

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of September 3, 2025
Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Jonathan Abrahams, Laurel Kornfeld, Mel Pihura Shiu, Karen Swaine, Allan Williams, Council liaison Matt Hersh,

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:03 PM.
2. The minutes of July 2, 2025 meeting were approved with a minor correction.
3. Site Plans: None
4. Correspondence
 - a) JSM is applying for Treatment Work Approval (TVA) for South 6th Avenue (Buck Woods). The plan is changing the location where water and sewer hook up to the municipal sewer system.
5. Old Business
 - a) The site plan for 802 North 2nd Avenue was approved by the Planning Board. The borough engineer said they do not have to do anything concerning stormwater unless it interferes with the property next door.
 - b) Meadows Update. Volunteers have been doing maintenance of the trail and cutting down invasives. There was an issue with wasps. One volunteer was stung but is fine. If there are safety considerations, we need to coordinate with Phil George and the Council's Public Safety Committee and determine what resources we might need. The trail crew is under the Environmental Commission. The volunteers have an emergency kit with them.
 - c) Neonicotinoids. Nothing new.
 - d) Greenway. Nothing new.
 - e) Website. Nothing new.
 - f) Leaf Blower Ordinance. We have a report from meetings held at the library and on Zoom as well as the online survey for residents and landscapers. The task force collated this data into the report. The next step is sending it to the Borough Council's Public Works Committee. We noted that several towns have enacted full bans. Allan will post the report on the EC website.
 - g) Community Solar. Nothing new.
 - h) Cleanups. Mark is not here, but we know that several cleanups had a good number of volunteers and that they worked on the rain gardens. We are still waiting for DPW to work on the rain gardens. At the South 5th Avenue rain garden, there is a gap under the pavement that could be dangerous.
 - i) Invasive Species Act. Nothing new.
 - j) Budget. We have \$400 to spend. The trail crew would like a new drill because the old one died. They will give Allan the details on the cost.
 - k) Bamboo Ordinance. No action yet. Matt will look into where we can start on this. We have an ordinance template.
 - l) Recycling of Plastics. We still don't know if the borough is recycling only ones and twos or anything else. Mike reported that Frank said new information will come out for 2026. The county recycles numbers one through five. Matt asked Frank and Mike

at DPW to look into the county program. We would like to rejoin it if that is a viable option. If we do rejoin, we would get recycling totes.

- m) Mulch Volcanoes. Karen wrote a letter, which she will send to all of us. She has not yet sent it to the schools' facilities manager. Mel spoke to the principals of all the schools about this; they said they will pass it to the facilities manager to take care of, but nothing was done. We will send a formal letter as the EC to the school district. The letter will also go to the superintendent, the facilities manager, and all school principals.
 - n) South 3rd Avenue Plaza. There were several public meetings on this, including an open house held two weeks ago. SHP met with the Economic Development team. The meeting was run by the consultant. Now the consultant is taking everything collected at the recent meeting, which will be compiled into a report. Karen noted concern about whether volunteers should move ahead on work at the South 3rd rain gardens. It would be helpful to find out if these rain gardens will be left alone or redesigned/rebuilt.
 - o) Killing of Fawn in Donaldson Park. An unleashed dog killed a fawn in the park. Matt said Highland Park police can enforce leash laws in Donaldson Park. Mel noted she has seen unleashed dogs in the MS/HS area. Mike reported that some people walk dogs along the river and other places and don't clean up after them. Some who do clean up put dog waste in bags that they either leave in the street or put into storm sewers. We discussed putting up signage and installing kiosks with dog waste bags and a place to throw them out. Matt will look into these options.
6. New Business
- a) Sunoco and BBBig. These properties have been approved by the Council as areas in need of redevelopment with the option of condemnation. Seven different lots are included in this new designation. Sunoco will have to do final cleanup after its building is demolished. There might also be contamination under the dry cleaner lot by BBBig.
 - b) Native Plant Reserve and Mary Denver Memorial. Matt: We are planning a proclamation, which SHP needs to approve. The pad and concrete foundation set are for the bench, which has been purchased.
7. The meeting adjourned at 9:24 pm. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, October 8, 2025 at 8 PM on Google Meets (rescheduled from October 1 due to a Jewish holiday).