**Highland Park Environmental Commission**

Meeting of October 2, 2019

Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Jonathan Abrahams, Steve Barnes, Laurel Kornfeld, Allan Williams

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:09 PM.
2. The minutes of the September 4, 2019 meeting were approved.
3. Correspondence: None
4. Site Plans: None
5. Old Business
6. 31 River Road Project. Allan reported the project was approved by the Planning Board. All stormwater will be retained on site and not go into storm sewers although the applicant has not yet specified how this will be done.
7. Solop Project. The applicant has 60 days from the August 8, 2019, memorialization of the plan to write a conservation easement and submit it to the Planning Board attorney.
8. PSE&G Solar Farm. Construction is underway. Some panels have already been put up. PSE&G still has to do the wiring and plantings around the property. The current fence is not the final one, which will be much more attractive and have shrubs and trees planted around it, along with an educational sign.
9. Meadows Update. Part of the boardwalk was underwater due to tidal flooding. Removal of concrete from the site will start next Monday. We can ask to see a copy of the contract for this work.
10. Environmental Commission Website. Allan added copies of all our meeting minutes and asked Monica Jackson to move content from our old link to our new one. Steve will write an article about the Meadows for the site. It would be a good idea to also add information about the PSE&G solar farm.
11. Environmental Education Center Improvements. We discussed replanting and maintenance of the green roof. Last night, the Borough Council passed a resolution to pursue a grant from Sustainable New Jersey for maintenance of the roof and training DPW on how to do this maintenance. Karen volunteered to help maintain it and to help train the DPW employees who will do the work.
12. Master Plan Re-examination. There is a public meeting about this tonight at the Senior/Youth/Community Center. The plan is to discuss open space as part of the Master Plan revision. Allan noted that according to the proposal, the solar farm site will be rezoned as a sustainable energy site. Also, parts of Valentine Street will be vacated and become part of the Meadows. The bike path on the other side will become open space and be zoned quasi-public. The beginning of the Meadows Trail is currently zoned residential and should be changed to conservation. Around 150 people attended the previous meeting about this. The borough planner was at that meeting and collected public comments. Approximately 45 percent of residential lots in the borough are non-conforming. This means property owners have to go before the Zoning Board to make any changes. The Master Plan revision proposes to make it easier for these property owners to make changes to their properties without going before the Zoning Board. There is an online survey for residents about the Master Plan re-examination on the borough’s website.
13. Environmental Commission Budget. We have $550 remaining in our 2019 budget, of which $50 has been committed to protecting plants from deer. Steve suggested we spend money on small plastic signs that say, “Conservation Area: Do Not Disturb” for the Meadows. He will look into this idea and discuss it with the trail crew.
14. Herbicides and Pesticides at County Parks. No signs were put up in advance of these being applied. Laurel noted the Board of Health is addressing this issue.
15. New Business
16. Jonathan reported that vinyl water bags placed around newly-planted trees on Lincoln Avenue were all stolen. The borough likely purchased the bags when the trees were planted. Mike asked him to send an email to STAC asking if they are aware of this.
17. The meeting adjourned at 9:06 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, November 6, 2019, at 8 PM in the Environmental Education Center at 20 River Road, Highland Park.