

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of June 20, 2012
Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Steve Barnes, Karen Swaine, Allan Williams, Council liaison Jon Erickson

Guests: Megan Rapisarda, Kelly Nishikawa, Dave Bedford, representing Energy Service Corps a joint program with NJPIRG – They educate people to use energy more efficiently and have recently done work in Highland Park

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:00 PM.
2. The minutes of the May 16, 2012 meeting were approved.
3. Correspondence
 - a) Received a copy of a Request to NJDEP for a Letter of Interpretation for 433 River Road, known as “The Castle”. They are applying for a letter of interpretation to see if any wetlands are present. We note that Buell Brook through the property and requires a buffer on either side.
 - b) We received a copy of the 2011 annual recycling tonnage report prepared by the Department of Public Works.
4. Site Plans
 - a) Proposed 7-11 at former Sunoco Site. We reviewed the revised site plan. The developer, Continental Global Ventures, needs a Remediation Action Letter from the DEP as well as approvals from both the HP Redevelopment Agency and the Planning Board. Traffic flow and parking still are major issues and we continue to press for additional soil sampling to determine if there is any contamination under the building. We already have submitted comments on this plan. Our comments dealt with three topics: site remediation, stormwater runoff, and pervious surfaces.
5. We sent a memo to Kathy Kovach asking that the Environmental Commission receive a copy of site plan applications at the same time as borough professionals receive them. No response yet.
6. Old Business
 - a) Cleveland Avenue Proposed Developments – No news
 - b) ERI. Sandy Batty from ANJEC requested that Allan Williams give a presentation about preparing an ERI. Allan presented last week at the Sustainable Raritan River Conference at Duke Farms.
 - c) Y Property. The Zoning Board is holding another hearing on the proposal on June 15. Several important variances are being sought by the developer. Setback buffer from the steep slopes is a major issue.
 - d) Cenacle House Historic Documentation. The performance bond will not be released to Pulte until all items are resolved. The photo-documentation of the Cenacle House is

not up to standards. STAC will look at trees and shrubs to see what has not survived and will need replacement.

- e) Meadows Trail. The trail is still being widened via weed-wacking. Woodchips are a big help keeping the trail open. Young volunteers are always needed to help keep the trail open and free of trash. Eleanor James is getting quotes to level the surface at the trail entrance.
 - f) Jon Abrahams organized a cleanup of the Native Plant Reserve with the Ahavas Achim Environmental Committee on June 10. Approximately 30 bags of trash and weeds were collected and removed.
 - g) Buck Woods - Middlesex County favors purchasing open space land that is contiguous with other open space parcels. We could perhaps turn over the Meadows and then add Buck Woods along with 4 other properties (between The Meadows and Buck Woods) that would require rezoning to make it all one contiguous area. There could be some sort of management agreement so that Highland Park still has level of control over the area. Jon Erickson will put the idea to rezone the lots on the conference agenda for the Planning Board next month. The Environmental Commission is in favor of the concept, but details would still have to be worked out.
 - h) Riparian Buffers – Need a formal request to Borough Council to get CME to go out in field and then redraw the lines. This is for streams that were not previously mapped by NJDEP.
 - i) Pumphouse Upgrade. Jon Erickson reported that bids are going out for upgrading of the old pumphouse. Allan sent Borough Council information about the historic significance of the pumphouse.
7. New Business
- a) Barwood Marsh Conservation Easement – This is the area along the Raritan River between Donaldson Park and old Reds Marina that is now still zoned residential and privately owned by Colonial Homes. Perhaps the Trust for Public Land or the NJ Conservation Foundation could assist with acquiring the land. We will see if Judy Shaw from Sustainable Raritan River could be involved.
8. The meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, June 18 at 8 PM in the Environmental Education Center.