

Highland Park Environmental Commission

Meeting of May 1, 2019

Minutes

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

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:16 pm.
2. The minutes of the April 3, 2019, meeting were approved.
3. Correspondence: None
4. Site Plans: None
5. Old Business
 - a) PSE&G Solar Farm. The borough web site has a news release from PSE&G about their work on the project. PSE&G trimmed and cut down some trees and flattened some of the area, as was agreed on with the borough. Chain link fences were put up along the street, and a runoff barrier has been placed around the circumference of the site to prevent sediment from draining. A total of 26 trees were removed. Craig Ambroch was present to supervise the situation on behalf of the Environmental Commission and Meadows trail crew. He had also been involved in borough meetings with PSE&G. The trees and limbs cut were shredded and will be recycled for use as wood chips in the Meadows. Concrete removal has been completed. A piece of an old brick and mortar well weighing 300-400 pounds was discovered on the site and dropped off in the lower Meadows about two weeks ago. We had expressly stated such debris should not be dropped into the lower Meadows and now need to get it removed, as it is in the location where the trail extension will go. Phil will discuss this with Borough Administrator Teri Jover tomorrow. We need to find out if DEP has certified that the remediation of the solar farm site is complete. PSE&G still has a lot of smoothing of terrain and stabilization of steep slopes to do in several spots. Craig is there every day and will report back to us on their progress.
 - b) Meadows Update. The trail crew started work on the site two weeks ago. They cut dead wood and spread woodchips on new areas of the trail. Cuttings from black willows taken in the upper Meadows are being replanted in the lower Meadows. Craig put together a list of trees and plants needed, which have a total cost of approximately \$1,000. Steve and Mike at DPW will shop to get the last of the supplies for the new trail section under the National Recreational Trails Grant, completing expenditure of grant funds. National Trails Day is in early June, and the trail crew hopes to do something public on that day. Steve will create a summary of all the work that needs to be done, including the placement of one large sign at the trail entrance and three small signs on the ground in various locations. Steve also reported the trail crew got new sweatshirts.
 - c) Buck Woods. The borough introduced an overlay zoning ordinance for the site as required by the fair share housing settlement. Minor modifications were made to the ordinance during a recent meeting of attorneys for the borough and the developer. JSM brought up some minor issues at this meeting, which was attended by the Master. The judge extended the deadline for enacting the ordinance by six weeks. Because of these minor changes, the ordinance may have to be reintroduced by the Borough Council. Some neighboring residents also asked for changes to the ordinance regarding the proposed heights of the buildings. A modified concept plan will be

introduced soon. Samples of soil taken by JSM at the site show the presence of creosote and concrete.

- d) Environmental Commission Website. Allan is meeting with Nicole Wines on this. They went through everything on our old site. The new site has a more complicated design than the old one. The next steps are to replace all non-working links. Phil recommended we coordinate the revision of our site with the redoing of the borough's website. They will eventually be linked. Steve emphasized we want content on our site that people can use.
 - e) Environmental Education Center. Phil reported that DPW was at the Center last week and this Monday to repair the leak in the restroom. He is not sure whether they are done with the work. The exterior was cleaned up, and other maintenance issues were addressed. The Borough Council wants to move the solar structure by late 2020. At Phil's recommendation, the commission voted 5-0 on a resolution asking the Council to look into relocating the solar structure to the south side of the building. The original plans for the site were located. The current goal is to make the building totally sustainable, especially in the event of emergencies in which there is loss of power in town.
 - f) Fence Repairs. Several areas need fence repairs, including the bikeway, the Native Plant Reserve, one side of the DPW building, and the entrance to the Meadows. Phil said there is someone willing to donate fencing, but that fencing is not the appropriate length. We would have to dig new eight-foot fence holes to use them. Instead, he suggested taking down the existing fencing and putting up hedges. Karen responded that hedges would not work as fencing. The main problem with purchasing new fencing is lack of money. Steve said improving the hedging at the bike trail could fall under the National Recreational Trails Grant. Phil will look into this. He pointed out there will be more funding available once we start working on the larger greenway project.
6. New Business
- a) Earth Day. The Earth Day event was canceled due to inclement weather. Karen recommended that next time, Sustainable Highland Park either use an indoor location for the event or have a rain date. Next year will be the 50th anniversary of Earth Day.
7. The meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, June 5, at 8 PM in the Environmental Education Center.