

**Highland Park Environmental Commission**  
Meeting of February 6, 2013  
Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Jonathan Abrahams, Steve Barnes, Laurel Kornfeld, Karen Swaine, Allan Williams, Council liaison Padraic Millet

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:10 PM.
2. The minutes of the December 19, 2012 meeting were approved.
3. Correspondence: None
4. 2013 List of Meeting Dates. Mike sent a list of the commission's meeting dates for 2013 to Borough Clerk Joan Hullings. Our September meeting will take place on September 11 at 8 PM and will be a joint meeting with the Shade Tree Advisory Committee
5. Site Plans
  - a) Carl B. and Randy T. Levy  
12 Grant Avenue  
Docket No: #213-01  
Block and Lot: B-178, L-27

The applicant proposes to expand the size of a house by turning the garage into a part of the house. This application is before the Zoning Board because the house is on a non-conforming lot. No Comments.

- b) The Crossings at Highland Park (Honeywell Property)  
Preliminary and Final Major Subdivision and Site Plan  
Block 172, Lot 2, Block 181, Lots 25-30

The zoning and layout for this development were settled in a lawsuit, but the application, submitted by Pulte Homes, is not complete. Borough ordinance requires the applicant do an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), but this can be waived if there is a good reason. Pulte wants the requirement waived but agreed to provide a documentation of remediation of the area in lieu of an EIS. This application will go to the Planning Board. Pulte wants to build about 95 homes but has not yet submitted a complete site plan. The Environmental Commission believes Pulte should be required to submit an EIS. Allan will review the plan they submitted and write up a synopsis. He will also send copies of letters to and from the borough planner and the applicant's professional representatives to us. Honeywell is committed to cleaning up the area to residential standards; the cleanup is currently in the testing phase. The current plan calls for taking down 330 trees and redirecting a sanitary sewer easement. Pulte should have an RAO (Replace with No Further Action) letter within a month. We discussed requesting copies of all reports that Honeywell and Gerszberg (original purchaser of the property, who sold it to Pulte) have.

6. Old Business

- a) 27 Brookdale Court Application. The applicant decided to significantly revise the plans and seek fewer variances. The revised application will go before the Zoning Board in February or March.
- b) 74 Lawrence Avenue. The Zoning Board did not approve of the applicant's proposal for the steep slopes portion of the property. Some neighbors also objected to it. The applicant will revise the plan and bring it back to the Zoning Board in February or March.
- c) Proposed 7-11 on Former Sunoco Site. This will probably go for a vote before the Planning Board in February.
- d) Raritan River Access Sign. The sign is here, and Public Works has specifications for installing it.
- e) Signage for Environmental Education Center. Padraic said we should come up with a sign that works for the site, and the council will then review it. Karen noted the sign should be readable to people who pass by.
- f) JSM-Buck Woods. The idea has been raised to preserve Buck Woods and have the borough swap the Upper Meadows (which the borough already owns) to the developer, with the goal of letting him develop the latter property. But the borough is also responsible for cleaning up that site. The Lower Meadows cannot be developed. Buck Woods comprises about four acres while the Upper Meadows comprises two-and-a-half acres. The real issue is getting a good development for the Upper Meadows property. The county has not responded positively to the request that they purchase Buck Woods for open space. JSM's request to cut down trees in Buck Woods is on hold because he is not complying with the law.
- g) Meadows Trail Update. The landscaping contractor and crew worked on the first part of this project in late January, clearing out downed trees along the trail route and the existing trail. They reached the lower portion to begin clearing the relocated part of the trail. Steve and Allan marked out a new section of the trail that gently curves and meets the end of the approved trail. The slope curve allows people to walk around and down. We need a three-foot wide trail with a two-foot border on each side, as required by the grant. The whole area has now been cleared according to the specifications of the Natural Trails Grant, and a route to the river has also been cleared. Next steps are putting down the wood chips and starting to do plantings. Two boardwalks are gone as a result of the recent storm; several sections are still there but not on the trail. We can have more benches put in; we also discussed having directional markers placed along the trail. Padraic suggested Public Works could dump wood chips and then spread them along the trail. We also noted the need for people to regularly maintain the site. No major trees were lost along the trail.
- h) Meadows Property Rezoning. There are two properties, on the north and south of the bike trail, adjacent to the Upper Meadows, both of which are now zoned residential. We want these rezoned for conservation. So far, there are no plans for these two properties to become part of any development.
- i) Pulte Park and Historical Monument Status. Allan is in contact with a company in Austin, Texas, that is sending him information about the cost of a sign for this site.

## 7. New Business

- a) Silver Certification for Sustainability. We now have Bronze Certification from the Sustainable New Jersey program, and Sustainable Highland Park wants to go for the next level, which is Silver. The Commission agreed to pursue this. The borough needs to do many activities to achieve this; two requirements are for the Environmental Commission to complete an annual report and for the borough to provide a link showing that we have an Environmental Commission. Allan will write a first draft of an annual report. Another requirement is that the town has completed an ERI within the last ten years, which we have. We need to document this and update it periodically. Documenting it may require a borough resolution.
  - b) Earth Day. Sustainable Highland Park is not doing a fair like they did last year. We decided to hold a workday at the Meadows on Sunday, April 21, when we will have volunteers spread wood chips. However, to maintain the trail, we need volunteers on a regular basis. Padraic suggested we create sign up sheets for projects that need volunteers; an announcement can then be placed on the borough's Nixle service. Volunteers would be required to sign a waiver. Steve noted we should get the trash out of the Meadows area and make sure the trail is safe before the workday.
  - c) ANJEC Seminar: Fundamentals of Effective Environmental Commissions. Karen plans to attend one of these seminars. We now have the ANJEC workshop plan, so Commission members can attend for free.
  - d) The county is creating a list of sewer service areas. Allan brought in a map displaying where they are located. Gridlines define where development can occur. This list is a DEP requirement.
8. The meeting adjourned at 9:40 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, March 6, 2013 at 8 PM in the Environmental Education Center.