

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of November 1, 2017
Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Jonathan Abrahams, Steve Barnes, Laurel Kornfeld, Karen Swaine, Allan Williams, Council liaison Philip George

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:07 PM.
2. The minutes of the October 4, 2017 meeting were approved with minor corrections.
3. Correspondence: None
4. Site Plans: None
5. Old Business
 - a) PSE&G Solar Farm. We need to find out what will be done with the concrete to be removed from the site and request it be recycled. After PSE&G experts had a meeting with DEP representatives, the remediation plan was revised.
 - b) American Properties/Heritage at Highland Park. Allan received an email from the engineer in charge of the cleanup, who informed him that more reports are coming. So far, they have sent Allan eight reports, all of which are about air monitoring. The developer is crushing concrete at the site and moving it around.
 - c) Meadows Trail Update. The new trail entrance is almost complete. The last carpentry work will be completed this coming Sunday. Grading and filling have to be done at the edges. The trail entrance will be closed until the work is done. The old path will be used for the gator and have a sign placed next to it reading, "Maintenance equipment only." Approximately 90 percent of the list of projects to be completed this year are done. The volunteers will work at the site for about another month and will do some tree planting. Four or five birch trees are currently in the DPW yard for planting at the trail. A purchase order will be put in for grass and wildflower seed mix. Two new volunteers have joined the trail crew.
 - d) Environmental Education Center. The October 15 vine clearing at the site was very successful. Phil took a selection of vines to the Artists' Collective, as they will be using them in an art project focused on making use of local invasives. There wasn't much poison ivy at the site. Japanese knotweed and several large branches of wisteria were removed.
 - e) Environmental Commission Web Site. The site is still under development. Any comments on it should be sent to Chris. Jon will contact him before our next meeting for an update.
 - f) Phase 1 Study for Redevelopment. Allan reported that the studies have begun and that some reports are in. He asked Councilwoman Susie Welkovits to let the Environmental Commission see the reports for the north side of Raritan Avenue between First and Second Avenues. The Sunoco site has been cleaned, and DEP has issued a no further action letter on it. Phil informed us that final copies of the reports on these sites will be sent to the Commission. Potential redevelopers are in the acquisition phase. In an ordinance adopted last year, the borough declared the entire town to be in need of rehabilitation. The whole commercial downtown is now part of a rehabilitation area. The ordinance prohibits any condemnation of properties for redevelopment.
 - g) Riparian Buffer Ordinance Changes. The Borough Council reviewed sample ordinances Allan provided them, but it is almost impossible to get any zoning or redevelopment plans passed after August. The Council will start looking at these in February, specifically in reference to state changes that allow building can be done in part of a riparian buffer. Riparian buffers are 50 feet

on either side of a stream. We are allowed to have an ordinance that is more restrictive than that established by the state.

- h) Storm Water Permits. We need new permits in 2018. Quentin Zorn of the Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership would like to see our storm water management plan.
- i) Proposed Subdivision at 405 South Fifth Avenue. The borough planner and engineer as well as STAC and the Environmental Commission all thought the plan was incomplete. The applicant agreed to resubmit the plan, and we may see it in January. We also noted that the Commission would like to receive copies of all applications in which variances are requested.
- j) ANJEC Congress. Hoboken Mayor Dawn Zimmer was the keynote speaker at the congress. She discussed the resilience plan Hoboken is building, including a micro-grid that will tie into hospitals, the police station, and the Fire Department.
- k) Beehive Fence. Dark green links are woven through the black chain link fence. The black chain link fence will not be visible. Phil reported green slats will be put in but not all the way to the top of the fence. The project has gone out to bid. It went to a state identified contractor, and the borough is saving money by adding this to a list of other fences that need to be constructed.

6. New Business

- a) Google Maps. Mike looked at green areas in Highland Park listed on Google Maps. Valley Place Ravine and the ravine trail are listed, as is the part of the East Coast Greenway that goes through Highland Park. Phil reported he is talking to the Council about having the greenway run along the Raritan River. The Meadows Trail is on Google Maps, but it is not labeled as "Meadows." We need to submit this to Google. If it's an area of interest, they will send someone to drive by and look at the area. The Environmental Education Center is not on their street view. An outline of the trail is shown, but there is no mention of what it is. Allan will discuss this with Chris.
- b) Trenches dug for the summer placement of a sculpture at the Environmental Education Center site are still there and need to be filled.
- c) The Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership will meet on November 17. Phil will either attend or look into having the borough send someone else to the meeting.
- d) The borough has started its annual budget process. We need to send a memo on the amount we request. We have \$250 left over from our 2017 budget, which we can use to buy seed for the Meadows.
- e) Street lights at The Crossing are still unshielded, Karen reported. Phil advised her to discuss this with Scott Brescher, the new code enforcement official, and with Teri Jover, the new borough administrator. A resident has to make a complaint on an issue in order for any action to be taken.

- 7. The meeting adjourned at 9:09 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, December 6 at 8 PM in the Environmental Education Center.