

**Highland Park Environmental Commission**  
Meeting of November 5, 2025  
Minutes

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

Guest: Craige Ambroch

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:04 PM.
2. The minutes of the October 8, 2025 meeting were approved with minor corrections.
3. Site Plans: None
4. Correspondence: None
  
5. Old Business
  - a) Meadows Update. Craige reported that the entrance sign fell over in windstorm in mid-October. The volunteers will reconstruct it. ANJEC had a silent auction (fund raiser) in which Heather Fennick and the Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership were the winners. Heather proposed a tour of 10-12 people, including Environmental Commission members, trail crew volunteers, and LRWP representatives to view the Meadows at the riparian buffer, so her team can discuss how to protect it more efficiently.

The Borough Council will honor Steve Barnes' decades work of volunteering by renaming the Meadows Trail the Steve Barnes Meadows Trail.

The oral history project sent a letter to the borough requesting the Council sign an official support and recognition letter for the project and offered to discuss this in a Zoom meeting. Matt would love to meet with them. Craige will prepare a timeline of Meadows history all the way back, including how the project evolved and important people who took care of it and continue to do so.

Craige reported that Mike W. at Public Works doesn't have anything to offer us in terms of a new shed. We discussed putting in a request for additional funding beyond the \$400 Environmental Commission annual budget. The proposed shed will be a 20-foot used container with a rolling door. We need the space because we're getting a lot of equipment. Mike W. determined the total cost for purchasing the shed, having it delivered, and having it placed next to the other sheds to be \$6,500. He will get us a bid in writing. Matt does not know if the money is available now and recommended requesting it from the Council in the spring. He will reach out to Mike W. and the mayor about this and noted that sometimes, there is supplemental funding in the DPW budget.

- b) Greenway. The borough is planning to relaunch the greenway committee in January. Matt needs to get hold of information on each component of the project.

- c) Website. The site is up to date with meeting minutes. We have money in the budget to make some site improvements.
- d) Leaf Blowers. Matt said the goal is to pass the ordinance this year. It will be introduced at the November 25 Council meeting, which will be followed by a work session on December 9 and a second reading on December 16. The task force will likely hold a separate meeting with the mayor to discuss implementation of the ordinance. Members of the task force can also attend the December 9 work session where this will be discussed.
- e) Bamboo Ordinance. The ordinance was introduced and will have a second reading and final passage on November 25. We will put together a pamphlet for residents explaining it. Mark reported that volunteers cleaning up Valley Place Ravine saw a bamboo forest growing there. Craig noted DPW has been maintaining that trail and trimming the bamboo to the ground. It has to be cut back annually. He said Meadows volunteers can cut it back. Preventing the bamboo from spreading to the trail would require building a concrete or metal barrier and digging down several feet to install it.
- f) Community Solar. Solar Landscape, our Community Solar operator, is nearly ready to launch. Matt has a copy of the BPU opt-in letter that will be sent to about 800 residents in the next few weeks, which discusses automatic enrollment, how to opt out, and an explanation as to why specific households qualified for the program. He will also put a section on the borough website with more information on it.
- g) Cleanups. Mark's volunteers did three cleanups since our last meeting, at Bartle School, the Native Plant Sanctuary, and Valley Place Ravine. The latter focused on the trail parallel to South Adelaide Avenue along the river. Three more cleanups are scheduled for this year—one at the high school and two in the downtown. Mark sent Commission members a data sheet with numbers detailing the cleanups since he started collecting data about three years ago.
- h) Invasive Species Act. Matt reported the Climate Superfund Act could move once the state legislature is back in session. He will research efforts to move this forward and find out if ANJEC has information about it. Mark noted there will be a big rally in Trenton on November 17 in support of the Climate Superfund Act.
- i) Budget. With what is left of this year's budget, we can buy several grabbers (a tool to pick up small pieces of debris). Batteries for the electric power tools need to be replaced. Allan needs the name of the product manufacturers and the cost for these to determine what we can do. Allan recommended we request a budget of \$7,000 for next year, and Matt said he will advocate for whatever we ask. The budget request must be submitted by December 1.
- j) Recycling of Plastics. Matt reported the borough is looking into rejoining the county-run recycling program though no decision has yet been made. Currently 1-5 items are recycled in town, yet the borough website says only items 1 and 2 are recycled. If we do join the county program, that would free up existing DPW laborers. Matt will get Mike W.'s analysis on this. We will take this item off our December agenda and put it back in January.
- k) Mulch Volcanoes. Allan hasn't seen any moving of mulch at the schools. Matt reported that at the STAC meeting, Karen said she had a good discussion with the schools' Buildings and Grounds Department, and they were very receptive about the issue.

- l) ANJEC Congress. Allan noted that American Water and another utility at the conference expressed concern about PFAS compounds popping up in water samples at multiple different sites in the country. They are putting money into developing quantitative analytical methods to detect these compounds and to confirm they are not present or have been removed. Carbon filters remove certain PFAS, but they are very expensive and have to be sent to a landfill after use. Methods need to have a sensitivity of parts per billion. Spectroscopy can reveal which compounds are present. Alvin Chen of DEP Blue Acres gave talk at the conference on how the process works.
  - m) Harrison Avenue Blue Acres Property. This area near Mill Brook once had a house. The state purchased it with Blue Acres funding, tore down the house, and now controls the property. If the borough controlled this site, it could be made into a pocket park.
  - n) 2026 Budget. Mark and Craige put in specific requests. Allan will put together a proposal and forward to Commission members before December 1.
6. New Business
- a) The Borough Attorney wants us to use the email address [ec@hpboro.com](mailto:ec@hpboro.com) for the purpose of the Open Public Records Act. The borough, Mike, and Allan have access to this account. The borough needs to be aware of environmental issues that are raised, and responses must be posted on the borough website.
  - b) Redevelopment. We will put redevelopment and possible contamination on redevelopment sites on the agenda for our next meeting. Matt recommended we meet with Matt Hale and the Borough Administrator on this subject.
  - c) Rain Gardens. Mark's volunteers will weed the rain garden on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue this Saturday. There are no updates on getting cement cut at other rain gardens. Planting will be done in the spring. The volunteers hope to get mulch for these sites and a way to water them during droughts.
7. The meeting adjourned at 9:04 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, December 3, 2025 at 8 PM on Google Meets.