Karen spoke with someone in Bucks County that has a native plant ordinance already in place. The theme is to encourage developers to use native species when preparing landscaping plans. Karen working to get copies of ordinances that we might be able to use.
- b. Dredging of ponds in Johnson Park – Middlesex County already has permits to dredge 2 ponds in Johnson Park that have been filling up with silt.

- 7. The meeting adjourned at 9:50 PM. The next meeting will be on Wednesday April 21, at 8:00 PM.