

BYRAM TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
January 25, 2018 – Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm. Members present included: James Myers, Eric Duch, Jim Reinhold, Lisa Shimamoto, Secretary Donna Fett, Councilman Scott Olson and Mayor Alex Rubenstein.

New Business:

Publications/Professional Membership review – a motion was made by James, seconded by Jim to obtain the following memberships:

- NJ Shade Tree Foundation @ \$95
- ANJEC @ \$350
- NY/NJ Trail Conference @ \$50

The decision on NJ Highlands membership was tabled to next month so EC can research the benefits to this membership.

Ongoing Business:

Plan 2018 Goals and Topics of Interest – Scott and Alex offered several suggested topics to consider, including:

- Revitalizing the conservation easement monitoring program. Conservation easements, which have previously been identified, have not been reviewed to ensure they are still being maintained. It is advisable to ensure the easements are still being maintained. This could be done by visiting the properties once a year to visually determine there are no buildings erected, pools added, etc.
- Coordinating group wide water testing program for residents. EC could arrange an educational program on the importance of testing well water, perhaps every two years, and coordinate obtaining discounted water testing rates to groups of interested residents.
- Offering programs on environmental issues to educate the public. Years ago, EC coordinate a movie night with an environmental theme.
- Creating a trails sub-committee. A few members from EC, Open Space and Rec Committees could focus on maintaining existing trails and encouraging their use.
- Clean-up day(s). Prior clean-up days were briefly discussed along with how they were advertised to residents. Additional advance advertising could encourage residents to participate.
- Scott advised that EC members in other towns (example Mendham) meet on a designated day each month to walk sites that are under planning board review.

Planning Board Applications – Jean Harry Bouquet – 18 Fieldstone Trail – EC reviewed the application and had the following comments:

- Adjust the grading on the East side of the site to prevent runoff to the neighboring parcel

- The plans indicate connection to a water service but also include a note about installation of a well. Please clarify the water source.
- Please provide the long term maintenance plan for the interceptor drain.
- Please confirm the detention basin and associated infrastructure is suitable and was designed with the proposed development in mind.
- Please provide the landscaping plan. We recommend using low maintenance landscaping practices and encourage the planting of native vegetation that minimizes the use of lawns, fertilizers and pesticides.
- We recommend the use of a rain garden or other means of retaining runoff from the disturbed slope on the property.
- Please provide detailed information regarding the rights and practices of PSE&G's easement versus the intentions of the conservation easement.

Trails:

Trail Map "App" Status – add to next month's agenda

Training:

- ANJEC Training for EC Members to be held on 3/17. Eric expressed possible interest to participate.
- Amphibian Crossing Training Refresher to be held either 2/6 or 2/11. Scott discussed the unique importance of the amphibian crossing on Waterloo Road and the state grant being used to create a tunnel for amphibians to successfully cross Waterloo Road to access vernal ponds. EC members had previously participated in the actual Amphibian Crossings which are typically held February through March, weather dependent.
- Amphibian Scientist Training to be held on 2/11.

Expenditures and Budget:

The temporary EC budget is \$700 and the full budget is expected to be released in April. EC would greatly appreciate having a laptop/screen to view planning board application materials during meetings as well as a whiteboard. Scott will research this further.

Membership:

- EC welcomed new council liaison, Scott Olson.
- EC has two vacancies, a full member and Alternate 1. EC Secretary contacted Michael Cavallaro, a Forest Lake resident who supported EC initiatives last summer, to determine if there was interest. Unfortunately, Michael is in the process of moving to Oregon, but he thanked EC for thinking of him.
- James indicated that EC had discussed putting an ad in the Township Journal to advertise vacancies in the spring.

- Scott indicated that a resident had approached him while at a council meeting and expressed interest in joining EC. He advised her to contact Doris. He will follow-up with Doris on the status.

Committee Reports:

- Musconetcong River Management Council – Jim Reinhold volunteered to be the alternate to James Myers who is back-up to Michelle. EC Secretary will inform Doris to add this to the Council Meeting agenda.
- Open Space – no new meetings occurred since the last update.
- Rec Committee – the next meeting is scheduled for 2/21.

Other:

- SCMUA fee-free days were briefly discussed and noted that the dates have been posted on the website. Household Hazardous Waste Fee-Free Days for 2018 are 6/28 and 11/3. E-Waste Fee-Free Days for 2018 are 3/31, 5/19, 7/21 and 10/13.
- The EC meeting date for November has been changed to Tuesday, Nov. 20th to accommodate another evening meeting.
- Additional Township website updates:
 - Added a link to 2015 Guide to Conservation Easements which was requested by a member of Musconetcong River Management Council (MRMC) and Washington Twp. EC member. A discussion followed on the importance of monitoring conservation easements, the Musconetcong River and MRMC's important efforts.
 - Membership was updated to reflect the two vacancies.
- Eric advised that we can use Strava's heat map site to potentially determine trail usage. It was noted that expected usage would be light this time of year. A brief trail usage discussion occurred and it was suggested that perhaps we could consider incorporating our Township trail maps into Maprica or Strava, which might potentially increase trail usage. Eric will again suggest to Salt Shakers that they consider using Tamarack Park Trail.
- EC Secretary advised that NJ is rolling out an application called Recycle Coach, and information is being gathered about it. It is possible that this may eliminate the need to issue the annual recycling postcard, which could be a cost savings.
- Scott will send the link to the Highlands Mapping website for EC members to review. This interactive website has multiple layers and members were told it would be very slow.
- Alex suggested holding a Special Council Meeting to discuss the responsibilities of each Township committee.

- EC members reviewed the membership list with contact information.

Adjourn - A motion was made by Jim and seconded by Lisa to adjourn at 10:30pm.

Next meeting – February 22, 2018.