

**sHighland Park Environmental Commission**  
Meeting of December 5, 2018  
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 November 7, 2018, meeting were approved.
3. Correspondence: None
4. Site Plans: None
5. Old Business
  - a) Meadows Update. We are waiting for remediation of the solar farm site. All permits are in place, and the borough hopes to do this in the spring. We have to complete spending our grant money by August 2019 and need to decide where the trail extension should go. Phil reported that the Borough Council discussed a connector for the East Coast Greenway project at last night's meeting. Grant money is available if we could tie into the greenway. Phil will put Steve in touch with Heather Fenick, executive director of the Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership, to discuss this. The Meadows site needs grading for about 50 feet. We could ask PSE&G to do this. Several options for the trail extension are currently being explored. The Commission spent the last of our 2018 budget purchasing equipment, including a new weed whacker and hoodies for the trail crew. Steve said he spoke with Mary Denver about applying for a Park Partners grant to purchase motion sensitive wildlife cameras that could take photos in the Meadows day and night to inform us when and where creatures are traveling, learn about any creatures we are not aware of, and add this information to the ERI. A camera costs \$185 and runs on battery power. We would put one at the Meadows and the other at the Native Plant Reserve and have them take pictures at regular intervals. The cameras would be mounted with straps and cables that have master locks. Total cost for two cameras and all accessories is \$517. The cameras would also help us get a handle on the deer population and where they are coming from. Phil reported that current fencing at the bike path was put in at 12-foot intervals, and these types of fences are no longer being stocked. One possibility is moving the fence posts or using the trunks of trees removed for the solar farm as 12-foot posts.
  - b) Environmental Commission Website. Allan reported that all Environmental Commission meeting minutes are now posted on the new site except for those of November and December. Steve's article is also up. The site will go public some time in December-January. Phil reported the borough will bid on a new website in January or February, and we might be able to tie in our new website with the borough's new site. The state requires the borough post its municipal budgets for the past five years on its website. Allan said remediation reports for Cleveland Avenue are now up on both Environmental Commission websites but have not yet been published. Steve recommended our website report which grants we received each year and thank NJDEP and NJDOT for giving us grant money.
  - c) Buck Woods. Phil reported the judge directed JSM to submit a plan for 75 units as part of an affordable housing plan. The deadline for this submission passed without anything being submitted. When it is submitted, the borough will review it to determine whether it is acceptable.

The next step will require the borough to consider rezoning the property to fit the plan, then propose ordinances for the zoning change. The biggest issue now is to keep the stay on cutting more trees on the property in place.

- d) PSE&G Solar Farm. This was discussed in the Meadows Update section.
- e) Environmental Education Center Condition. Phil is trying to get DPW to inspect the site once a week and to adopt a regular work schedule for it in the New Year. The leak from the furnace was repaired. There is still a roof leak in the bathroom. Don Rish and Frank Troy will look at the EEC and come up with a list of what needs to be done. The borough will then determine if we can afford these repairs/changes.  
An idea that has been suggested is to relocate the solar structure to the front of the building and use the EEC as a charging station in the event the borough loses power. We are also discussed possibly excavating the roof and replanting it.
- f) Greenway. The borough is working on this, and Edison is discussing its vision for a pedestrian and bicycle greenway that runs from Johnson Park to Perth Amboy. The Borough Council is looking at easements and land the town owns that could be tied into this larger greenway. The Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership and Middlesex County are working with the state in conducting a feasibility study on land acquisition for this project. One possibility is to divert the greenway through the Meadows trail. Doing this would qualify the Meadows for greenway grants.

6. New Business

- a) Enhancing Pedestrian Safety. Jon attended a meeting of a group operating under the state DOT to enhance pedestrian safety. This project involves the DOT “loaning” professionals to towns to implement these plans. Highland Park wants to identify five spots in town to redesign for pedestrian safety. Consultants have been hired to come up with recommendations, and they are working with DOT on this. Sites being considered include the corner of River Road and Wayside Road, two locations in the Raritan Avenue business district, one on the corner of Benner Street and South Fourth Avenue, and one on Route 27 near the location where a fatality occurred as the result of an accident. The consultants will present their recommendations in the spring.
- b) 2019 Budget. We are requesting \$1,050 for our 2019 budget.

- 7. The meeting adjourned at 9:23 PM. Because the Borough Council Reorganization Meeting is taking place on Wednesday, January 2, our next meeting will be on Wednesday, January 9 at 8 PM in the Environmental Education Center at 20 River Road, Highland Park.