

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of October 8, 2025
Minutes

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

Guest: Craig Ambroch

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:04 PM.
2. The minutes of the September 3, 2025 meeting were approved with minor corrections.
3. Site Plans: None
4. Correspondence: None
5. Old Business
 - a) Meadows Update. Rutgers University's History Department is doing an oral history project of the Meadows, which will eventually be published in Rutgers' archives. The department wrote an introductory letter to the project and want to know to whom they should send it. Craig suggested the letter be sent to the Borough Council and to Mike, Alan, and Matt Hersh.

Mark did a cleanup in the native plant garden at the Meadows, which resident Colin Marx dedicated to his late father, Richard Marx. There is now a sign posted welcoming people to the Richard Marx Community Garden. Volunteers removed trees that fell in the Meadows. The next goal is to add more informational signage to both the trees and the display areas.

Wood from the last construction project has not been removed. Some of the volunteers want to use it to build a ramp to the new deck. Mike W. of Public Works is actively helping Craig figure out how to get a new shed. There are three containers present, and the volunteers want to put the shed next to them. Mike W. may donate an old container since the new ones are expensive.

- b) Neonicotinoids. Nothing new. We will remove this from the agenda.
- c) Greenway. Nothing new. Borough Administrator Teri Jover is in talks with Middlesex County about this.
- d) Website. The leaf blower task force report is now up.
- e) Community Solar. Nothing new.
- f) Cleanups. Mark reported that he has organized six cleanups since July. The cleanup on September 28, at the Meadows trail, was the best attended in borough history. Most volunteers cleaned along the river bank. A few cleaned in the stream and along the roadway down by the radio tower. This cleanup was organized by the Highland Park Conservative Temple/Congregation Anshe Emeth. They brought in another congregation and a yeshiva to do the work. The Environmental Commission was also represented at the cleanup. A total of 74 volunteers took part. Mark will send Commission members a data sheet on this cleanup.

The most recent cleanup, the 66th since July 2022, was held on October 4. Six more will be held this year. The next ones are on October 19 at Bartle School, on October

26 at the Native Plant Sanctuary, on November 1 at the Adelaide Avenue trail, and on November 16 at the high school by the football field. Both December cleanups will be in the downtown, with volunteers meeting up at the Welkovits Pavilion. Cleanup dates for next year have been chosen but have not yet been publicized.

- g) Invasive Species Act. Matt will get back to us on this.
 - h) Budget. We have \$400 left for this year and are being asked to submit next year's budget. Allan would like to replace the volunteers' electric saw that burned out; this will cost around \$100. We have no backup for the website, so Allan would like to spend \$100 to determine what data we have and how to make it functional for those who want to use that data. Mark noted we could use some of our budget money to purchase some garbage bags and grabbers for the cleanups.
 - i) Bamboo Ordinance. We obtained copies of ordinances from several towns as resources. Matt Hersh wants to pursue this.
 - j) Recycling of Plastics. We noted there are still some people in town who think the borough doesn't recycle. Mike spoke to Frank Troy and said there will be an agreement about which plastics the borough recycles in 2026.
 - k) Mulch Volcanoes. No changes have been made.
 - l) Donaldson Park. Matt is supposed to follow up with us on whether the Highland Park police can cite people with unleashed dogs in the park.
 - m) Rain Gardens. Volunteers worked on the two rain gardens on 4th Avenue and the one on 5th. They pulled out weeds and bags of trash. Public Works now has to cut the cement in these rain gardens so the water flows into them. Chris and Karen already picked out native plants for these sites, and volunteers will do another round of weeding and planting. Nothing has been done with the rain gardens on 3rd because we don't know what the plans for that site are as of now though we hope those plans come out before the grant for work on the rain gardens runs out. Last Sunday, volunteers cleaned the rain garden at the Teen Center; they weeded, planted, and cleaned out the drain pipes. Mark is scheduled to meet with Karen this week to look at all the rain gardens in town.
6. New Business
- a) Ordinance for the Meadows. Allan wants the borough to pass an ordinance specifying what is and isn't allowed in the Meadows. We want people to stay on the trail, and we don't want bikes on the trail. Mike suggested we obtain copies of ordinances other towns have enacted for trails. ANJEC might have sample trail ordinances we could use.
 - b) Tools. Steve Barnes donated tools for the Meadows volunteers, which were distributed on Sunday. They will be kept in the shed in waterproof containers. Don took the antique tools.
 - c) ANJEC Congress. The Congress will be held this Friday, and the DEP Commissioner will be speaking. Allan will attend and report back to us on the conference.
7. The meeting adjourned at 8:56 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, November 5, 2025 at 8 PM on Google Meets.

Adjourn: 8:56 pm