

BYRAM TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

MINUTES, FEBRUARY 26, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. Present were Chair John Boyer, Vice-Chair Michelle Rehse, Jim Reinhold, Lisa Shimamoto, Katie Parrish, James Myers, Council Liaison Dave Gray, and secretary Margaret McGarrity. Also present was John Garrity, a Cranberry Lake resident.

January minutes approved: Motion by Lisa; second by Jim; unanimous.

Special February 12 minutes approved: Motion by Lisa; second by James; unanimous.

Correspondence and updates:

BEM outcome notice for NJDOT garage UST spills on Roue 206: John is reviewing this document. *Table until March meeting.*

Letter from Cranberry Lake Community Club to NJDEP: Supporting the Commission's comments on the Highlands Applicability Determination application for Block 186 Lot 1 (proposed house at corner of North Shore Road and Route 206.

Draft quarry relicensing approval: Various Commission issues addressed (see agenda). Dave explained the litigation between Tilcon and Byram Land Development (owner of the quarry parcels) regarding possible contaminated soil deposited at the quarry, which Tilcon says will be disproven by NJDEP inspections. Tilcon is to provide that documentation, as well as court papers. If there was contamination, the Township could pull the quarry license. The large metal debris on the lower quarry parcel is an issue for Byram Land Development, not Tilcon.

MacKenzie Hall, formerly of Conserve Wildlife NJ, preparing for this spring's amphibian rescue: The Waterloo Road rescue/count will take place once the weather changes in the early spring, which may be in March.

Business:

Soil ordinance: Dave will email the current draft to John and Katie, who will review for the EC, with Dave's help. A motion was made by Michelle and seconded by Lisa, with unanimous approval, to appoint this 3-person ad-hoc sub-committee. Dave noted that the Township is working on four ordinances—soil, solar, septic, and signs.

Planning Board:

- Environmental Commission process for reviewing Planning Board applications: A motion was made by John and seconded by James, with unanimous approval, to dissolve the current sub-committee and to share the work-load at this time by assigning application reviews to various EC members:
 - ✓ Dave led a discussion of the Paul application, for an enlarged home on the Stag Lake property, which is coming to the Planning Board on March 5. A motion was made by John and seconded by James, with unanimous approval, to support the comments of Planning Board Engineer Cory Stoner, including that the applicant must provide information about how State riparian buffer regulations affect his project, and also asking the Board to impose a requirement for a vegetative buffer along the lakeshore (the ordinance calls for a 10-foot buffer along 80% of the shoreline, which needs some interpretation in this situation, since the Paul house is on the very large Stag Lake master parcel).
 - ✓ James, with Lisa's help, will review the Lake Mohawk Pool application.
 - ✓ Donna, with Lisa's help, will review the John Garrity application.
 - ✓ Michelle will also help if needed, as she used to do Planning Board application reviews for the EC.

Margaret will ask Cheryl to email the applications to the EC (in addition to one paper copy), so that all members can be familiar with the applications and also with this EC task. Only three Commission members can visit a site at any one time, so as to avoid a quorum.

Dave cited the State and local ordinances establishing Environmental Commissions, which grant the right for Commissions to receive copies of Planning Board applications, as long as a Commission has a Natural Resources Inventory. Planning Board reviews/decisions cannot be delayed or invalidated if an EC fails to submit timely comments. Dave also noted that it is Byram Township's policy to encourage the EC to review Planning Board applications, and Margaret noted that it is also long-standing past practice (for at least 20 years).

There was discussion about whether EC members should avoid reviewing or doing site visits of Planning Board applications within their own neighborhoods. Dave and John recommended this to avoid conflicts; Mr. Garrity and Margaret thought that neighborhood residents would understand the issues better.

- Other planning Board applications:
 - ✓ Edwards: Lisa reported that the Edwards plans (Meteor Trail, Cranberry Lake) were sent back to the applicant again for further information/revisions. At the last Board meeting, Lisa led a discussion of all the EC's points. PB Engineer Cory Stoner is looking into the question about drawing drinking water from a C-1 waterway; any Planning Board resolution will be subject to any NJDEP restrictions or permits for a C-1 shoreline. Mr. Edwards denies that he cleared the

r.o.w. bordering his parcel or that he placed boulders in the lake (aerial photos could help clarify this). Margaret will find out if the clear-cut r.o.w could be added to the No Net Loss planting sites.

Trails:

- Spring trail work: at the next meeting, schedule work days at Brookwood Park and Johnson Lake. Jim will attend the March 28 trail maintenance course given by NY-NJ Trail Conference at Salt. The EC also voted to send Jim to a \$90 chain saw certification class on May 6 in Manalapan: motion by Michelle, second by John, unanimous.
- 2015 ANJEC grants for open space stewardship: The Commission decided to apply to hire a tree removal contractor to clear the large downed trees near the river in Brookwood Park. Margaret will ask ANJEC if they will consider this use of grant funding; if not, the EC agreed to apply for placing a bench and trash/recycling container at the Township-owned Johnson Lake parcel.
- Margaret gave Jim Township blazes to better mark the trail at Johnson Lake, as it goes up the driveway to intersect with the main Tamarack Park trail.

Forestry:

- No Net Loss tree planting grant application: Non-competitive; the Township will get \$317,554 for 1,058 trees (\$300 per tree, which can be paid to a contractor to develop a planting plan, purchase and plant and maintain the trees). Margaret suggested more planting sites, especially along Route 206 in the Cranberry Lake Neighborhood Commercial Zone, to give a boulevard effect to that local retail area, and at various places along the Route 206 corridor to intensify the landscaping. Other suggestions from prior meetings: various places at the municipal complex, especially around the DPW lunchroom building; at the foot of the quarry berm on 206 where a fire burned several trees, at C.O. Johnson Park (where the Township's first smaller NNL grant will not cover proposed plantings). These sites would have to be reviewed by the Township and/or NJDOT; a contractor hired under the grant would then complete a detailed planting plan.
- Community Forestry Plan update (2015-2019 plan): The EC manages this forestry plan, while the Forest Stewardship Plan is managed by the Open Space Committee. Under the CFP, the EC has certain annual responsibilities, including Arbor Day activities, educational efforts, training, and annual accomplishment reports. A final draft of the new plan is due in early March; Margaret will email to the EC. The plan makes recommendations which can be used to help the EC decide upon an Arbor Day event and educational materials.

Musconetcong River: Michelle reported that the Musconetcong River Management Council and the Musconetcong Watershed Association have had no response from the NJ Department of

Transportation to their letters protesting conditions under the Route 206 Lubbers Run bridge. Paul Kinney of the National Park Service is looking into aspects of recreation and safety that might fall under NPS's purview; and Rich Egge is asking NJ Fish and Wildlife to weigh in. MWA Executive Director Beth Styler-Barry will send a second letter with more specific information, especially regarding the stream scouring caused by the coffer dam remnants.

Michelle also reported that there are MWA River Watch training programs on March 14, 21, 28, to become a river tester.

Report from EC liaison to Open Space Committee: Michelle will forward the current draft of the Forest Stewardship Plan update (both this plan and the Community Forestry Plan are being updated by the Township's forester, Ron Farr).

Report from Council liaison Dave Gray: Dave is now Council liaison to the Board of Health and will initiate the process of re-writing the Township's health ordinances, which will help address the concerns about septic reviews and enforcement by the County.

Township Recycling Center: Jim reported numerous plastic bags in the recycling dumpsters and recommended better signage, more aggressive monitoring, or again providing a garbage can for recyclers to discard plastic bags after dumping recyclables. The EC suggested posting signs with images from ReCommunity (which buys the town's recyclables) showing how plastic bags sabotage their machinery.

Adjourn: 9:40 p.m.