

**Highland Park Environmental Commission**  
Meeting of April 6, 2022  
Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Jonathan Abrahams, Craige Ambroch, Laurel Kornfeld, Karen Swaine, Allan Williams

Guest: Mark Lesko

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:09 PM.
2. The minutes of the March 2, 2022, meeting were approved with minor corrections.
3. Correspondence: None
4. Site Plans: None
  
5. Old Business
  - a) Buck Woods/JSM. Bruce Koch has signed off that the plan is complete, but the borough planner has not yet done so. Both the planner and the Planning Board have to deem the plan complete, and neither has done that yet. The county wants JSM to submit a formal proposal on mosquito control and file a stormwater maintenance agreement. The county also listed seven items of concern regarding fire safety. The project manager wants their design of the retaining wall to be a condition of approval. The Environmental Commission wants to see the test result reports from the test pits. Once the plan is deemed complete, neighbors will be sent letters informing them of it and of Planning Board hearings where it will be considered.
  - b) ANJEC Dues. The borough gave us a temporary 2022 budget of \$500. Our total budget for the year will be \$1,050. We will pay our annual ANJEC dues within the next few weeks.
  - c) 238 Cleveland Avenue. The landscaping is completed for the first house, and an open house was held. The LSRP report has been completed with the required changes made. As a result, Bruce Koch released the bond on the project. Construction of the second house has not yet started.
  - d) Demolition Checklist. Teri Jover is writing up a new protocol on construction office requirements for demolitions. It should be completed by June 1.
  - e) Light Pollution. One of the Cleveland Avenue businesses made changes to their lighting that put them in compliance with light pollution regulations.
  - f) Leaf Blowers. Tina Weishaus of Sustainable Highland Park (SHP) expressed concern about gas-powered leaf blowers, which cause noise and air pollution. One company that works in town is using electric leaf blowers at her request. The problem with electric leaf blowers is the batteries run out quickly, so they can be used only on smaller properties. Allan will send Commission members a proposal fact sheet addressing the possibility of requiring electric blowers starting in 2023, and Craige will work with him on this. We noted that Montclair, Maplewood, and Princeton have enacted various restrictions regarding leaf blowers. Because many landscapers come from outside Highland Park, we questioned whether any neighboring towns or the state are looking into this issue.

- g) Environmental Education Center Tour. The borough's Recreation Department is giving a tour of the Environmental Education Center for 8-12-year-olds. They will be discussing how it is environmentally friendly. Allan provided information about the green roof.
- h) Artists' Collective. We noted the Artists' Collective will be in the Environmental Education Center through May 31.
- i) Website. The minutes of our February meeting have been put up, and the March minutes will be put up tomorrow. Mike recommended putting up information about the statewide plastic bag ban. We are not sure whether the ban applies to home deliveries.
- j) Meadows Trail Cameras The cameras are still in the same location they were in last month.
- k) Greenway Study. The next step is to write up an RFP and have a professional assess whether a greenway is possible. The Environmental Commission will be one of the stakeholders. Allan recommended the greenway not go through the Meadows because we want the Meadows to remain as untouched as possible since it is a recovering ecosystem. Currently, there is no greenway though the county is purchasing land for the long-term goal of creating one. The borough has a \$250,000 grant for a greenway feasibility study, which will address the issues of permitting and cost.

6. New Business

- a) Earth Day. SHP's Earth Day celebration will take place on Sunday, May 1 in conjunction with the Street Fair, and the Commission has been asked to participate. STAC will have tables behind Provident Bank on North Third Avenue. They will conduct tours and show people rain gardens on South Third and South Fourth Avenues. Craige will bring his Meadows displays, which we can put on a table at the STAC site along with a volunteer sign-up sheet. Allan will email Tina Weishaus informing her we are interested in participating.
- b) Town Tables on South Third and North Fourth Avenues. These were supposed to be put back on April 1. We don't know why it has been delayed. Noting there are environmental arguments both for and against the street tables, we discussed writing up a list of pros and cons, along with possible suggestions of better sites for the tables, such as the Farmers' Market site. The Police Department will be involved in this decision, as public safety is an overriding issue.
- c) An Earth Day cleanup of Valley Place Ravine and the trail that leads from South Adelaide Avenue down to the ravine's main trail will be held on Sunday, April 24 from 10 AM-12 PM.

7. The meeting adjourned at 9:22 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, May 4, 2022, at 8 PM on Zoom.