

Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes  
August 27, 2020 @ 7:30pm

Role Call / Call to Order - The Zoom meeting was called to order at 7:35pm. Members present were Gerry Murphy, Eric Duch, James Myers, Katie Baron, Dana Flynn, Katie Parrish, Lisa Shimamoto (Planning Board Liaison), and Donna Fett (Secretary). Mayor Alex Rubenstein and member of the public Kymberli Morris also participated.

Open Public Meeting Statement - Adequate notice of this meeting has been published specifying the time and access information in compliance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of this meeting has also been electronically sent to the newspapers and uploaded to Byram's website, at not less than 48 hours in advance of the meeting. In addition, a copy of this notice is on file in the office of the Environmental Commission Secretary.

Public Participation – Kymberli Morris participated and she may be interested in joining EC.

Review of July 23, 2020 Meeting Minutes – Motion to revise meeting minutes to include Alex Rubenstein as a participant was made by Katie B. seconded by Lisa and all were in favor.

Committee Reports:

- MPMC – Katie P. attended the last meeting. There was a lot of discussion regarding how the use of the river has changed during the pandemic. They were happy to see increased usage but noticed that litter has also increased. They recognized the need to educate people on things such as litter control. Eric advised that there is a nice trail around Lake Tilcon that is becoming popular but also noticed a buildup of trash.
- Recreation – A meeting was held on 8/17. The dog park survey is open for responses until the first week of September. The survey is still available on Township website. There were over 600 responses received. The next Recreation meeting will be held 9/21.
- Open Space – Eric reported on the joint meeting coming up next month (see New Business).
- Council – Harvey was not present, but Secretary obtained his update and reported:
  - There will likely be a Council discussion at the next Council meeting regarding revising town ordinances on the keeping of chickens. Planning Board member Frank Gonzalez has raised environmental/Highlands issues and concerns.
  - Sept 8 is a special meeting of the Town Council and the Open Space and Rec committees regarding use of Open Space funding.
  - If there are projects that the EC would like to see accomplished, the next two months are the time to bring these ideas to the Administration and Council. It would be best to even provide some notice so that they are considered at the Sept 8 meeting.

New Business:

- Joint Township Council, Recreation and Open Space Meeting – will occur on Sept. 8<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. EC members were invited to participate. One item which will be discussed at this meeting is the Dog

Park Survey. Several members confirmed that they already completed the survey. Mayor Rubenstein requested EC to prepare a letter of recommendations for Council. Overall, members were in favor of establishing a dog park, but have some concerns. Members will send their concerns to EC Secretary to consolidate by the end of next week (Sept. 4<sup>th</sup>).

Eric had previously distributed documents which provided additional information regarding options of prioritization of future Township funds on several CO Johnson projects including the extension of the walking path, improvements to fieldhouse and football field.

#### Old Business:

- Invasive Species Event #1 Follow-up – Members felt the event was a very successful and was a great start to the grant project! There were a total of 10 volunteers at the event. It was noted that there were a lot of bugs, so bug protection will be added to future advertisements. In addition, we should purchase more snacks for the next event.
  - Location – The volunteers walked about half of the trail and stopped just before the Forest Lakes water tower. It was suggested that for the September event, volunteers meet at the Route 206 park entrance. If the trail is completed, volunteers could work on Cranberry Ledge in October; members will research logistics on parking.
  - Advertisement – Advertisements for this event included a Nixle notification, posting on the Township Facebook page, emails (to EC trail clean-up volunteer list, SALT Shakers Club, Stanhope EC and Go Green Club). Although an article was sent to the Township Journal and Sparta Independent, it was not published. Secretary will pursue advertising in the Herald, to the local schools and lake community clubs. A motion was made by Katie B., seconded by Katie P., for Secretary to issue a follow-up event article (including advertising future events) to the NJ Herald, not to exceed \$30 (if a fee is charged).
  - Signage – Katie P. was thanked for making the sign for the day of the event so volunteers knew where to meet and park. Eric suggested making signs to advertise the event. He advised that Staples charged \$15 for a one-sided sign and \$20 for a double-sided sign. After some discussion, Katie B. indicated she had some leftover scout signs that she would be willing to paint over/donate for our purpose. Lisa volunteered help her do the painting. Donna was asked to determine where the signs could be placed. The plan is to place the signs out a week before each event and a member would remove them the day of the event.
  - Cell Signal – The signal on the trail was very spotty and volunteers were not able to use NJ Invasives app to log the actual location of the plants. Inaturalist was used to identify the species and capture the GPS locations to upload them when home.
  - Apps - Members felt the Inaturalist app was a great way to identify the various species. They thought it would be a great idea to create a video to explain how to download and use the apps, as this would also help sustain the program. The video could be posted on our website.

- Games – one of the volunteers suggested having a game to get children more involved in the future. Members thought it was another great way to sustain the program. Gerry will research this further.
  - Deer Management – Mike Van Clef advised that the invasive species program would be more effective if deer management was included. Eric will share this with Open Space. A brief discussion on deer stands occurred. Secretary was asked to research who has responsibility to remove potentially unused stands or if they can remain on Township properties.
  - Data Collected – Gerry will work on the official project name so volunteers can continue to log invasives on their own.
- Fall Trail Clean-Up – As per Township Management, the Fall clean-up event can be done in the Spring of 2021.
  - Volcano Mulching Concern Follow-up – Secretary confirmed that all commercial property applications include a landscaping plan and EC reviews them. Resolutions guarantee landscaping requirements are adhered to for a certain number of years. There is no Ordinance and therefore no enforcement. She will advise the concerned resident accordingly.
  - Lot Disturbance / Impervious Coverage – This was tabled from last month. Members were requested to review documents provided and determine the percentages of lots they would like to see for Byram. Secretary will resend documents.
  - Stormwater Letter – The letter was mailed last week. A few residents contacted the EC Secretary to be placed on the trail clean-up volunteer list as well as inquire about the Fall plastic bag challenge.

Planning Board Applications:

- Wawa – 75 Route 206 – Lisa was recused from review of this application. Due to time constraints, a special meeting was called to review this application. The meeting will occur on Wednesday, Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:30pm.

Eric suggested that when applications are reviewed, members should remember to recommend use of native plantings which should discourage invasives. Secretary confirmed that when EC provides a landscaping comment on an application, it is recommended to use native plantings. Members also remembered a list of specific native plantings provided by Mike at a previous event. This list could be added to EC website.

Due to time constraints, the below three applications were not reviewed and will be added to the September 24, 2020 meeting.

- Gockeler - 183 Forest Lake Drive, Block 360, Lot 1.01
- Kill – 202 Lake Drive, Block 254, Lot 9
- Lombardo – 10 Route 206, Block 42, Lot 112

Training:

NJ Forestry Association's Backyard Forestry:

Wed., Sept. 17<sup>th</sup> "NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) Cost Share Opportunities" – 7-8:30pm, worth 1 NJUCF CEU. Katie B. expressed interest in this webinar; Secretary will send her details.

Budget: \$2,205 balance remains.

Membership: The Alternate II position is open. A Township Nixle announcement was issued in July indicating a position was open and Township Management advised that a few residents expressed interest in joining EC. Kymberli Morris expressed interest in this position and joined the Zoom meeting.

There is an ordinance (3-58) pertaining to filling vacancies on committees. The ordinance was reviewed with EC members. If a member cannot attend three consecutive meetings, they were advised to contact Secretary.

Other:

Sept. 21<sup>st</sup> (week of) – Tire Disposal event at Byram Town Hall

Sept. 26<sup>th</sup> – Invasive Species Event

Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup> – Invasive Species Event

Oct. 10<sup>th</sup> – Hudson Farms Charity Hike

NJ Invasive Species Strike Team is holding one hour "Force of Nature Hikes" on one weekend each month during Sept., Oct. and Nov. in Pennington, NJ.

NJ Invasive Species Strike Team is holding their annual Strike Team conference on Wednesday, Oct. 7<sup>th</sup>. The conference will be virtual. Agenda details are being finalized and will be provided to members when available. Eric will notify Open Space members.

The next meeting will be held on September 24, 2020.

Motion to Adjourn was made at 9:55pm by Gerry, seconded by Katie B. and all members were in favor.