

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of May 7, 2014
Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Jonathan Abrahams, Steve Barnes, Laurel Kornfeld, Allan Williams

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:15 PM.
2. The minutes of the April 2, 2014 meeting were approved with minor corrections.
3. Correspondence: None
4. Site Plans
 - a) Greater Plainfield Habitat for Humanity
South 10th Avenue
Docket No: #314-02
Block and Lot: B-61, L-25

Greater Plainfield Habitat for Humanity wants to build a house on this small lot and is seeking many variances. They are applying for a side-yard setback variance because the property is only 3,891 square feet. The Borough Council has approved the project. Allan will research whether this lot is included in our open space inventory.

Comment: Retain storm water on site with a dry well or rain barrels. Use permeable pavers for the driveway.

5. Old Business
 - a) Earth Day Fair. Approximately 350 people attended the event. The Environmental Commission had a table outside that was staffed by Allan, Steve, and Mike. The borough took some pictures. Jon recommended we put pictures of the event on our Facebook page. The Native Plant Society gave out plants and talked to many people. There was also an electric car on display. Steve spoke to a member of the New Brunswick Environmental Commission and was told they will contact us to set up a joint meeting.
 - b) Kaplan Castle Site Application. We have comments on the application from CME and from Alan Schectel. CME noted the major points they want Kaplan to address before there is further discussion about the application. Schectel's comments were more detailed than those of CME. So far, the applicant has not submitted any floor plans for any of the proposed apartments.
 - c) Y Property Archeological Survey. The developer submitted a copy of the archeological survey for the site, which did not find anything archeologically significant. Alan Schectel deemed the report acceptable. To date, the developer has done seven soil borings on the site.
 - d) Environmental Education Center. We still do not have the sign or the external lighting and motion sensor. The latter two are being put in by the same company that is making the sign. A group of Rutgers students wants to paint murals at the Environmental Education Center and has been discussion plans with council members Gayle Mittler and Gary Potts. They are trying to raise money online by crowd sourcing so they can pay the artists. So far, they have raised \$440. Paint and brushes are being donated by Sherwin Williams. The Commission is requesting that we be kept up to date about this project. We want to have another meeting with Sustainable Highland

Park about their proposed trail near the Center. May 17 or 18 have been proposed as potential dates for this meeting. Steve will attend as the Environmental Commission's representative.

- e) Pumphouse: No new information.
 - f) Fencing for the Native Plant Reserve. We need to repair/replace the split rail fence in front of the Native Plant Reserve.
 - g) Conservation Plan for the Meadows. We have not yet heard anything from the Freehold Office of Natural Resources Conservation Services about this.
 - h) Pulte Monument. The monument has been completed. We need to put information about it on our website. We should also send pictures of it to the county Historic Preservation Commission.
 - i) National Recreational Trail Grant. We plan to apply for one of these grants in September and need to decide whether we want to use the money for the area near the Environmental Education Center or for the Meadows.
6. New Business
- a) Trail Cleanup. The Commission is holding trail cleanup at the Meadows on Sunday, May 11, from 10 AM-1 PM. The work mostly will involve pulling weeds and removing garbage.
 - b) Raritan Landing Exhibit. The Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission is hosting a grand opening of an exhibit on the old village of Raritan Landing. The exhibit will be displayed at East Jersey Olde Towne Village. The Commission is distributing a book they produced on the history of Raritan Landing. Much of the information in the book came from the Route 18 excavation several years ago.
 - c) Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers. We received a letter from a resident requesting an ordinance banning gas-powered leaf blowers. The resident noted Montclair is adopting such an ordinance. We feel this is really a Board of Health matter, so Laurel will raise the issue with the Board of Health. We should get a copy of the ordinance. Allan will obtain a model ordinance on this topic, which we will review. We can also ask the Board of Health to propose such an ordinance.
7. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.
The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will be a joint meeting with the Shade Tree Advisory Committee on Wednesday, June 11 at 8 PM in the Environmental Education Center.