

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of October 4, 2017
Minutes

Present: Steve Barnes, Laurel Kornfeld, Karen Swaine, Allan Williams, Council liaison
Philip George
Guest: Mark Lesko

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:10 PM.
2. The minutes of the September 6, 2017, meeting were approved with minor corrections.
3. Correspondence
 - a) We received another notice of a DEP permit issued to PSE&G allowing them to prune trees around town in their right of way as needed.
4. Old Business
 - a) Environmental Commission Website. No new information, as Chris was not present. The site is up, and Allan will send us all the link.
 - b) Heritage at Highland Park. The engineer in charge of the cleanup has returned from leave and forwarded us eight reports with more to come. The developer is moving some ground -up concrete around the site in preparation for final grading.
 - c) Meadows Update. Nine Rutgers student volunteers came last week and started clearing the site below the proposed bird observation platform. They removed the invasives and created an open area. More volunteers are needed to stack up the stuff cut by the weed whacker; this will provide us with an opportunity to reseed the site with grasses and wildflowers. Steve will look at our budget to see if we have the money to purchase seeds for planting. Work on the main entrance is done except for the platform at the front, which is partially built. The guardrails are in. We will leave caution tape around the site until next spring. The site will then be ready for a grand opening if the mayor desires one. Two new volunteers have joined the crew and are doing a great job. The Commission has received several compliments about the Meadows. At DEP request, PSE&G has marked locations in the Meadows for concrete removal. Access paths were cut to enable removal of the concrete. There will be another workday this Sunday.
 - d) Solar Farm. The concrete will be removed from the Meadow once the approval of the Solar Farm is issued by DEP. The site was not formally closed in the 1970's because no regulations existed. The borough has contacted the county to borrow equipment so DPW can perform the work.
 - e) Post-Sculpture Fixes. Trenches used to support the blue sculpture at the Environmental Education Center site were not filled in once the sculpture was removed. DPW will fill in the trench. We also noted there are areas needs to be reseeded because the sculptures killed off the grass.
 - f) Vine Removal at the Environmental Education Center. Steve and Phil discussed this. The Meadows Trail volunteers will assist with the vine removal on Sunday, October 15 at 8 AM. There is poison ivy on the site that also needs to be removed.
 - g) Beehive Fence. The borough wanted something to minimize bulk. We got a bid in at \$4,900, which the borough will accept at the next Council meeting. The new fence will be black chain link with dark green links woven through it.

- h) RUPA Cleanup. Rutgers volunteers removed non-native invasive species in the Meadows.
 - i) Ordinance for Upper Meadows. The Master Plan review process starts in January and runs through next year. The category of Sustainable Energy has now been changed to Sustainable Resources. The borough is looking into requiring sustainability provisions in commercial developments; for example, we may require hardwiring for electric vehicles in new commercial residential buildings. Steve said the Commission could write supporting statements for rezoning the left side of the bike path. The theme of sustainable resources is broader than conservation alone. The Meadows area is currently zoned residential; the borough is also considering rezoning it as a sustainable resource, which encompasses conservation. Karen recommended we plant the area next to the solar farm with pollinator plants.
5. New Business
- a) Redevelopment. The borough has won a grant to perform Phase 1 environmental studies on contamination in the redevelopment zone.
 - b) ANJEC is holding its 44th annual Congress on Friday, October 13.
 - c) Litigation with Jack Morris. This has been transferred back to Middlesex County and is on the Council agenda. It concerns Buck Woods and affordable housing litigation. A new master needs to be appointed, and the judge needs to hold a briefing to schedule the two lawsuits together. The first step is Morris' request to remove trees on the site in order to do more environmental testing.
 - d) Tree Dedication Plaques. Phil saw a picture of one of the drafts created by Main Street and their Council liaison and did not like it. The plaques are signs that will be hung with wires on trees. Phil said he instead proposed no signs but a large plaque in Borough Hall commemorating all dedications in one place. Main Street is working to address our various concerns.
6. The meeting adjourned at 8:51 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, November 1 at 8 PM in the Environmental Education Center.