

**Highland Park Environmental Commission**  
Meeting of June 1, 2022  
Minutes

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

Guest: Mark Lesko

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:02 PM.
2. The minutes of the May 4, 2022, meeting were approved with a few corrections.
3. Site Plans: None
4. Correspondence: None
5. Old Business
  - a) Buck Woods. JSM has not responded to the Borough Planner's last memo, which addresses increasing the width of the road from 15 to 18 feet to make room for emergency vehicles. The application will not be deemed complete until they address this. All the trees along the sides will be taken down. The applicant did submit a landscaping plan. Phil reported the judge in the case held a status conference two months ago on the issue of site cleanup. The applicant has an idea of what needs to be done; the issue is who is responsible for funding the cleanup. The cleanup's estimated cost is \$6 million.
  - b) Checklist for Demolition. Borough Administrator Teri Jover will have this completed by the end of June.
  - c) Light Pollution. Only one of the four Cleveland Avenue businesses complied with the requirements of the construction office letter to reduce light pollution. Their lighting is now significantly better. Allan will contact the construction office informing them of the business that complied and of the other three that have not done so.
  - d) Meadows Update. Last week, the volunteers did maintenance, including mowing and weed whacking. They will begin constructing the boardwalk foundation soon. There is a new group of volunteers for whom Craige wants to conduct an orientation to better learn their skill sets. Members of the public are very grateful for this special place. There is invasive honeysuckle and wisteria. The volunteers are planting common milkweed among the mugwort. They can manage invasive vines but can't do much about the wisteria other than keep it off the trail. Honeysuckle cannot be completely removed; it does have the benefit of feeding birds and maintaining soil structure. Each invasive species is being dealt with individually. Mark noted the site is very clean and has almost no trash. Craige would like to conduct a tree tour of the Meadows. Karen said STAC will support this. We can do this later in June after National Trails Day, and send the information to Harry Glazer to publicize. The benches in the Meadows are okay but are getting old. Some planks in the first boardwalk are being replaced because they have rotted out. Craige will try to get Steve Barnes to come down to the Meadows to view the progress made.
  - e) Leaf Blowers. Allan is talking to landscapers who work in town regarding the use of electric leaf blowers.

- f) Artists' Collective. All the art in the Environmental Education Center has been taken down with the exception of one table. We don't know whose table it is. Allan will fold it up, and Phil will look into its ownership.
- g) Website. We received one comment from a person who liked our article about peregrine falcons.
- h) Trail Cameras. Allan needs to find the one in the Meadows.
- i) Greenway Study. This was on the agenda for the Borough Council's Public Works Committee meeting last week. It will be revisited in two weeks.

#### 6. New Business

- a) Replacement of High School Turf Field. The new field will be artificial turf, but previous issues have been resolved through the use of new turf materials.
- b) SHP Cleanup. Mark reported that Sustainable Highland Park is doing another cleanup on Saturday, June 4, from 9 AM-12 PM. They will start at Valley Place on South Adelaide Avenue, go down the ravine in both directions, and work on the trail along the river bank. Mike suggested recyclables collected be dropped off at his house to make sure they get recycled and not mixed with regular garbage.
- c) Possible County Land Acquisition. Mike wants to write to the county requesting they acquire the land next to his house on Skyway Terrace as open space. The land's status recently changed because the owner created a subdivision last year and a conservation easement for the Bar Marsh, which is now connected to the Polos property on Skyview Terrace. The subdivision contains lots for two homes adjacent to Skyview Terrace. A conservation easement runs through the property along the river. Mike will write the letter.
- d) Connection of Red's Marina and Donaldson Park. There are "Private Property" signs between Red's Marina and Donaldson Park, but there is a conservation easement for this area with a foot-path easement through the conservation easement. Phil will put this on the agenda for the Council's Public Works Committee.
- e) Possible Composting Locations. Tina Weishaus of SHP has discussed placing a composting facility along River Road, either on the Environmental Education Center property or at the Native Plant Sanctuary. Phil informed Tina that the EEC operates under the auspices of the Environmental Commission while STAC operates the Native Plant Sanctuary. Another option discussed is composting leaves at a property near the Public Works garage. If composting is done on municipal land, we would need a permit and approval from DEP, as well as municipal monitoring and maintenance of the site. Phil will discuss this issue with STAC. For insurance purposes, a composting facility would have to be under the aegis of the borough. Obtaining the permit is a long and expensive process. The facility would have to be for composting more than just leaves and yard debris.
- f) In-Person Meetings. Phil reported the mayor is hesitant to return to in-person meetings because of the resurgence of Covid in town. One possibility is to hold hybrid meetings that are both in-person and virtual. A decision is expected in June. Allan will set up a Zoom meeting for the Commission in July. We do not meet in August, so our earliest possible in-person meeting would be in September.

7. The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, July 6, 2021, at 8 PM on Zoom.