

BYRAM TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION  
April 27, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Meeting was called to order at 7:35pm. Those present included James Myers, Nora Amato, Katie Baron, Eric Duch, Jim Reinhold, Catherine Varian and Donna Fett.

Approval of the March meeting minutes was postponed until next month so that the EC members who were present at the meeting are present to approve the minutes.

New Business:

- Tamarack Field and Park Grand Opening - Nora advised the EC group on the details for the May 13th event. Volunteers will park at the upper CO Johnson parking lot closest to Roseville Rd. There will be hikes starting at the trailhead across from CO Johnson lot between 10 - 11:30am. Walkers will register at this trailhead and will walk to Tamarack Field and be able to enjoy a BBQ lunch after noon. Participants can take the shuttle bus back to CO Johnson lot or walk back. Catherine, Nora and Joanne volunteered to assist with registration. A shared EC/Open Space/Rec Table will be set up and EC will provide the Byram Township trail maps and a sign-up sheet to gather email contacts for the EC trail clean-up distribution list.
- Byram Twp. New Recreation Programs Available - Registration is now open for the 50 Mile Challenge Program. Participants qualify by hiking 50 miles on Byram's trails or trails in the surrounding areas. Hiking must be completed by September 1st. The Recreation Dept. is sponsoring several hikes over the next several months, and mileage from these hikes can be applied towards the 50 Mile Challenge.
- National Trails Day (June 3rd). The Recreation Dept. is sponsoring a hike on Saturday, June 3rd on Sussex Branch. In addition, other events are being held at Kittatinny, Mendham and in Blairstown.
- NJ DEP Youth Fishing Event (June 10th) - NJ requested each county to hold a fishing event for youth under the age of 20 with the goal to redirect youth to avoid temptations of drugs, alcohol and tobacco.
- Mosquito Awareness Week (June 25th-July 1st) - The county representative encouraged towns to hold a clean-up event or promote public awareness about mosquito control. Although several clean-up events were occurring within Byram in April, there was not sufficient notice to plan an event for this month. There is a link on the Township website from Sussex County Mosquito Control that provides information on mosquitoes as well as the county spraying schedule. The county representative has been invited to participate in Byram Day (Sept. 9th). EC questioned if the county routinely sprays and this will be researched.

### Ongoing Business:

- Arbor Day 2017 - The Norway Spruce seedlings arrived. Catherine picked up the seedlings and planting instructions and will bring them to C.O. Johnson field on 4/29 for distribution to residents. Nora made a poster as well (thank you!).
- ANJEC 2016 Grant - This has been closed as the remaining \$500 check has been received.
- ANJEC 2017 Open Space Grant - This grant was applied for and awardees will be notified by May 1st.
- Spring Trail Clean-up at Briar Ridge Trails - Nine people volunteered, including four scouts. Two groups were formed and one group did the North Trail while the second group did the South Trail. On the North Trail, the group cleared the trail, reblazed until the supplies ran out, removed invasive barberry plants and trimmed back branches. Numerous Private Property signs were noted, including several near the second wetland. This will be investigated as it is believed that they are on Township property. On the South Trail, the group was asked by Township Manager to determine if a reroute could be made to avoid the steep rocky incline at the trailhead. After walking the trail, they determined this can be done. Two bags of trash were removed and an article (with photo) was submitted to the Township Journal.
- Amphibian Tunnel Project - another migration event was held in late March and two vernal pond walks were offered in Waterloo in April. Kelly expects to receive an update on the grant status in May.

### Planning Board Applications:

- Finegan - EC had one comment "please protect any run-off from going into Lubbers' Run, especially during construction, and ensure any water that goes off the deck into the river does not contribute to erosion".
- Dishinger - EC had no comments.
- Greenhalph - EC had the following comments regarding the gravel access road:
  - How was it constructed?
  - What is its purpose?
  - How is run-off handled?

EC will review this application again during the May meeting.

- O'Donohue - EC had the following comments:
  - Please clarify exactly what is being requested.
  - How will rainwater runoff be handled?
  - Many of the photos are very dark and not useable. Are there more available?
  - Several pictures are not of the house, why were they included?
  - Where is the existing portable car tent/portable garage located?
  - Please clarify how the proposed new structure will be accessed.

- Can an updated site plan drawing be provided?

EC will review this application again during the May meeting.

#### Trails:

- Eric suggested a reroute to Tamarack Park Trail. He indicated that the beginning of the trailhead (about 50-100') goes up a steep, rocky incline and over a small rock wall. He would like to reroute that section to avoid the rocky incline. This requested was forwarded to Township Management. At this time, management does not wish to pursue this but may revisit it in the future.
- Trail Map Apps - EC discussed the idea of making electronic trail maps available to residents via apps. Resident J. Byrne developed an app and is willing to share this with the Township. A motion made by Catherine and seconded by Katie to invite him to come to a meeting to do a demo. In addition, EC will investigate commercially available apps (ex. Motion X, Maprica, All Trails). If this project is pursued, EC would "own" this and have responsibility for it.

#### Expenditures and Budget:

Budget of \$2,600, with a balance remaining of \$1,762. Two expenses were recently removed from budget: \$98 was spent on tree seedlings for Arbor Day and \$270 was spent on trail blazes.

#### Committee Reports:

Open Space - Eric Duch went to the Open Space meeting and advised that the focus is moving towards maintaining open space parcels rather than purchasing new parcels. He shared with them EC's plan to reroute the steeper portion of the start of Briar Ridge Trail. Also they discussed the Community Forestry Plans.

#### Additional:

- Membership - Mayor Oscovitch granted Katie Baron's membership request and Katie will take her Oath of Office.
- Hold Harmless Agreements for Trail Clean-Up Work - Donna F. will inquire if new agreements are required for EC members who do multiple trail clean-ups during a year. Can the agreement can be modified to be valid for an entire calendar year?
- Eric advised that there is a trail clean-up day to be held on May 6th and he will provide us with more information.
- EC reviewed the requests for the two resolutions from George Stafford of NJ Highlands Coalition. On the Clean Water resolution, EC recommended to change the date to 2017. The purpose of the second resolution was unclear. A few questions were raised and will be sent to George for his response.

- EC expressed interest in researching the Emerald Ash Borer problem and how to protect the chestnut trees on Briar Ridge. EC would be then post information on these topics to the EC website.
- Donna F. advised she attend County Clean Communities training and reported there were six groups who performed clean-ups in Byram Township in April. When groups remove trash or recyclables from parks, trails, etc. and report it to her, the Township can report this under the NJ Clean Communities Program which will result in additional funding received. EC members were encouraged to advise if they remove any trash while hiking.
- EC will think about potential Eagle Scout projects for the boys to consider. Ideas briefly discussed included additional benches on trails or building trail kiosks to display maps.

The next meeting will be held on May 25, 2017.

Motion to adjourn at 10 pm was made by Eric and seconded by Katie.