

Environmental Commission
Minutes - February 27, 2020

Role Call / Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm. Members present were Gerry Murphy, Katie Baron, Eric Duch, Dana Flynn, Katie Parrish, Lisa Shimamoto (Planning Board Liaison), Harvey Roseff (Council Liaison) and Donna Fett (Secretary).

Open Public Meeting Statement: Adequate notice of this meeting has been made with the Open Public Meetings Act, NJS 10:4-6.

Review of January 23, 2020 Meeting Minutes: Correction to the Open Space Committee Report – Ray Bonker is the new Council Liaison; Scott Olson has joined Open Space as a member. A motion to accept revised meeting minutes was made by Katie B., and was seconded by Eric. All members were in favor.

Committee Reports:

- MRMC – the meeting was held on 2/18. Dana and Katie P. attended and reported that the group discussed local town ordinances regarding septic pumping. There are several upcoming MRMC events and Dana/Katie P. will email them to the members.
- Recreation – the meeting was held 2/18. Byram Fest will be held on Fri., June 5th with rain date of June 6th.
- Open Space – the meeting was held 2/10. Eric reported that they had a preliminary review of Greener by Design summary. The group discussed a request to have a turf field at CO Johnson Park, but this was not feasible due to Highlands restriction.
- Council – Harvey reported that there are two meetings next week – Budget and Building Subcommittee. It is expected that EC will receive their full budget of \$2,600 which is usually released in April. Harvey gave a brief update on the building subcommittee and reminded members that there is additional information on the Township website. Council is working on a reso to support JCP&L's tree cutting/trimming efforts. In addition, Council is concerned about their aging infrastructure. Council is developing a "dirty dirt" ordinance, as DEP is enforcing the existing laws regarding soil importation/dirt.

New Business:

- Membership Dues Renewals:
 - NJ Shade Tree Foundation @ \$95 – offers training and events; however, EC did not participate in any the last two years. This may help us obtain future grants and is recommended for Tree City USA certification. We did not apply for Tree City USA last year, nor do we expect to this year. As such, members did not want to renew membership. All were in favor.
 - Arbor Day Foundation @ \$15 – offers discounts on purchase of trees and subscription to the bi-monthly Tree City USA bulletin. The renewal request was not yet received but is expected. Motion to renew was made by Katie B., seconded by Dana and all were in favor.

- 2020 Trail Maintenance Resolution – The draft was reviewed. Members reviewed last year’s resolution and opted to remove “erosion control” in the first paragraph. Motion to submit the revised resolution was made by Lisa, seconded by Katie B. and all were in favor.

Old Business:

- ANJEC Open Space Grants – Twp. Manager suggested the application be submitted using the request made last year on Tamarack Park Trail (which was the removal of invasive species, specifically barberry). This was discussed at Open Space meeting and they also felt it was worth pursuing.

EC members discussed two potential projects. One project was working on invasives; however, based on comments made by the NJ Invasive Species Strike Team (NJISST) Director at last year’s presentation, EC wants to change the focus of the grant. Rather than focusing on mature invasives such as barberry, members were in agreement with NJISST Director to focus on the emerging invasives. The other project was to work with Stanhope’s EC on developing a connector trail. Eric reached out to our liaison with Stanhope’s EC and EC members felt it was a better use of the grant to pursue the invasives.

A discussion ensued about the grant project. It was decided to submit the grant to focus on educating the community on how to identify emerging invasives. We would offer multiple training sessions/presentations (similar to last year) and then walk the trails to identify the emerging invasives. Volunteers would log the species into the NJISST app, creating a database of “hot spots” in the Township. Township management could use this data to prepare a plan to evaluate and prioritize the future removal of the emerging invasives.

Members would reach out to the local community groups to encourage their participation as well as ensure sustainability. Katie B. volunteered to revise the draft grant application. The application needs to be submitted to ANJEC by April 3rd and as Council approval is needed, the final application package needs to be completed by March 16th.

- Lot Disturbance – this will be discussed at next month’s meeting
- 3rd Grade Free Tree Seedling Program – Byram School is very interested in this program and very much appreciates the offer of EC to fund the purchase of seedlings. A motion was made in January to spend up to \$50 for this purpose. The application will be submitted next week and a purchase req (up to \$50) will be requested. A volunteer will pick up the seedlings on Fri., May 1st between 9am-3pm at the Forest Service in Andover on Route 206 and will drop them off at the school for distribution.
- CFMP – The resolution and required annual report was submitted. The 3rd grade free tree seedling program (see above) fulfills a requirement of this plan.

- Arbor Day Event – the Mayoral Proclamation was obtained. Opening day of baseball is scheduled for Sat., April 18th. Our event is scheduled for April 25th. James will pick up the seedlings on April 23rd.
- MRMC Representation – Council approved the requests for Dana and Katie P. to be the Township representatives. Members thanked Dana and Katie P. for volunteering!
- Green Communities Grant Closure –the grant closure documentation and resolution was submitted.
- Review of Local Township Ordinances re-Wastewater Treatment Systems – this will be discussed at the next meeting.
- Plastic Bag Letter to Businesses – members reviewed Katie P’s draft letter and members felt it would be appropriate to send it to local businesses, subject to Township approval. Secretary will prepare a list of local businesses for members to determine distribution as not all businesses utilize plastic bags.

Planning Board Applications:

Tomahawk Lake - EC reviewed the Tomahawk Lake application and had the below comments:

- The EC is concerned with the possibility of soil compaction by increased driving and parking on the now pervious grass areas, making them less pervious, and the impact it may have on stormwater run-off and soil erosion in areas that previously absorbed rainwater.
- Please advise how you are handling potential automotive fluid run-off from the parking areas? Please consider landscaping between the parking areas and the lake.
- Please share any plans you have regarding stormwater management in the area of the proposed concession stand.

Raimo – EC did their first review of the Raimo application and began to develop the list of comments. Draft comments will be distributed to members and will be finalized at the March meeting.

Training:

- March 7th (Sat.) – ANJEC “Fundamentals of Effective Environmental Commissions” at Turtle Back Zoo. Gerry is registered to attend.
- March 11th (Wed.) – NJUCF Webinar 1-2:30pm, “A Call to Action For Ash Tree Conservation and Resistance Breeding”
- March 19th (Thurs.) – NJ Forestry at Frelinghuysen Arboretum 7-8:30pm, “Managing Forests for Wildlife” (1.5 CEU’s for NJUCF)
- March 21st (Sat.) – 2nd Annual NW NJ Rivers Conference at Centenary University 8:30-4:00

Membership:

- Nominations for New Chair – A motion was made by Lisa, seconded by Dana for Gerry Murphy to be the new Chair. All were in favor. A motion was made by Lisa, seconded by Dana for Eric Duch to be the new Vice Chair. All were in favor.
- Resignation – Mayor Rubenstein accepted the resignation of Michelle Rehse.
- Katie Parrish received mayoral appointment and was welcomed into the EC.

- The Alternate II position is open. Secretary confirmed this is on the Township website. It was suggested that an email be sent to the list of people who volunteer to participate in trail events as perhaps they might be interested in joining EC.

Expenditures:

- \$225 remains in temporary budget; full budget is usually available in April
- Re-useable tote bags were ordered and arrived. These will be distributed at the Arbor Day and possible Byram Fest events.

Other:

March 28th - Fee-free EWaste Day at SCMUA

March 29th – Opening of Twp. Leaf & Brush Areas (weather dependent)

April 26th (Sun.) – Mayor’s Hike on Sussex Branch Trail 10-11am

April 1st – Eric asked about the Invasive Species Task Force conference being held at Duke Farms. Secretary will resend the information.

It was suggested that we consider having NJISST do a presentation on deer management in the future.

Next Meeting will be held on March 26, 2020

Motion to Adjourn: Motion to adjourn at 10:00pm was made by Lisa, seconded by Katie P. and all were in favor.