

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of November 4, 2015
Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Jonathan Abrahams, Steve Barnes, Laurel Kornfeld, Dan Larkins, Karen Swaine, Allan Williams, Councilwoman Susie Welkovits

1. The meeting was called to order at 8 PM.
2. The minutes of the October 7, 2015 meeting were approved.
3. Membership. We noted Dan Larkins and Christina Potagna were appointed by the Mayor and Borough Council as alternate members of the Environmental Commission.
4. Correspondence
 - a) Y Property. We received a copy of a letter from the site developer's engineer noting the developer is applying for a permit to connect to the sewer trunk line on South Adelaide Avenue.
5. Site Plans
 - a) Rite Aid submitted a revised site plan to the borough to address concerns about their windows having been closed off. This new plan shows the interior floor plans. There will be a hearing before the Planning Board on this on Thursday, November 12. Rite Aid has not yet provided the proposed contracts between themselves, the borough, and Mason Gross School of the Arts regarding the displaying of art on the former window sites.
6. Old Business
 - a) American Properties. The CME report says everything is complete, but the company has not submitted a storm water management plan, calculations for retaining walls, or site remediation plans, so Borough Planner Alan Schechtel has deemed it incomplete. Allan sent a letter to Borough Engineer Bruce Koch about this, requesting a status report on the application be given at the next Planning Board meeting.
 - b) Fire Citation. The Environmental Education Center received a fire citation for storing combustible items in the utility room, which contains the furnace. Allan cleared up the room.
 - c) Eagle Scout Project—Bat Boxes. Jon hasn't heard anything Boy Scout Jacob Kleinmann, who proposed the project. The Commission will need to sign off on it saying it meets our standards. Jon will send Jacob a reminder and ask if there is anything he needs from us.
7. New Business
 - a) Update of Our Open Space Inventory List. Our Open Space Inventory List was done in the fall of 2001 and needs to be updated. This list is referenced in our Environmental Resources Inventory (ERI). We noted that the paper street that runs from Lincoln Avenue to Harrison Avenue, going over Mill Creek, is used as a pedestrian pathway. We questioned whether we could declare this property as open space. Karen proposed we designate the paper street as such. A suggestion was made to have the county take it over and make improvements to make it a more attractive walkway. Steve noted there should be some criteria necessary for an area to qualify as open space. Allan reported that the DEP has such definitions, which we could include in future listings. The definitions are specified in a document known as the Recreation and Open Space

Inventory (ROSI). In the past, we submitted a list of open spaces in the borough to the state ROSI. At Jon's suggestion, we set the goal of updating our Open Space Inventory and will discuss this further at our next meeting.

- b) Work Day at Native Plant Reserve (NPR). Dan reported the Native Plant Society will hold a work day at the site on Sunday, November 15.
 - c) ANJEC Resolution in Support of Clean Water Supplies. In 1986, the state adopted a plan for managing New Jersey's drinking water. This plan has not been updated since 1996. Because the governor wants to increase development in the Highlands, which contains drinking water for the whole state, ANJEC wants to pressure both the governor and the DEP to update the state plan. We unanimously approved recommending the Borough Council pass a resolution supporting this and send a letter of support to the DEP, governor, and legislature alerting them to our concerns.
 - d) Environmental Commission Website. Allan will work with Leora Wenger on this after November 15. We want to revise the website to feature more content from everyone and integrate what is posted on the site with activity on social media.
 - e) Meadows Update. Craig Ambrose and Allan found 186 ecologically significant trees in the Meadows. So far, they have covered three-quarters of the area. They still need to count significant trees in the flood plain. A sign for the Meadows was created by Olivia Wolansky; we determined it needs more contrast and decided to remove the word "the" referencing the Meadows.
 - f) Grants for Signage. The *ANJEC Report* noted grants for signage will be made available in the spring. Allan suggested we look into obtaining a grant to pay for the Meadows sign. Mike said we should also put a sign at Valley Place Ravine and recommended we brand all our trails as Highland Park trails, so they appear as a system. Susie noted that Mary Denver is designing a sign for the Native Plant Reserve. ANJEC's grant application deadline is usually March 31, with award decisions made in May.
 - g) Goals for Next Year. Members were asked to bring suggestions for 2016 Commission goals to our next meeting.
8. The meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, December 2 at 8 PM in the Environmental Education Center.