

**Highland Park Environmental Commission**  
Meeting of April 3, 2019  
Minutes

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

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:05 PM.
2. Because the March meeting did not have a quorum, we approved the minutes of the February 6, 2019, Environmental Commission meeting.
3. Correspondence: None
4. Site Plans
  - a) We reviewed a summary of a Raritan Avenue site plan application that was already approved by the Planning Board. A lot adjacent to the parking lot where the Farmers' Market is held was split in half, and the borough purchased one of the two new lots. The Planning Board approved this as a minor subdivision.
5. Old Business
  - a) Meadows Remediation and Solar Farm. The borough rejected the first bid received for remediation of the solar farm site because it came in too high, at \$193,000. A second bid came in much lower. The Borough Administrator wants to make sure the contractor will follow all the rules before awarding them the bid. The borough is also doing some of the remediation. PSE&G plans to start work on the solar farm in April.
  - b) Buck Woods Update. JSM cut down 179 trees on the site after a judge lifted the stay on cutting them. Their permit said they could take 25 feet of trees on each side beyond what was previously approved. The borough is working on creating a new overlay zone and will hold a public meeting to present that plan on Tuesday, April 9. The Planning Board will deal with the proposed new zone at its meeting on Thursday, April 11. JSM will be required to plant grasses to stabilize the area from erosion. Karen recommended they plant sedges for this purpose.
  - c) Environmental Commission Website. Very little work has been done on the site since January. Allan received the final remediation report for the cleanup of the Heritage at Cleveland Avenue site. It is too large to post on the website. We can add a feature to the website to measure the number of visits it gets. Communications from the public are being received through the site. The link to our site from the borough website needs to be changed, as it still links to our old site.
  - d) Park Partners Grant. We put in a proposal for wildlife monitoring cameras, but somehow, the proposal was never put on the ballot for public voting. We will try again next year.
  - e) Deer Management. The borough hired a private company to conduct a population survey of deer in the borough. The survey which was recommended by NJDEP, was done today and the borough is paying for it. Drones, with infrared sensors were used, and observed only the Meadows, the Rutgers Ecological Preserve, and the corridor along the Raritan River. These are the areas where the most deer have been reported. We need to determine if the deer population is at an unsafe level. If the deer population is too high, then the state recommends a culling hunt as the only solution. The company conducting the survey will issue a report on its findings, a copy of which will be sent to the Environmental Commission, and the borough will ultimately have to decide what, if any, action to take. Data collected for the survey will be sent to the state Division of Forestry Management. Phil reported the county is getting onboard with deer issues.

6. New Business
  - a) Boy Scout Conservation Project. Several Boy Scouts want to do an environmental project for three to four hours. The question is whether we have any recommendations for projects in either the Meadows or the Native Plant Sanctuary (NPS). Jon will contact Steve, who will meet with the Meadows trail crew to discuss the type of work needed and whether there are any appropriate projects for the Scouts. Steve has a list of activities that could be done at the Meadows.
  - b) Earth Day Celebration. This year's Earth Day celebration will be held on Sunday, April 28 from 11 am-3 pm at the Environmental Education Center. The Commission will have a table there, and Steve will bring information to display on the table, which will be shared with the Meadows trail crew. The event is sponsored by Sustainable Highland Park and celebrates the borough's new bag ordinance. Free reusable bags will be handed out.
  - c) Meadows Trail. The trail crew is back at work in the Meadows. They completed a survey for the new section of the trail, which will cost \$1,400. All work done under the National Recreational Trails Grant must be completed by August. We still have \$2,600 left to spend. Whatever is not used on the new trail section will be used to purchase equipment, tools, plants, and trees. Steve will have the exact cost for the trees by the end of the week. We also need to buy wood chips. Steve will come up with an estimate on the cost of Meadows maintenance and get it to Phil.
  - d) Master Plan. Work has begun on the borough's new Master Plan, much of which will be based on the plan adopted in 2003. Phil provided the first electric vehicle zoning ordinance, which will require charging stations in all zones. He is working on a requirement for mandatory installation of charging stations in all new construction and on projects with 50 percent reconstruction. The Redevelopment Plan has been amended to require mandatory electric vehicle charging stations at the site of the current medical building on River Road. A requirement to install charging stations in redevelopment zones will also be added. Sustainable installation for solar charging will be required in developments greater than 30 units. A new Sustainable Resource Zone will be applied to land the borough owns, stipulating it can be used only for clean energy or active/passive recreation. Climate change will be addressed in future Master Plan revisions.
  - e) Mill Brook Presentation. Last Sunday, March 31, Susan Edmunds spoke at the Library about the history of Mill Brook. Approximately 50 people attended.
  - f) Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety. Jon reported he attended a borough meeting about pedestrian and bicycle safety two to three weeks ago. The Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Commission presented a study they did on increasing pedestrian and bicycle safety on state, county, and borough roads. The project is a DOT grant, but of experts rather than money. All of the proposals are for state- and county-controlled roads.
7. The meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, May 1, at 8 pm in the Environmental Education Center.