

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of September 6, 2017
Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Steve Barnes, Chris Satch, Laurel Kornfeld, Allan Williams,
Council liaison Philip George

Guest: Mark Lesko

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:05 PM.
2. The minutes of the July 5, 2017 meeting were approved.
3. Correspondence: None
4. Site Plans
 - a) 405 South Fifth Avenue, corner of South Fifth and Mansfield. Proposed subdivision of a large lot currently before the Planning Board. The applicant wants to subdivide one lot into two smaller lots and build an additional house on one of the new lots. The property is adjacent to Buck Woods and has steep slopes at the front and side. Some trees will be removed. The applicant did not follow the tree ordinance in the proposal, which does not list the number of trees, diameter, or species to be planted. The proposed new lot is larger than 5,000 square feet. The applicant wants to put a sidewalk around the whole lot. Steve questioned whether we could get the borough engineer to comment on the issue of water retention on the site, as the borough's rainwater retention policy applies only to larger subdivisions.
Comments: We want full compliance with the tree ordinance. We also want to see a plan on water retention, possibly including dry wells. A retaining wall will probably be needed to stabilize the steep slope. The applicant needs to show the location and size of the retaining wall. They also need a construction and drainage plan regarding retaining walls.
5. Old Business
 - a) PSE&G Solar Farm. Phil reported that the DEP told PSE&G last week that they want surface concrete currently embedded at the site and at the Meadows removed. This is because the old landfill at the site was never officially closed; it stopped being used as a landfill before regulations for these sites were established in 1976. PSE&G has come up with a protocol for the borough to clean up the concrete, and that proposal is supported by the Environmental Commission, Shade Tree Advisory Committee, and Sustainable Highland Park. The utility presented the protocol to DEP either yesterday or today. The borough is arranging with the county to borrow equipment to do this. DPW will do the work. We have the well testing report, which indicates the site was tested for many parameters. Air monitoring was conducted to search for volatile compounds. All of this work was done by PSE&G contractors. A question arose as to whether they took groundwater samples from the monitoring wells. We recommend using the gator rather than a dump truck to remove the concrete. Steve, Allan, and Craig will discuss these concerns about this with Frank Troy at DEP and will emphasize that we want someone present when the work is done. The solar farm will likely not be built until next spring.
 - b) American Properties. Allan noted that the company AMEC did a cleanup of the site in March and said more reports on that cleanup would be coming, yet we have not received any. Allan sent an email to a company representative on Monday asking where they are in the project and found out that the person responsible for overseeing the cleanup is on disability leave. He called the number

provided by this representative and was told the company needs permission from Honeywell to get back to him. Allan also has contact information for Honeywell.

- c) Meadows Trail Project. The main beams have been extended from 16 to 20 feet long. Planked over decking has been installed, and work has started on putting in the guardrails. More parts need to be purchased. Work will continue this weekend. The work is done Sundays 8-10 AM during the summer and 9-11 AM in colder weather. The group could use another two regular volunteers. Craig will soon order plants for fall plantings. We hope to get 12 Rutgers student volunteers to dig the holes and put the plants in the ground. We would also like to have inmates work at the site. Frank Troy is supposed to get us a lot of woodchips, which will be delivered to Mary Denver at the Native Plant Reserve. Craig and the volunteers have done a good job of maintaining and mowing the trail site. We need to finish the new trail entrance and clean up the area. Frank Troy needs to leave the gator in a spot where it is accessible to the volunteers on weekends. We also noted that the southern pine bark beetle is now in the Pine Barrens and spreading further north due to climate change. We need to inspect pines on the borough sites for their presence.
 - d) Environmental Commission Website. We have a draft of the new site, which is basically up. A lot of content has already been transferred. We need a meeting to address what content we want to transfer. Also, we need to note the site is for Highland Park, NJ, because there are Highland Parks in several other states. There is a page on the new site about the Meadows trail. Steve will give Chris pictures and text for it. Chris does not have copies of the recent minutes; we need to decide how many years of minutes to keep. Mike recommended we keep them all. Chris suggested we move those more than seven years old to a zip file that can be downloaded. He reported the ERI is already on the new site, and he just received two or three photos from the Arts Commission. Chris needs to be reimbursed for the website.
 - e) Plastic Bag Reduction Campaign. Sustainable Highland Park received a \$10,000 grant for this, of which \$5,000 is upfront, and the other \$5,000 will come at the end of the campaign. There are some ordinances in NJ banning their use in supermarkets. About 500 people and 30 businesses filled out questionnaires about plastic bags on Sustainable Highland Park's website. Sustainable Highland Park purchased 2,500 reusable cloth bags, of which 250 were given to the Food Pantry, and another 250 will be given out at the town-wide garage sale. Some will also be distributed at the Farmers' Market. The movie "Bag It" ran on HPTV several times and will be shown in the schools. Sustainable Highland Park will also have tables at Back to School nights where bags will be distributed. Stop and Shop has displayed signs saying they support the campaign. Bags will be sold to people from out of town at Arts in the Park. More than 500 reusable Stop and Shop bags were given out at National Night Out in August. There will be some monitoring to learn whether people will reuse the bags they received.
 - f) Sculpture Project Removal. Phil discussed this with fellow Council member Stephany Kim, who is liaison to the Arts Commission. She will remind the Commission that the sculptures are supposed to be removed in September. The borough is paying the cost of a crane for the sculptures' removal.
6. New Business
- a) Remediation Grants. Allan reported the borough approved various remediation grants for several locations. Phil noted these are for sites targeted for redevelopment, which have known or suspected environmental problems. They include several properties on the north side between Second and First Avenues as well as some on the south side between the same streets. The

cleaners on the north side is the biggest concern. The Main Street building is under contract with the borough for possible redevelopment. The DEP has given the borough a \$150,000 grant to do a Phase 1 environmental study for all these sites. The borough had to approve acceptance of the grant. Tantleff Properties, a developer, presented the Redevelopment Agency with plans to install commercial space and three stories of residential space, along with 135 parking spaces. Between 20 and 30 of the parking spaces will be dedicated to public parking. The borough will use CME, the official borough engineering firm, as its Licensed Site Remediation Professional (LSRP). There is no new movement on Sunoco. Edgewood Properties has an option on the site, but Sunoco still owns it.

- b) Sewer Work along the Raritan River. Mike noted that this project is still ongoing. The site becomes unworkable when it is muddy. A 30-inch diameter sewer main needs to be repaired; DPW and Middlesex County are performing the work. This line connects to the county line and junction for one of the main lines for the borough, which is why the work is a joint effort between the borough and the county. Work is currently being done behind Cliff Court; the access point for trucks is Red's Marina.
7. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, October 4, at 8 PM in the Environment Education Center.