

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of June 7, 2023
Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Jonathan Abrahams, Laurel Kornfeld, Mark Lesko, Allan Williams,
Council liaison Matt Hersh

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:03 PM.
2. The minutes of the May 3, 2023, meeting were approved with a correction.
3. Site Plans: None
4. Correspondence: None
5. Old Business
 - a) Skyview Terrace. Nothing new.
 - b) Trip to MCUA Recycling Center. Allan is working with contacts in the County Planning Department, and Matt is working with DPW to set this up. It will take place on a weekday. The purpose is to show interested members of the public what happens at the recycling center.
 - c) Meadows Update. Nothing new.
 - d) Earth Day Follow-up. At the Earth Day event, several people attributed climate change to “aluminum nanoparticles.” We will be promoting an event in Edison demonstrating the use of battery-powered lawn equipment sponsored by the Edison Environmental Commission. SHP is co-sponsoring that event, and we agreed to co-sponsor it as well.
 - e) Sunoco Property. This property is a Classified Exception Area (CEA) site, meaning it exceeds the required limit for benzene and non-carcinogenic organic compounds. Sunoco has accepted responsibility for the contamination. The permit is for a two-year period and can be extended until 2029. There is also soil contamination at the site and under the building. Sunoco has agreed to remediate the soil when the building is torn down.
 - f) Website. Allan put up last month’s Commission minutes. ANJEC notified us that we are being awarded a \$1,050 grant The Borough will pass a Chapter 159 resolution, which means the EC can start to spent money even if ANJEC had not forward the funds. Allan will write up a notice about the Grant and put it on the website.
 - g) Spotted Lanternflies. Allan sent Commission members a document about this.
 - h) Trail Cameras. Nothing new.
 - i) Leaf Blowers. Jon will contact Tina of SHP to initiate conversation about the next steps in promoting the use of electric leaf blowers.
6. New Business
 - a) Woodbridge Gas Power Plant. The Borough Council and Board of Education passed resolutions opposing this project. This is both a climate change and environmental justice issue. Many local environmental groups are fighting it. Empower New Jersey is an umbrella group composed of 100 organizations in New Jersey that want a moratorium on all new fossil fuel projects in the state. The governor has the power to stop the gas power plant. Mark will send

Commission members information about this project and six others across New Jersey in the process of obtaining DEP approval. We discussed the issue of passing our own resolution opposing the power plant as well as directing our concerns about it to our Assembly representatives, Sterley Stanley and Robert Karabinchak.

b) Solar Structure at the Environmental Education Center. There is a support structure on site to hold solar panels but no panels. Matt will put this on the DPW agenda. The borough is in talks with Solar Landscape approved vendor about joining a public solar infrastructure, and this is one site we could consider for the project. This program funds solar panels on public buildings. We could also encourage the schools to put solar panels on their buildings. The state program encouraging the use of solar panels on public buildings is called Community Solar.

The borough also wants to install charging stations for electric vehicles at various sites, including River Road. There are many grants to fund this. Matt will research how frequently the charging stations at the Community Center are used. The ultimate goal is to have charging stations on Raritan Avenue, at Borough Hall, and at the schools.

7. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 8:53 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will be on Wednesday, July 5, 2023, at 8 PM on Zoom.