

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of November 1, 2023
Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Laurel Kornfeld, Mark Lesko, Allan Williams

Guest: Craig Ambroch

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:08 PM.
2. The minutes of the October 4, 2023, meeting were approved with minor corrections.
3. Site Plans: None
4. Correspondence: None
5. Old Business
 - a) Meadows Update. All but one of the Sunday work days last month were washed out. On the work day, volunteers updated the deer fencing around the new perennial gardens. They found and removed some aluminum fencing, which DPW will recycle.
 - b) Open Space/Skyview Terrace. Nothing new.
 - c) Greenway. Nothing new. Allan will discuss this with Teri and update us at our next meeting.
 - d) Website. The site is up to date and includes a blog on our ANJEC grant and our September minutes.
 - e) Trail Cameras. Nothing new.
 - f) Leaf Blowers. An April date has been set for the non-gas-powered lawn equipment demonstration, which will be held at a park in Edison. Highland Park, Edison, New Brunswick, North Brunswick, and Milltown are participating, mostly through members of their Environmental Commissions. The next planning meeting will be November 8 at 7 PM. Volunteers are still working on getting vendors and stores to attend.
 - g) ANJEC Grant. The annual report on the grant was due on October 31 and was submitted on time. We purchased all the lumber and materials to replace the boardwalk at the beginning of the Meadows trail and the second observation deck. The final report is due at the end of June.
 - h) Colgate Recycling Facility Visit. Mike, Allan, Jon, Craig, Matt Hersh, and several people from New Brunswick attended. The facility is large, and handles recycling from 200-300 trucks daily. The visitors saw bales of several materials.
 - i) They also found out that caps should be removed from bottles and cans before they are left for recycling. The facility separates Grade A and Grade B aluminum. Aluminum foil can be included with recyclables. They also recycle glass. The facility has 60 employees to do materials recovery and processing. A lot of separation is done by hand. Lithium batteries are dangerous to recycling centers, as they cause fires. Emma posted a photo of those who attended in a Facebook group. Everyone was impressed with how clean the facility was and how well their process works. We will ask Matt and Emma to send the facility a thank you letter for the visit.
 - j) Rezoning of the Solar Farm and Meadows. Matt is looking into whether there have been any new developments.

- k) EV Charging at the Community Center. We received a report with statistics on EV usage there. We know that borough vehicles use these charging stations.
 - l) Healthy Community Planning Report. We are unclear as to how to utilize this.
 - m) Arts Commission Bench. DPW has not yet installed the bench at the site of the Environmental Education Center, but a location at the site has been selected.
 - n) Raritan River Cleanup (at the Meadows) by the Highland Park Conservative Temple. The cleanup was done on October 24. Seven people, including four high school students, took part and cleaned along the river bank. A separate cleanup of the bike path was done last weekend. Mark has a cleanup scheduled for this coming Saturday but as of yet has no location for it. We noted that trash can be removed from the Red's Marina site at low tide.
 - o) Community Solar. At their last meeting, the Borough Council decided that Gabel Associates will set up community solar for Highland Park.
 - p) 2023 Budget. The remainder of our budget is being used to purchase sweat shirts for the trail crew from All Colors. Allan will pick up the quote.
6. New Business
- a) 2024 Budget. We are requesting \$1,075, the same amount we got last year. Allan will send our request to the borough's Finance Department.
 - b) 2024 Meeting Schedule. We will meet the first Wednesday of every month except for October, when our meeting will be on the second Wednesday, October 9. Allan will send a notice of our meeting dates for next year to Monica.
 - c) Townwide Garage Sale/Interest in Reusable Items. We noted that many people can use items others have discarded and questioned whether the borough could set up a reuse center all year. This could be an area where some people drop off items and others take them. We would need a space and volunteers to manage it. We could try to do this once and see how well it works. DPW would have to agree to take away whatever items are not taken. Possible locations are a shed on the DPW property or the parking lot by the Native Plant Reserve. We will put this issue on the agenda for our next meeting.
 - d) Forum on War and How it Affects Fossil Fuels. Mark noted a forum on this topic will be held, possibly at the Reformed Church, on either December 2 or 9. He will provide more information at our next meeting.
7. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 8:52 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, at 8 PM on Zoom.