

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of February 1, 2017
Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Steve Barnes, Laurel Kornfeld, Allan Williams, Council liaison Jim Walsh

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:05 PM.
2. The minutes of the January 4, 2017 meeting were approved.
3. Correspondence
 - a) We received notice that the Highland Park Gives A Hoot Foundation, which provides lunches for children on days when there is no school, is having a fundraiser at TGI Friday's.
4. Site Plans: None
5. Old Business
 - a) PSE&G Solar Farm. The application was approved by the Planning Board. A note has been added to the application confirming members of the Environmental Commission will be present when the trees on the site are marked and trimmed. This had not been mentioned in the original draft. Work will begin in April and end in June.
 - b) American Properties. Work on the site is ongoing. Some of the concrete on the site is being broken up. The contractor submitted a baseline report about the site prior to the start of construction.
 - c) Buck Woods. Litigation continues. We noted that two borough-owned lots adjacent to Buck Woods are currently zoned residential and should be zoned conservation. We also noted that the upper Meadows where the solar farm is being installed is still zoned residential. Jim will look into this.
 - d) ANJEC Grant. The most recent birding program was held last Sunday on the subject of winter fowl. ANJEC emailed us reporting new \$1,500 grants will be made available for open space stewardship. Applications for these are due on April 7. Sustainable Jersey also has grants for actions we can use for future certification. Sustainable Highland Park is applying for one of those grants; the application is due on February 28.
 - e) NRT Grant/Meadows. Craig is putting together a list of items for which we need purchase orders. We need to buy equipment, possibly including a new weed whacker. He will meet with Frank Troy to pick a shopping date for equipment and tools. Mary Denver has made an arrangement for the borough to purchase plants from the Pinelands Nursery. We noted that snow was plowed against the sign board by the bike path, which should not be done. We need to work on a sign board. Steve reported he walked the trail two weeks ago. The first big project for the spring is a new trail entrance. We will need use of the borough's bobcat to do grading at the top of the slope, which will require a DPW employee to do an hour's worth of work on the site.
 - f) Community Garden. The Environmental Education Center site is capped both at the building site and extending up the slope. The property could be leased to a non-profit for one dollar a year, but the borough may have some liability because of the contamination. This is a problem even if raised beds are used. We need to get feedback from the borough as to whether or not there is a liability risk.
 - g) Commission Budget. Jim reported the borough budget will not be finalized until March and added there will be substantial cuts to many areas. He will look into whether the Commission will

get the same \$1100 funding we got last year. Steve suggested we ask for money to stabilize the steep slope going down to the lower Meadows once the solar farm is installed. We decided it would be good to plan how we will spend our money ahead of time and have a specific budget for the next year outlined annually by November.

h) T-shirts. Allan will bring them to our next meeting.

6. New Business

- a) A sculpture class at Rutgers wants to put sculptures around town. Middlesex County has pulled out of the Donaldson Park sculpture project. We will set up a subcommittee to meet with the Rutgers students to discuss concepts and locations.
- b) Earth Day. The borough's annual Earth Day celebration will take place on April 23. To save money, STAC is getting unpackaged trees that will not be individually wrapped for distribution on Earth Day. We will hold a get together at the Environmental Education Center on April 8 at 2 PM for volunteers to come and help package the trees.
- c) Allan reported the mayor is having a meeting on February 16 to thank volunteers who got the borough recertified as silver by Sustainable Jersey. There will be discussion about additional actions the borough can take toward recertification and about whether recertification should be done annually.
- d) Steve reported we need to put out another call for volunteers to work at the Meadows. We discussed the possibility of holding a publicized event there.

7. The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, March 1, 2017, at 8 PM in the Environmental Education Center.