

BYRAM TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES, JANUARY 28, 2010

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. Present were Co-chair Sue Wise, Co-chair Dawn Boyer, David Gray, Adam Rosenberg, Sheila Hall, Jennifer Kreuzsch, Council Liaison Scott Olson, and Secretary Margaret McGarrity.

November minutes: Motion by Dawn; second by Adam; unanimous.

Correspondence:

ANJEC membership for 2010: Margaret is to ask the CFO to pay the ANJEC dues as soon as possible. Waiting to hear if the EC can also join Foodshed Alliance and the Environmental Lobby.

Business:

Highlands Applicability Determination for Cutoff: Site walk on January 10, from Old Wolfe Lake Road to site of proposed Andover station—Scott, Adam, Caryn, Dave, Margaret, Kate Millsaps from NJ Highlands Coalition. GPS points and corresponding photographs to be attached to written comments; EC letter to cite EC support of Kate's letter to NJDEP. (Note: EC comments were submitted by email on time—by Friday 1/8 at noon; paper copies sent immediately afterwards.)

ANJEC grant for 3-town trail link: Update—still pretty much on schedule, finding linking routes, determining if Stanhope routes are on public lands and if routes are possible in Hopatcong across private lands.

No Net Loss tree and Community Forestry Plan: Jen will review CFP and propose more revisions, following Margaret's proposed revisions. Star the mandatory tasks; add new column in schedule of work showing who does what and estimated costs if available; emphasize minimum requirements throughout and make sure timelines are credible. Clarify impacts on DPW for Adolf. Add points on timeline where the Township could apply for grants, such as the CSIP grants provided under the Community Forestry Program. Make it clear throughout that we will do the mandatory elements but that the rest depends on getting outside grant funding. Clarify the difference between street trees (Byram has very few) and rural forested roadways, and what the plan will require in those two very different areas.

The EC discussed the question of liability, noting that there are already numerous hazardous trees, which pose a real and substantial liability for the Township. Does identifying these trees and saying we will prioritize their removal and seek funding to do so increase or decrease the Township's liability?

Jen, Margaret and Sheila will discuss the revisions to the CFP and also talk with forester Ron Farr, to make sure we remain within the minimum requirements of a State-approvable CFP. Jen is to call Margaret once she has drafted further changes.

Trails/streams:

- Grant for three open space parcels. Forester Ron Farr to mark boundaries of Arnell, when weather permits. Parking issues at Arnell and Beckmann—hinges on status of Township engineer's paid participation in this grant. Margaret is working on this.
- Sussex Branch 5-town advocacy effort for repairing 'Whitehall Washout' on Sussex Branch—Margaret will keep checking on status of this campaign.
- Sussex Branch repairs between Whitehall and North Shore Road—Margaret to get SLAP for spring cleanup and to get final work done when weather permits.
- Mansfield Trail on Cutoff r.o.w.—Township attorney believes that existing documents, surveys, and a Memorandum of Understanding should secure the Mansfield Bike Trail's location on the Cutoff r.o.w.
- EC to join NY-NJ Trail Conference and TC to adopt Byram Trails—our volunteers then are covered under TC insurance. Membership is \$50. Should the Open Space and Recreation Committees also join? Margaret to clarify with Joe Sabatini.

Joint Recreation and EC projects:

- Brookwood Park grant application—Margaret and Brenda Holzinger revised and submitted for 2010. Potential problems with Safe Drinking Water Act and impact of park development on the East Brookwood water company well, including possible Township liability. These issues to be further researched.
- Andover EC's grant to plant detention basins—Sheila needs to know if our basins are infiltration basins, which probably cannot be planted (Margaret will provide a copy of the Stormwater Management Plan to Sheila or check with Adolf). Might seek funding from Sustainable Jersey for basin plantings, once we name a Green Team.

Joint Township committee meetings: Councilwoman Marie Raffay sponsored a meeting on January 25 to improve communication and cooperation, which was attended by all committee chairs except that of the Historical Commission. Dawn, Sue, and Scott attended. An introductory session. Minutes of all committees are to be forwarded to all other committee chairs and also to be posted on the Township website. (Marie and Doris will send out an email list for this distribution.) Discussions dealt with better coordination among the Planning Board, Environmental Commission, and Board of Health, of special concern to PB Chair George Shivas. Need better timing of when an application is put on a PB agenda, to provide time for EC/BoH reports to be delivered to PB. (Margaret to remember to send copies of applications to EC and BoH when pertinent issues appear.) Discussions also regarding more cooperation between the Environmental Commission, Recreation Committee, and Open Space Committee. These issues also to be addressed at a meeting of the chairs of these three committees to be called by Joe Sabatini.

Update of trail brochure: Sample of the new issue, moisture resistant, printed by Trukmanns. Colors are much brighter and paper more substantial.

PSE&G powerline update from Scott: NJBPU has called a February 4 meeting to hear from PJM for more information about the need for the project, as two similar projects in other states have been cancelled because of reduction in demand. BPE is promising a decision by February 15, although this may be delayed. There will be hearing on February 16, 17, 18 to commence the review of issues regarding the route of this project through the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, a review to take about two years.

PSE&G offered settlement money to towns along the line, including \$307,000 to Byram. Towns who accept would agree to stop opposing the line; the money would be in the form of reimbursement for certain tasks outlined by PSE&G. All the municipal intervenors refused; Stillwater, Sparta, Hopatcong took the money.

Planning Board issues:

- Osgood application on Lake Drive: the resolution prepared to reflect the Planning Board's decision does not mention a lakeside buffer planting requirement. At Caryn's request, the PB agreed to revise the resolution to contain this requirement. Question: who checks to make sure this is enforced? Construction official; planning director; EC?
- Jen will review the Kostiuk application—addition and higher roof, on River Rd.
- Daven will review the BSA Patriot's Path application for bathhouses/latrines.

Tri –County Regional Forum: Food Inc. screening—\$200 (or \$180?) plus \$21 shipping/handling for the film (to be funded out of 2010 EC temporary budget). Avoid the theatre rental cost of \$300 by showing it free at Lake Mohawk Country Club? Scott will check on their equipment. Several farmers have offered to speak.

Quarry: Jen will attend the Council meeting to present the EC comments.

Sustainable Jersey: Michelle gave an update. Cranford's Sustainable Jersey Green Team, headed by Mary Riley, uses their EC as a board of directors but the volunteers are many and varied, including high school students. They have a website for new volunteers to sign up, and they very actively seek press coverage for their work. About 30 people attend the monthly meetings and the group only takes on projects that someone will volunteer to chair. Mary wants to organize a meeting of all Green Team chairs.

The Green Team is mandatory for Sustainable Jersey certification, which now requires 150 points for certification in June 2010. The program offers training at the College of NJ and Rutgers and 'carbon footprint' grants (funded by Walmart).

Both Bernards Township and Hardwick have active Green Teams—check their websites; Sheila knows Hardwick coordinator (Desiree Dunn).

Michelle will contact Councilwoman Marie Raffay about launching Byram's Green Team—make a list of possible member groups or individuals; put notice on Township website. Scott will help. Michelle will be the official EC liaison.

Sheila to invite Louise Davis, on board of Sustainable Jersey, to explain the program—at the Food Inc. showing?

ANJEC Smart Growth grant applications: Due March 31. The EC was in support of applying to fund a Lake Lackawanna Management Plan, including strategies such as a non-phosphorus requirement that are applicable to other lakes. Steve Souza of Princeton Hydro would help write the application.

Soil importation ordinance: Unclear what happened during the Planning Board discussions—did they dismiss this as too onerous on property owners? Or recommend that Lou Slaby's final draft go to the Council? Or needing clearer thresholds? Margaret will send around all the documents for discussion at the March or April EC meeting.

Musconetcong Management Council: Michelle reported that this group is seeking input about local issues. Beaver dams—Trout Unlimited is to remove?

Westby shooting range: The EC should submit to the Council pertinent sections from the Robinson groundwater study.

Township 2010 budget: Scott reported that the proposed EC budget was cut by 41%, to \$1,600, a much larger cut than reductions for other boards. EC members to send 'wish list' for funding via Sue by February 15.

For instance—is the match for the ANJEC Tri-Community Trail Link grant reflected in this budget (Margaret will verify the match amount); costs for Community Forestry training if we adopt the Community Forestry Plan (Margaret will supply a cost); revision and publication of updated Trails Brochure (estimate c. \$1,000); memberships (ANJEC @ \$420, Foodshed Alliance @ \$50, NJ Environmental Lobby @ \$30); showing of Film Inc. (c. \$200); \$1,000 to mail another postcard. Any other possible costs.

Budget work sessions are in February and March, then public hearings and final passage in April.

Lake Musconetcong Homeowners Association: Sue and Daven to investigate how this association works and how they address lake management, dredging, grant funding, etc. Scott will send some information. Former Byram Councilman Earl Riley is chair of the Musconetcong Regional Planning Board.

Adjourn: 10:10 p.m. Motion by Dawn; second by Jen; unanimous.