

BYRAM TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

MINUTES, AUGUST 27, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. Present were Vice Chair Michelle Rehse, Lisa Shimamoto, Jim Reinhold, James Myers, Council Liaison Dave Gray, secretary Margaret McGarrity, and new secretary Donna Koenig, who will replace Margaret (retiring). Also present were Councilman Scott Olson and resident Rich Shernce (Belton Street, 973-713-6800).

Minutes:

- The July minutes were approved: motion by Jim; second by Lisa; unanimous.

Updates and correspondence:

Tree City USA bulletin: The Right Tree for the Right Place. Margaret suggested the EC could extract a short article from this to send to local newspapers and put on Township website, to help fulfill the EC's obligation to print two articles each year under the Community Forestry Management Plan. Use the article to promote EC forestry activities and that we are Tree City USA.

Sustainable Jersey (anti-idling program): More than 200 NJ communities have some program about this, which can be used toward Sustainable Jersey certification. Margaret will email Michelle the flyer she received and Michelle check on Byram's status with Sustainable Jersey; there is still a small grants program (which funded the recent conservation easement project). EC to discuss whether to continue with Sustainable Jersey.

Business:

Membership: Katie Parrish is away at Rutgers but wants to continue as an alternate, for holidays and summers. The EC agreed and will seek new members for the other alternate seat and the regular seat vacated by Donna Koenig. Margaret will contact the Byram resident with an environmental sciences degree who was seeking a job at the town (*Stephanie Moore, 786-285-9086—NOTE: Margaret called her 8/28 and she will apply.*)

Conservation Easement grant: Sustainable Jersey grant completed. Margaret will email to the EC her summary of the grant accomplishments and future work needed on this project. The EC can discuss at its September meeting and recommend that this be discussed at the September 29 Committee Chairs meeting..

Soil ordinance: Dave will work with John Boyer and then for EC review.

Planning Board:

- Olivo residential application: Block 360 Lot 42.04, on Tamarack Road behind the B&B. The EC has visited the site and will submit the following comments:
 - The zoning chart on the application is missing some information (building coverage) and contains other information that seems inaccurate (lot disturbance, which appears to be far more than 25%).
 - Was the Highlands Exemption based on total disturbance or just impervious coverage calculations? Total disturbance seems to exceed the one-acre Highlands threshold—the current plans seem to show disturbance of 1.5 or even 2 acres. Was the Highlands Exemption granted based on a different plan from the one now before the Planning Board?
 - There appears to be extensive grading/clearing, especially at the back of the property, in addition to the sizable amount of existing clearing. What is the purpose of this grading and clearing, especially since total disturbance seems to exceed the one-acre Highlands threshold.
 - What materials will be used on the driveway and patio?
 - What is the “burial area” marked on the plan? Is the oil tank at the end of the garage above-ground and what is its condition?
 - The EC is recommending two buffer easements: a vegetated buffer between this residence and the B&B to provide privacy for both and a vegetated buffer around the parcel perimeter where it borders the Township’s open space parcels. This Tamarack Park open space has strict usage limitations and is for passive recreation only. A buffer at the Olivo’s parcel perimeter will help secure the quiet of the park and also protect the Olivos from possible trespass by hikers. The EC assumes that B&B visitors have an established route to access Tamarack Park and its trail and do not need to cross over the Olivo parcel.
 - The EC assumes that a well test will be done, as required by the State when properties are transferred.
- Consolidated School apartments: Block 226 Lot 21, on Lackawanna Drive. The EC will submit these comments:
 - The application lacks a complete landscaping plan and the Commission is recommending that these elements be added to the plan:
 - ✓ An easement buffer should be established at the edge of the wetlands and more landscaping should be planted there to widen the buffer area;
 - ✓ Runoff from the parking lots, roofs, and hardscape at the back of the building should be directed to rain gardens or other landscape elements to help manage stormwater on this sloped parcel. These additions will also help improve the site appearance.

- Residents of these apartments need areas for outdoor recreation and enjoyment, and those should be established at the side and back of the building, with appropriate landscaping and furniture.
- Planning Board issues: Definition of ‘new house’ (EC recommends this be once all first-floor walls are down, for any reason)—Lisa reports that this is under serious discussion.

Trails/parks:

- EC workdays: Jim will propose work days for Johnson Lake and Brookwood Park. Donna will ask for DPW assistance with hauling out tree sections at Brookwood. Discuss this further at September EC meeting. (Manager is looking at improving guardrails and may receive grant funding for trash/recycling cans at parks.)
- 20 trailhead signs: DPW has installed 19 and may do the final one (Matt Pinkerton). Donna will ask if DPW can affix QR code blazes to each trail post; if not, Jim may do.
- Cutoff trail: Margaret summarized the work so far on seeking support for this idea; Jim took the information and will report at September EC meeting. Scott noted that the Cutoff rail restoration to Andover is not scheduled for completion until 2018 because of wetlands issues (the EC should press for wetlands mitigation credits to be accomplished in Byram and the need to repair the Roseville Tunnel and the Roseville Road bridge.
- Sussex Branch Trail: the EC was instrumental in getting the section above Cranberry Lake repaired; Donna will contact Northern Regional Parks Office at Kittatinny about repairing the washout on the Byram-Andover border, so that this regional trail is complete to Newton.
- Lubbers Run buffer at Neil Gylling Field: EC members will meet this Sunday at 10 a.m. to plant eight more shrubs to improve the buffer and help prevent mowing there.

Forestry:

- No Net Loss tree-planting grant: \$317,554 for 1,058 trees. Margaret and Donna will discuss general planting plan with Township Manager; he will direct the Township Engineer to prepare the detailed planting plan and then to hire a private contractor to purchase-plant-maintain the trees.

Byram Day: Emphasis is on history and nature. Margaret submitted vendor form for the EC; Scott knows where the EC table is to go. EC events should be announced by signs at the booth and by the Towne Crier (Donna to email Donna Griff and Janet Meisner, Byram Day organizers). The EC will:

- Host a salamander presentation: Kelly Triece at Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ, 908-782-4614, reports that Lindsay McNamara will come for the day; Donna to contact Lindsay.

- Host a fly-fishing demonstration: Greg Becker, White Water Flies, 973-600-0123 or 201-230-5455, www.whitewaterflies.com, will charge \$60 for 2 demos at 12:30 and 2:30; Donna to contact.
- Hold a *Where Is This?* contest to identify photos of Waterloo Village and go find the spot. Prize: two tickets @ \$50 for Harvest Moon Festival at Waterloo (Council to approve resolution for this expenditure on September 1). Donna will take the pix and talk to Andrea Proctor about good locations; Donna will make a sign.
- Hang recycling signs about what NOT to recycle. Follow this with a photo and article in local newspaper and also mention the Community Forestry Management Plan, so that this article serves as one of the two that the EC is required to publish each year under the CFMP. These recycling signs can later be used at the municipal complex to educate residents.
- Post flyers about proposed changes to the Township's recycling program, which the Council is to finalize on September 1.
- Display sign-up sheets to receive EC mailings—provide email addresses.
- Display flyer about mini-contamination at homes, streets, storm-drains in Byram: over-use of pesticides, litter and waste in storm drains, and other ways residents harm the environment. These small events all add up and are a threat to groundwater. Based on comments from tonight's visitor to the EC meeting (see final item in minutes).
- Garden Club: on hold, at least until the Route 206 landscaping issues are resolved.

Musconetcong River: Michelle reports that at least week's Musconetcong River Management Council meeting, Musconetcong Watershed Association Executive Director Beth Styler-Barry showed new photos of the coffer dams under the Route 206 bridge; the MRMC board was very concerned. There has been no NJDOT response to MWA's letters.

The Highlands Festival is September 19-20 at the Waterloo Village concert field.

The North Jersey Transportation planning group is dedicating substantial funding for the rehabilitation of Waterloo Village (considered a transportation hub, historically); the MWA will support this.

No further information about possible William Penn Foundation grant money for preservation along Lubbers Run.

Pamphlet on "deer exclosures," where small areas are fenced to keep deer out to illustrate how much damage they do to forests and understories. Very dramatic.

Report from EC liaison to Township Open Space Committee: Michelle and Scott report that the OS Committee formally accepted the updated Forest Stewardship Plan. Some new tasks are listed, especially at Tamarack Park (deer hunting will be permitted there this year).

The land swap with Wild West City is supported by the Committee but is on hold pending work at the municipal complex.

Report from Dave Gray, Council liaison to EC: The process for better communication between the Township Board of Health and Planning Board and the Sussex County health department will be discussed at the September 29 Committee Chairs meeting.

EC 2016 budget: The EC discussed the Township Manager's request for a detailed draft budget request. Margaret and Donna will review the last four year's budgets and draft a request based on those numbers and on tonight's EC discussion. Discuss again at the September EC meeting.

Comments from visitor Rich Shernce: Numerous small violations by residents diminish Byram's quality of life and threaten groundwater and streams: frequent dumping in vacant wet parcels in West Brookwood; blowing of leaves into the Musconetcong River; unlicensed landscapers and pesticide applicators working in town and ignoring new NJ pesticide laws. Homeowners may be liable for workmen's compensation claims if these unlicensed, uninsured workers get injured.

The EC suggested posting NO DUMPING SIGNS, citing police enforcement of our ordinances, which could be installed on the several wet Township-owned lots in West Brookwood. Also a flyer at Byram Day about how these numerous mini-events threaten quality of life and groundwater/stream quality in town.

Adjourn: 10:15 p.m.