

**Highland Park Environmental Commission**  
Meeting of May 4, 2022  
Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Craige Ambroch, Laurel Kornfeld, Karen Swaine, Allan Williams,  
Council liaison Philip George

Guest: Mark Lesko

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:03 PM.
2. The minutes of the April 6, 2022, meeting were approved.
3. Site Plans: None
4. Correspondence: None
  
5. Old Business
  - a) 238 Cleveland Avenue. A new excavation has been dug for the second house. Realtor signs are displayed for the first house. Bruce Koch released the bond and signed off on the LSRP report.
  - b) JSM (Buck Woods). The EIS was updated with two additional reports and is now much more detailed, including a list of contaminants and their concentrations at the site. Remediation will be required though the question of who will pay for it remains in litigation. Two issues of concern were listed—water seepage from the front part of the site and historic fill. The issue of the road being wide enough for a firetruck to drive around the entire building may be resolved, as the county requires the road to be 18 feet wide. The applicant had proposed a 15 feet wide road.
  - c) ANJEC Dues. Our payment of dues will be approved at the next Borough Council meeting. The Finance Department will mail a check to cover this.
  - d) Meadows. The trail crew took a walk around the Meadows and came up with a list of priorities for the coming season. These include construction of new foundations for the boardwalk and moving the boardwalk to its permanent location. Work will begin on May 22 and end in September. The trail crew estimates this will require 120 hours of volunteer work, as it is very labor intensive. The trail is mostly in good shape. A few trees planted two years ago were lost over the winter. The crew needs to assess how many trees survived the winter. There are no plans for new plantings. Seven people signed up at the Street Fair to volunteer at the Meadows. The borough is trying to get FEMA reimbursement for damage done by Hurricane Ida, and Allan has requested the appropriate information from Craige.
  - e) Earth Day/Street Fair. Craige had a root system of English ivy, which had been removed from a tree in the Meadows, to demonstrate the damage English ivy can cause. A new member of the Edison Environmental Commission stopped by to discuss the proposed greenway and both their plans and the county's plans for it. When asked, a large number of people said they know about the Meadows. Some asked what the Environmental Commission does. The North Third location was a good site for the Earth Day event.
  - f) Town Tables. The borough is in negotiations with the state DOT regarding permanent closure of parts of North Fourth and South Third Avenues. Closure of any street that

intersects a state highway requires DOT approval. The borough may put the tables out on these streets for a weekend event to demonstrate their use.

- g) River Road Cleanup. Approximately 30 people from various Scout troops took part in a cleanup led by Mark Lesko. They pulled out a combined total of 499 pounds of trash, including two fire hoses. They also took before and after pictures. There is still some trash under the bridge. No work was done at the trail area by Valley Place Ravine, but that area is not as bad as the trail along the river was. Mike observed the cleanup from his house and noted Mark showed good leadership in organizing the event. DPW did not pick up the trash until several days later, and they mixed recyclables with regular trash in the garbage truck. To avoid this happening again, recyclables will no longer be put in plastic bags. Mark informed us there may be another cleanup during the summer.
  - h) Plastic Bag Ban. The statewide ban began on May 4 and received a lot of media coverage. There is information about it on the borough website and on Sustainable Highland Park's website.
  - i) Demolition Checklist. Borough Administrator Teri Jover will have this completed by the end of June.
  - j) Light Pollution. Two of the three facilities on Cleveland Avenue have not corrected the problem, and their light is still spilling over their property lines.
  - k) Leaf Blowers. No new information. Alan hopes to discuss this issue at our next meeting.
  - l) Artists' Collective. Most of the art has been taken out of the Environmental Education Center.
  - m) Website. The minutes of our April 2022 meeting are up. Allan also posted a short blog about peregrine falcons in Johnson Park, along with a picture of one. Birders think the falcons may be nesting on the John Lynch bridge. Craig noted they have also been seen on top of the WCTC tower.
  - n) Trail Camera. One is still in the Meadows.
  - o) Greenway Study. An RFP for the study will be put on the agenda of the Borough Council's Public Works Committee. Craig noted that members of the Edison Environmental Commission have high hopes for the greenway.
6. New Business
- a) Addition to Temporary Budget. Allan put up the money to pay fees due for our website and URL. The borough will reimburse him for the \$130 cost.
  - b) Future Meetings. We are scheduled for one more meeting on Zoom. Phil reported the borough may return to live meetings in June. Boards and commissions will continue to have the option to meet via Zoom. We will decide this month by month.
  - c) SHP Adopt A Storm Drain. Sustainable Highland Park signed up for the Adopt A Storm Drain program, through which an individual or group can check a particular storm drain assigned to them during autumn after leaves fall. The program does not require volunteers to remove anything inside the drains. DPW is contracted to conduct any necessary removals. There is also an issue of snow and ice covering the storm drains. Anyone who observes this should report it to DPW. SHP is rolling out this program through the Borough Council's Public Works Committee and collected

signatures of potential volunteers at the Earth Day event. The goal is to promote better, cleaner use of storm sewers to minimize flooding and road repairs.

7. The meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, June 1, 2022, at 8 PM on Zoom.