

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of January 6, 2016
Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Jonathan Abrahams, Laurel Kornfeld, Dan Larkins, Allan Williams

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:05 PM.
2. The minutes of the December 2, 2015 meeting were approved.
3. Correspondence
 - a) We received our annual bill from ANJEC. We will pay the membership fee, including the workshop plan for Commission members.
4. Old Business
 - a) American Properties/Heritage at Highland Park/Cleveland Avenue. American Properties sent a letter to Cleveland Avenue residents about a meeting on January 5 at 6 PM at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Edison to address the residents' concerns, such as remediation, dust, and traffic, but the date and time listed in the letter were wrong. Allan informed the applicant that the information in the letter is erroneous. This was not the official notice for the Planning Board hearing on the site plan, and we do not know if it was sent to all residents within 200 feet of the development. The Planning Board has given legal notice of the official hearing, which will take place on January 14 at 6:30 PM in Borough Hall. Allan noted he still has not received a response to his November 24 request for copies of the site remediation reports. He noted the Planning Board at its last meeting said it has sufficient information to start the hearing but not enough to approve it.
 - b) Park Partners Grants. We decided not to apply this year and instead support the high school students who are seeking a grant for an environmental film festival.
 - c) Sustainable Jersey Grant. Applications are due on February 7. We aren't sure of the criteria for applying. Allan reported there was a webinar about the grants on December 16, and both Karen and Carol Avelsgaard were supposed to listen in. We also noted Susie said she would give her opinion on what our best grant option is. If we apply, we will need a support letter from the Borough Council. One idea is to seek a grant to purchase solar panels for the Environmental Education Center, but we don't know how much that will cost. Sustainable Jersey distributes grants twice a year, and we may have to wait for the second 2016 round to apply.
5. New Business
 - a) Website Update. We need the whole site to be updatable. Leora Wenger has given us areas where we can manage content, but we cannot update anything outside of these areas. The site still has a list of our meeting dates from several years ago. We need to put the older information into an archive section. Allan will meet with Leora to discuss this, as she needs to change the main pages so we can update the content. We also have a blog area where Allan has been putting content up. Dan has experience with Word Press and with working on websites, and he volunteered to work on this. We have already purchased our own domain name, but Leora is not yet using it. Once we get full control of the site, we will put it under our domain name. Allan said we should have a plan for the website by our next meeting. Jonathan recommended we move content every few months and agreed to be involved. Dan said we should have an events page and a calendar. We already have a Facebook page, which links to our site. Dan also suggested that during the spring, we put a list of area birds to watch on the Facebook page.
 - b) Environmental Commission Budget. The borough's 2016 budget, if approved, allocates \$1,100 to the Environmental Commission.

- c) Environmental Commission Membership. We have one opening to replace Jim Walsh, who was elected to the Borough Council.
 - d) Possible Activities at the Environmental Education Center. Dan is interested in organizing such activities, such as bird watching, stargazing, study of local insects, etc.
 - e) County Money for the Remediation of Brownfields. Allan reported that through a county program, the borough has pursued an EPA grant to pay for the remediation of contaminated sites in town. The money will be used for sites such as brownfields that need remediation and redevelopment. Susie suggested the money, which may be available as soon as August, be used for a public-private partnership.
 - f) ANJEC Grants. Dan and Steve discussed the possibility of our seeking a grant for signage. Dan also would like to purchase binoculars and bird feeders to encourage people to do bird watching. We could seek a grant to fund the placement of bird houses and create promotional materials.
 - g) Possible Discussion between DEP and Borough. Cindy Randazzo, Director of Local Government Services at DEP, wants to set up a meeting with the mayor to discuss local issues on which the agency and the borough can work together. We need to find out when this meeting will take place and request an Environmental Commission member be included.
6. The meeting adjourned at 9:19 PM. The next meeting of the Highland Park Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, February 3 at 8 PM in the Environmental Education Center.