

# BYRAM TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

## MINUTES, APRIL 23, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 p.m. Present were Chair John Boyer, Lisa Shimamoto, Donna Koenig, Michelle Rehse, Katie Parrish, Council Liaison Dave Gray, and secretary Margaret McGarrity. Also present was Township Councilman Scott Olson.

**March minutes approved:** Motion by Lisa; second by Donna; unanimous (Michelle and John abstained, not being present at that meeting).

### **Correspondence and updates:**

Cleanup at Stanhope school: Katie announced this is scheduled for this Sunday.

Sustainable Jersey: Offering to help us obtain certification. Margaret sent this information to Cathy, in case she wants to work on this. We were able to obtain the Conservation Easement Grant as a 'registered' but not 'certified' town. (*Table until Cathy is present.*)

### **Business:**

Conservation Easement grant: This Sustainable Jersey grant will be completed within the month. Eileen Swan of NJ Conservation Foundation is preparing close-out materials, including a brochure and maps which the EC reviewed, with these recommendations:

- For the brochure: the first word in bulleted items should not be capitalized (unless there is a complete sentence) and there should be no semi-colons or periods after bulleted items; a sentence should be added thanking the EC for their assistance on this project.
- For the maps: lakes should be shown and identified; road names should be added; the index map should show the entire town, even though all conservation easements are currently in the northern 2/3 of the Township.

Soil ordinance: Dave will re-send draft to John and Katie and they will discuss.

### **Planning Board:**

- Jefferson Lake Day Camp: on June 4 Planning Board agenda; to replace 4 buildings with 2 buildings. Donna will review the file; Dave, Donna, Margaret will visit the site, and Margaret will ask if other ECers want to go along. Lisa will look at old site plans with respect to the climbing wall and whether that is being newly built.
- Preziosa, 10 Marine Terrace, side and front variances for a new deck: the EC will not comment, as there are no environmental issues.

- Definition of a “new” house: Lisa reported that Planning Board Chairman George Shivas has required language to be inserted in Planning Board resolutions stating that one first-floor wall (not one foundation wall) must remain standing in order for a project not to be defined as a new house. Once all first-floor house walls are down, the structure becomes a “new” house. This is a result of the questions that arose during the Planning Board consideration of the Scully and Lanci applications. Lisa will find the UCC language supporting this definition, as other definitions may be in use.
- UPDATE: Mohawk Pool and Spa: The EC reserved most of its comments because of internal discrepancies within the application. The EC did submit comments about the parking area on the old tennis courts regarding lack of landscaping and stormwater/erosion issues; about the parking spaces on the grass between the road and the pool area (compaction and stormwater runoff), plus very general comments on the rest of the property, including the requirement for shoreline buffers. The County health department has withdrawn its approvals of septic systems on the two shoreline residential lots.
- UPDATE: Steep slope ordinance: At its March meeting, the EC voted to ask that this ordinance be revised, so that these restrictions on disturbing sensitive features pertain in all circumstances, not just when an approval or permit is sought. Motion by Cathy; second by Donna; unanimous. Margaret to draft a memo.

#### Trails:

- Spring trail work and National Trails Day (Sat., June 6): Margaret will contact Jim Reinhold about this project (possibly a cleanup on Jefferson-Glen Bike Trail); the Salt Shakers Running Club wants to help.
- Recreational Trails grant application: Margaret will email to EC, in case anyone wants to work on an application.
- 2015 ANJEC grants for open space stewardship: The Commission submitted a grant proposal for \$1,500 to hire a tree removal contractor to clear the large downed trees near the river in Brookwood Park. EC, Salt Shaker, and other local volunteers would supply in-kind hours as part of the grant match. No word yet.
- Cut-off trail: Margaret will organize a meeting of supporters, with the aim of sending a letter to Congressman Frelinghuysen (who in the past expressed some support for this idea and has been responsible for getting the new Cutoff rail line funded), Sussex and Warren Freeholders, and others. Margaret is retiring September 1 and has minimal time to work on this.
- 20 trailhead signs: DPW has not yet purchased the 5 additional posts/hardware; Margaret reminded Adolf Steyh. The sign for the Tri-Community Trails Link also needs to be installed---but work trailers are still in place for the Superfund site and the sign is now out-of-date (the Highlands Trail has been relocated). (This sign is on the top shelf of the supply closet in the town hall.)

### Forestry:

- No Net Loss tree planting grant (\$317,554 for 1,058 trees): Margaret will compile the planting suggestions by next month and will re-contact Andrea Proctor about possible sites at Waterloo Village.
- NJ Tree Recovery Campaign 2015: ‘Arbor Day’ free tree distribution on Saturday April 18: James Myers and Donna (who made a fine sign) gave away about 65 trees (all willow oaks and only c. 1.5 feet tall). Margaret will keep 6 for the Neil Gylling Park buffer along Lubbers Run and try to give away the rest.

Musconetcong River: Michelle reported that the 24<sup>th</sup> annual Musconetcong River Management Council cleanup was very successful.

Also the MRMC and Musconetcong Watershed Association are still working on the coffer dam problems under the Route 206 bridge; the Township Council will support them.

The MWA is very interested in being part of Byram Day (September 26), which will be held at Waterloo Village and is to emphasize historical and environmental issues.

Rider University is doing a study on road salt in surface waters, with one sampling site in Stanhope. Michelle and Katie will try to get high schoolers involved in the sampling. Also perhaps scout troops.

Michelle had no information about the NJ Herald mention (in the April 19 article, “Recreation Area to Expand”) of \$9 million in grant funding (from the Open Space Institute/William Penn Foundation) for 9 projects, including “Lubbers Run, a highly-valued stream which begins in Byram and empties into the Musconetcong River in Warren County” (part of a larger \$35 million preservation plan). Margaret will call Barbara Davis at The Land Conservancy of NJ to get some information.

The MRMC has distributed a letter regarding a 333-home Haberman development in Hampton Twp., Hunterdon County, on a river and with numerous well/septic issues and following a 34-year lawsuit. MRMC will draft a resolution and will be asking other municipalities to sign on.

The MWA has a list of native plants on its website.

Report from EC liaison to Open Space Committee: Michelle reported that the owners of Wild West City have not yet directly approached the Township with their proposal to swap parcels. The Township Council is considering possible details of such a swap.

Report from Council liaison to EC and to Board of Health Dave Gray: Dave will attend the May meeting of the Township BoH and report to the EC in June. The basic septic review process will be that applications are submitted simultaneously to the Sussex County health department and to our BoH. The EC will be given the opportunity to comment on the proposed revised process. Scott noted that Township Manager Joe Sabatini is recommending that a sub-committee consisting of members of the BoH, EC, Planning Board, and Council guide these efforts.

As for possible revisions to bulk standards at lake communities, Dave will discuss this with Lisa (the EC's Planning Board liaison); Township Consulting Planner Paul Gleitz is also reviewing. The emphasis is on limiting the amount of disturbance allowed on smaller lots (in R-4 and R-5 zones); currently, bulk standards basically permit total disturbance of such small parcels. There is no current discussion about maximum house height or maximum number of stories, even though some Planning Board members are concerned about this, with the recent approval of some 3.5 story additions.

Township Recycling Center: The Township manager has given the EC approval to provide better signage at the dumpsters, to keep plastic bags and other trash out. Margaret has not received any materials from ReCommunity, so the EC will draft its own signs. There was discussion of sending another postcard about this problem.

**Adjourn:** 10 p.m.