

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of March 5, 2014
Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Jonathan Abrahams, Steve Barnes, Laurel Kornfeld, Karen Swaine, Allan Williams, Council liaison Padraic Millet
Guests: Belinda Beetham, Mary Denver

- 1) The meeting was called to order at 8:15 PM.
- 2) The minutes of the February 5, 2014 meeting were approved.
- 3) Correspondence. We received a letter from the Hudson River Foundation listing upcoming seminars they are holding.
- 4) Site Plan Updates.
 - a) Regarding "The Crossing," we have a copy of a memo to the Planning Board from borough engineer Bruce Koch of CME asking Pulte to provide several additional items and details about their plans. Koch is asking for an Environmental Status Letter confirming the present environmental conditions are suitable for residential use. He is also asking for a letter addressing groundwater issues at the site.
 - b) Applicant Harry Glazer submitted a revised plan for a house expansion, showing the creation of a rain garden, as required by the Zoning Board.
- 5) Old Business
 - a) Honeywell Site Remediation/Air Monitoring Data. Work on asbestos remediation has begun, and every week, data is submitted to us with the latest information. So far, we have received data for the first three weeks of the work. We are posting this data on the Environmental Commission website. No asbestos was detected in the first and third air samples. One fiber of asbestos was detected in the second week. The abatement program is continuing, but many days were lost due to bad weather. Honeywell will continue to update us with sampling results and are also sampling for dust.
 - b) Conservation Plan for Meadows. Allan reported that the mayor signed our conservation plan form for the Meadows, which now is being sent to the Natural Resources Conservation Services.
 - c) Master Plan Update. Allan reported that borough planner Alan Schechtel looked for and found several inconsistencies between the Master Plan and zoning map. He then made all the appropriate corrections. The Native Plant Reserve and Environmental Education Center remain zoned for conservation/recreation. When the lawsuit over the Illuminating Experiences property is over, the zoning map will be updated to reflect that property's new status.
 - d) Environmental Education Center Signage and External Lighting. Padraic said work on both of these projects is scheduled for April. A motion detector light will be installed.
 - e) Pump House Repairs. A roofer is scheduled to fix the roof and façade. After that, work on the inside will begin. Currently, there are tools and materials such as wheelbarrows stored in the

pump house. Karen noted we need to find out if DPW has agreed to store some of these while the pump house repairs are being done. The hand tools can be temporarily stored in the Environmental Education Center. We can also store some tools in our storage shed. The borough will inform STAC when the pump house renovations begin.

6) New Business

- a) Sustainable Highland Park Borough Grant. Karen reported that Sustainable Highland Park has received a borough mini-grant to create a trail along the river by the Native Plant Reserve. STAC has strong reservations about the vagueness of the proposal. If the trail is too near the river, we may have to apply for a permit from the DEP. We also need to resolve issues regarding the use of wood chips and gravel and emphasize the importance of not removing native plants or trees to construct the trail. To discuss these issues, we will have a meeting of representatives of STAC, Sustainable Highland Park, and the Environmental Commission.
 - b) Remediated Soil. Allan reported that Scott Luthman said the borough can obtain clean soil from both the Honeywell and former Y sites and use it to cap the rest of the Native Plant Reserve. This is clean fill, not topsoil. We decided we do not want it since it is most likely to contain clay and rock. Karen recommended we find out whether the wood from the trees cut down on these sites will be chipped. Steve noted we already have a lot of wood chips at the Meadows.
 - c) Environmental Commission Annual Budget. We asked for an increase in our budget from \$500 to \$750 for the year, and the Borough Council approved it. Karen suggested we use the additional funds to plant wildflowers and a native grass meadow at the Native Plant Reserve.
 - d) Earth Day Activities. Sustainable Highland Park is holding an Earth Day celebration on Sunday, April 27, at the Environmental Education Center. STAC and the Environmental Commission are invited. There will be both indoor and outdoor events, including three bands playing, several food vendors, educational activities for both children and adults, and a discussion about recycling. The Shorrs have been invited to do a beekeeping presentation with the beehives placed in the area. We discussed the possibility of the Commission hosting its own, smaller event during this week in April, to go along with the borough's theme for the month. Options considered include hosting a speaker in the library to talk about climate change, distributing seedlings or plants, selling native plant seeds or seedlings, and organizing a bird walk. We noted that the Native Plant Society, which meets in the Environmental Education Center, will discuss climate change at its next meeting on March 25. Steve suggested organizing a work day in the Meadows, possibly on Sunday, May 4. We could recruit volunteers for this at the Earth Day event.
- 7) The meeting adjourned at 9:07 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, April 2, 2014, at 8 PM in the Environmental Education Center.