

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of March 6, 2024
Minutes

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

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:01 PM.
2. The minutes of the February 7, 2024, meeting were approved with minor corrections.
3. Site Plans: None
4. Correspondence: None
5. Old Business
 - a) Meadows Update. Nothing new.
 - b) Neonicotinoids. Sam Friedman of NJPIRG, who attended our January meeting, sent us a draft resolution to review. Resolutions are statements of the borough's position but are non-binding. This resolution calls for establishing a new committee to deal with neonicotinoids. We discussed banning these entirely versus doing an educational campaign about them. The borough already uses Integrated Pest Management (IPM). For an outright ban, the goal is to make it statewide. A resolution could be a stepping stone to contacting our state legislators in support of a ban. We will reach out to Jennifer Coffey of ANJEC to find out if they have a position on this. Jon will contact Sam Friedman to find out the specific action he wants us to take.
 - c) Open Space/Skyview Terrace. Nothing new.
 - d) Greenway. The consultant's final greenway report is now available and has been sent to the borough's River Greenway Committee and placed on the borough's website. It includes a concept design, technical assessment, and other areas of concern. The committee will review it and send it to the Environmental Commission. The Council plans to hold a series of meetings with the county on park improvements, and this will be on the agenda. The borough will reach out to County Commissioner Ronald Rios about this.
 - e) Website. Our January meeting minutes are up.
 - f) Trail Cameras. Nothing new.
 - g) Leaf Blower Ordinance. Matt noted that Tina Weishaus of Sustainable Highland Park (SHP) wants to start with an educational campaign. We need a subcommittee of the Commission to liaise with borough groups on this, much like was done with the plastic bag ban. We also need to set up meetings among the various borough boards and commissions involved with this project.
 - h) ANJEC Grant. Allan is waiting for Craige and the volunteers to finish the work. He will then write up the report, which is due in June. The project is on schedule.
 - i) Potential Rezoning of Meadows and Solar Farm. Allan wants to meet with Craige and Teri about this and will send them a meeting request.
 - j) Community Solar. Matt noted the borough is putting out an RFP for solar developers. Gabel Associates are the technical lead on this. Having our own solar expert will allow low- and moderate-income households to opt into the program. SHP plans to

reach out to the larger apartment complexes about this. Matt will share the RFP with us once it is ready to go.

- k) Philip George Appreciation for Assistance to Meadows Trail Crew. Allan is working on this. We want to do it at a Council meeting. Craige will talk about how Phil helped the volunteers and present him with a volunteers' sweatshirt. We need to check availability for both Craige and Phil.
 - l) Earth Day. The borough's Earth Day event will be held during the Street Fair on May 5. SHP is already working on this, and a flyer has been created. STAC will be there distributing native plants. We decided to have a table at the event and want to buy a canopy for sun protection, which we can do using our budget. Someone can buy the item and then get reimbursed.
 - m) Highland Park Ecology and Environmental Group Cleanups. Mark reported these are held on the first Saturday and third Sunday of each month, with the dates scheduled for the rest of the year. The dates will be posted on Facebook and on the SHP website. The downtown will be cleaned up before the Street Fair. Other cleanup locations include the schools' properties, which will be cleaned up during the summer. There is some discussion of doing a cleanup of Mill Brook together with Edison. This will require walking through the brook, and volunteers will need to wear waterproof boots. We will also need permissions from home owners. Mark noted he has a data sheet on all cleanups held since July 2022.
6. New Business:
- a) Mike reported that Pino's has a drop off bin for cork recycling. The corks are sent to a company that uses them to make new corks. Mike took a picture of the bin and noted Pino's recommended the Environmental Commission promote this. Mike will find out more about cork recycling. We could promote this on our website and Facebook page. Jon suggested we put up a resource page on our website listing places in town that recycle other items, such as glasses and ink cartridges. We will also approach Cyber Knight Computers and ask if they take old computers for recycling. The Borough recycles electronics including computers. All of this recycling information could be put into the borough's quarterly newsletter.
7. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 9:04 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, April 3, 2024, at 8 PM on Zoom.