

BYRAM TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES, FEBRUARY 26, 2009

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 p.m. Present were Chair Sheila Hall, Lisa Shimamoto, Daven Baez, Sue Wise, Adam Rosenberg, Caryn Segal, Rowena McNulty, Council Liaison Scott Olson, and Secretary Margaret McGarrity.

Minutes: The January minutes were accepted: motion by Lisa; second by Sue; unanimous.

Correspondence:

Billboards: Scott working on possibilities of parking, use of Kellogg billboards on Route 206, trailhead for the restaurant SALT. They need more parking contiguous with their parcel and want to become a trailhead into the State Park.

Business:

ANJEC grant application for three-town trail link: Joint project with Stanhope and Hopatcong.

Adam has done some walking of possible links—lots of private property, ATV use, roads in woods from old Village Grande proposal in Hopatcong. NY-NJ Trail Conference has been trying to find Highlands Trail route through this area; Adam will get information from Brenda Holzinger.

Adam will also get a parcel map of the area.

Also consider Bridge to Nowhere/Natural Heritage Site as a link from the other side of Stanhope to the Morris Canal Greenway.

No Net Loss trees: Joe Sabatini will discuss with Margaret and Adolf Steyh and forester Ron Farr what the Township's obligations will be under this program and under the Community Forestry Plan that is the prerequisite for getting No Net Loss grant funding.

Margaret will bring copies of the both the Community Forestry Plan and the Forestry Stewardship Plan to the March EC meeting. The Open Space Committee will be reviewing the final Stewardship Plan and the final draft Community Forestry Plan at its April 13 meeting. EC members can attend.

Green Building Master Plan Element: The EC approved the letter and draft Green Building Master Plan element that has also been approved by the Architectural Review Committee. Margaret will submit to Chris Hellwig for Planning Board discussion.

Trails/streams: Margaret will keep trying to get naturalist Martin Rapp of NJ Natural Lands Trust to lead a hike in spring or fall of their parcels along Lubbers Run.

Joint recreation and EC projects: 1. Sheila will get information from Andover EC about the grant they got to plant detention basins. 2. When work begins on the Vetter/East Brookwood park, volunteers must avoid cutting trees larger than 5" dbh from April 1 to

November 15 and should try to preserve large or dead trees or those with loose bark—for the purpose of protecting Indiana bat habitat.

Lake management plans: Sue reported that the best two options for funding a Lake Lackawanna management plan are either through the ANJEC grant program or through the Highlands conformance process—the EC will recommend the latter to Chris Hellwig when conformance tasks are being organized.

Also Margaret and Adolf Steyh recommended the stormdrain retrofits at Lake Lackawanna be proposed as a ‘shovel ready’ project under the federal infrastructure Economic Recovery Program funding.

Non-phosphorus ordinance: On BoH March 24 agenda at 7:30 p.m.

PSE&G update from Scott: There is a pre-hearing today at NJ BPU, at which opposition groups can find out how to intervene. Scott has also proposed that the State Attorney General approve an escrow account funded by PSE&G to help the Coalition of Concerned Municipalities (9) pay for expert advice, as is done when applications come before local land-use boards. PSE&G would have had to supply escrows in the nine towns, if they had followed through on their promise to apply to each board.

Also a PSE&G presentation scheduled at the Highlands Council meeting today.

PSE&G may be planning to go for federal approval, if it doesn’t get it from NJ BPU. However, a recent court ruling does not permit this.

Margaret was asked to write a second comment letter on the PSE&G project, because January maps submitted by PSE&G for wetlands review differ substantially from the ones the EC reviewed in November. For one thing, there are now 10 towers in Byram, instead of nine. Margaret will email this letter to Sheila for review; the EC gave general approval for this letter.

Planning Board: Scott reviewed old Planning Board approvals that required certain actions and found several where the requirements have not been met—for example, the Nufrio house on Lackawanna, the Reiner application on Amity, the Gilmore stream plantings on Amity (near new barn). The Planning Board was in agreement that these and others need to be addressed; referred them to Planner Chris Hellwig and Zoning Officer John Gutwerk.

Buffer plantings: Sue reported that Trout Unlimited will plant buffers on streamside parcels—they will do hers in spring. Sue will call Brian Cowden of TU to ask how many parcels they could do—do they pay for the plants? Could we supply volunteer labor? Sheila will also bring information about possible funding sources. Also possible remediation funding as result of wetlands that may be destroyed in Route 206 and Cutoff projects?

EC annual report: Presented to Council February 2 by Sheila.

Tri-County Regional Forum: Margaret will reset Foodshed Alliance Forum to summer, when local produce is available; arrange for SALT to host the Forum and cook.

Dates for NY-NJ Trail Conference trail maintainers workshop—April 4 or 11 or possibly March 28, mid-late a.m. Any Saturday is OK with SALT but we must be done by 2 p.m.

Soil importation ordinance: The draft ordinance from Planning Board Engineer Lou Slaby does not appear to address the situation on Amity Road that is the source of the EC's concern with this issue. Also, since the Amity dirt piles probably cover more than 5,000 sf, that problem would probably be referred to Sussex County Soil Conservation. Sheila will attend the Planning Board discussion—we will recommend that the discussion be held after March, so Sheila has time to review the draft ordinance to see if it answers the EC's concerns.

Quarry hydrogeology report: Both Jim Boyle of NJ Geological Survey and Bob Canace, formerly of NJGS, have submitted comments. Sheila will present EC comments at the March 2 Council meeting during the quarry relicensing hearing. Both Tilcon's consultants and Bob Canace call for ongoing monitoring of possible harm to wetlands—the EC will ask for an objective monitor.

Windmill ordinance: Margaret will recheck with Chris about when this will be on Planning Board agenda for discussion—appears to be in March some time.

Natural Heritage Priority Sites in Byram: Margaret has request in to Rick Dutko at NJDEP for more information for our NRI update. She will recheck soon—609-984-0059.

Margaret to call Trout Unlimited about weeds in Lubbers Run near Mansfield Drive bridge and about possible ways of removing them.

New business:

Sparta hydroelectric project proposal: Scott presented an update. Not a 'green' project, since it will take more energy to pump the water up than is generated when the water falls through the turbines. The cost differential does make for big profits for the owner and Sparta Township.

A net energy loss, plus serious issues about possible disturbance of Germany Flats aquifer, the County's biggest; about removal of massive amounts of rock; about the coal-plant source of electricity to pump the water up; about the powerlines proposed to distribute the electricity (adding another 500 kV line to the PSE&G corridor in Byram).

Adjourn: 10:00 p.m.

