

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of September 1, 2021
Minutes

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

Guests: Craige Ambroch, Mark Lesko

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:01 PM.
2. The minutes of the July 7, 2021, meeting were approved.
3. Correspondence: None
4. Site Plans: None
5. Old Business
 - a) 238 Cleveland Avenue. The Planning Board met on July 8. The developer's planner and engineer attended the meeting. While the site is potentially contaminated, the developer said they did not think they needed an LSRP. They obtained a permit to knock down the building of cinderblock and cement and began the work before the Planning Board meeting. Several recommendations in the Phase 1 study were not carried out, and the developer did not report this to the Planning Board. One resident in the back of the lot reported the regrading scattered dirt over a neighbor's yard. Broken up cement was not wet down, as was supposed to be done. The method used to detect asbestos was the least sensitive one that could be used. The site was disturbed, and the developer did not do all of the required testing.

The application was approved with several conditions, including a letter from the LSRP, a requirement to conduct Phase 2 testing, and a sample from the area where they are looking for petroleum residue. In the two reports the applicant filed, they reported they were looking for petroleum residue from underground tanks and conducting other tests. The developer has now retained an LSRP, who wrote a letter in August saying they met all the requirements. However, the LSRP also said they didn't evaluate at lot 33 because there are a lot of trees on that site. At the next Planning Board meeting, the board will try to determine how to get the developer to fulfill the necessary requirements. Phil would like a report outlining this project's problems and recommendations for addressing them. There is a proposal that if a site has potential contamination if there is a planned demolition that Bruce Koch will have to sign off on it. More testing on the three lots may be necessary. Phil will refer this to DPW. Amendments to the site plan may be required. Allan will send recommendations to Phil and Mike.

- b) Meadows Update. Craige reported the Meadows volunteers are doing maintenance, trying to keep the trail mowed and edged. Phil noted Johnson Street will be redone in 2022 and questioned whether the concrete from that project could be broken down and used on the Meadows Trail. Craige will discuss this with Steve.
- c) Spotted Lantern Flies. The borough is getting a lot of questions about what can be done. Craig is looking for host trees in the Meadows in which spotted lantern flies may be laying eggs. He will tag any trees where eggs are found and try to remove

those within reach. They need to be scraped into a bag and put in alcohol or disinfecting hand wash. Long-term damage by spotted lantern flies will kill the trees. Allan reported that NJ Spotlight published an article that reports certain oils can kill the eggs if smeared on them. We need to show people what the egg masses look like. Craige consulted state and USDA sites and found the insects are transported by latching onto cars. Mark noted there are many spotted lantern flies in Buck Woods.

- d) Artists' Collective Art Show. The collective wants to do an art show at the Environmental Education Center. They cleaned it up, placed works of art on the table, and hung some in the windows. Allan is helping them. The show is for people to view from outside the building.
 - e) Website. The June minutes have been put up. Allan will put up information about the spotted lantern fly. He reported he is leaving Sustainable Highland Park, so we need a new liaison to them.
 - f) Budget. We still have \$400 we need to use by the end of the year. Craige has some ideas on how to spend this, including purchasing a weed wacker, which will double the capacity to get work done.
 - g) Trail Cameras. Most of the pictures show deer. Several show groundhogs. We haven't seen a fox or anything exotic. The cameras were put out four or five times. Allan will put the other one out this weekend.
 - h) Public Gardens. Tina Weishaus of Sustainable Highland Park supports these and wants to put raised bed gardens at the right side of the Environmental Education Center. Phil researched this and found it is not recommended because the site contains old fill material. Raised beds wouldn't be viable because of the nature of the site. The Borough Council is looking into the issue of community gardens. Jon noted we identified a large vacant lot on Woodbridge Avenue but had no way of contacting the owner. The property is large and sunny, and the only challenge will be getting water there. Phil will pass this information to SHP.
 - i) SHP Divestment Resolution. SHP is advocating the borough adopt a resolution that the Police, Fire, and Public Works retirement systems divest from petroleum related stocks. After the Environmental Commission reviews the resolution, it will go to the Council's Public Works Committee. We questioned whether this would also include all major auto manufacturers and PSE&G, both of whom are investing in electric cars and renewable energy. Phil recommended the resolution read, "Highland Park supports the investment in X, Y, and Z" (companies that promote green technologies) as an alternative. Phil wrote down comments made by Commission members and will bring them to the Council.
 - j) Outdoor Meetings. We received an email from Monica Jackson informing us that Boards and Commissions can choose to meet outdoors but need to notify her in advance due to the requirements of public notice. We prefer to continue meeting on Zoom.
6. New Business: None
7. The meeting adjourned at 9:02 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, October 6 at 8 PM on Zoom