

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of December 2, 2020 – Via Zoom
Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Jonathan Abrahams, Laurel Kornfeld, Ethan Schoolman, Allan Williams, Council liaison Philip George

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:05 PM.
2. The minutes of the November 4, 2020, meeting were approved.
3. Correspondence: None
4. Site Plans
 - a) Girls' School on Cleveland Avenue. The application is going before the Planning Board tomorrow. We have reports from the borough engineer and planner. It is unclear from the application where stormwater from the site will go. The engineer's report contains 23 stormwater related items. We need to look further into the stormwater issue. The school bus proposed route through the town has been publicly presented. As part of a developers' agreement through the borough's redevelopment plan, green infrastructure is required even though it is not in the application. A preliminary assessment review discusses the history of the site and contaminants found there. The contaminants are at a low, residential level. The LSRP report has been submitted. The application includes an outdoor lighting plan, but the planner wants to see more detail in this. We will submit comments saying we want the outdoor lighting directed downward so it does not affect the neighbors. Currently, the site is mostly gravel. Allan wrote a report on behalf of the Environmental Commission, which he submitted on Monday.
5. Old Business
 - a) Buck Woods. This project is still in litigation. The application submitted was deemed incomplete because it did not address several safety issues.
 - b) Reforestation Grant. We submitted the grant report on time but have not yet heard anything back. New trees and shrubs have been planted in the Meadows. This required a lot of work. We would like to obtain a letter from the mayor to Phil acknowledging the work of the volunteers. He will speak to her about this.
 - c) Meadows Update. Craig Ambroch and Allan purchased \$400 of tools and more wood to extend the boardwalk closer to the river. Work on this is ongoing.
 - d) Budget. The Environmental Commission has \$96.39 left in its budget for 2020. If Allan finds something we really need, he will spend this money on it. Otherwise, the remaining funds will be returned to the borough.
 - e) 2021 Meeting Dates. We will continue to meet on the first Wednesday of every month. Meetings will be on Zoom through June. There are no conflicts with holidays on first Wednesdays this year.
 - f) Animal Camera. The camera has not yet been put up in the Meadows. Allan reported he tested it in his backyard.
 - g) Website. Allan did some work on this and changed things that needed to be changed. The site says we are now meeting virtually and that contact information can be obtained from the borough's website.
 - h) Conservation Easement. The Borough Council approved a conservation easement on the Polos property on Skyview Terrace, which passed on second reading at the most recent Borough Council meeting.

- i) Pipeline Resolution. The Borough Council also passed a resolution opposing a liquid natural gas pipeline in the state.
6. New Business
- a) New Brunswick Environmental Commission Request for Joint Meeting. New Brunswick's Environmental Commission has new leadership, and they requested a joint meeting with us. We would like to wait for this until after the pandemic, so we can all meet in person. Allan will send them an email saying we're looking forward to meeting them.
 - b) Possible Raritan River Activity. The borough is interested in revitalizing activity around the Raritan River. One possibility is installing a kayak landing. We need to look at potential access points to the river. There is a walk through the Meadows down to the river, but it is not convenient for canoes and kayaks in its current state. Donaldson Park has a boat landing that charges for use of its services. There also is an informal landing project in Johnson Park. Phil noted that interest in the waterfront is tied to the East Coast Greenway project, which envisions walking and biking along the greenway, which ultimately will run to the renovated waterfront in Perth Amboy. Eventually, the East Coast Greenway will run up and down the entire east coast. Our local greenway will connect Donaldson and Johnson Parks. Back in 1995, the Environmental Commission hired a consultant to conduct a feasibility study about a greenway to connect the parks. Phil will scan a copy of this study and distribute it to Commission members.
 - c) Goals for the Coming Year. Commission members are encouraged to send suggestions on goals for the coming year to Mike or Allan before our next meeting, where they will be discussed.
7. The meeting adjourned at 9:08 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, January 6, 2021, at 8 PM on Zoom.