

BYRAM TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

February 22, 2018 - Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:40pm. Members present included: James Myers, Katie Baron, Eric Duch, Councilman Scott Olson, Jim Reinhold, Michelle Rehse, Lisa Shimamoto and Secretary Donna Fett.

A motion was made by Michelle, seconded by James to accept the December 28, 2017 meeting minutes. A motion was made by Lisa, seconded by Jim to accept the January 25, 2018 meeting minutes.

**New Business:**

Arbor Day Event Planning – The committee reviewed a list of Arbor Day ideas (used as a resource last year) and would like to research a tree planting. Past years' EC tree plantings were discussed along with the unfortunate problem of tree theft. Rather than planting multiple seedlings or smaller trees, EC will consider planting larger, more mature tree(s). Planting areas under discussion included Tamarack Park, Waterloo or by the Byram Township signage area near Acorn Street. Also discussed was the possibility of doing a clean-up at a Township owned park rather than tree planting. Secretary was asked to research these ideas further, including the possibility of using Township grant funds if there are any that might be available.

EC would like to research sponsoring a "Biggest Tree" contest for Byram Day. The committee could determine certain tree species (ex. oak tree, maple tree, etc.) and ask residents to search through town to find the biggest trees. EC could provide a map at Byram Day and residents could put a pin on the map to identify the location of the trees. Although this would also be very appropriate for Arbor Day, EC feels this would require more planning and publicity to be successful and there isn't sufficient time to do this for Arbor Day.

Tilcon Quarry Annual License Renewal Application – James reported that he had reviewed the binder and report and noted there was very little activity this year. He had no comments. Scott indicated that there are using an expired permit that is considered valid till the state standards are published.

Trail Clean-Ups Resolution – The committee reviewed the draft resolution (retaining the same language as 2017 resolution, with changing the dates from 2017 to 2018) and would like to make minor modifications to the language – including adding erosion control and trash pick-up activities and to specify no power equipment would be used. Secretary will revise the resolution and submit this to Township Clerk to add to Council meeting for their approval.

**Ongoing Business:**

2018 Goals and Topics of Interest – The committee would like to prioritize to fill the vacancies of the group as there are currently 3 open spots – 1 full member along with 2 alternates. EC members have been speaking with their contacts to ascertain if there might be interest.

Scott suggested that if we offer programs to the public, perhaps this could result in people wishing to join EC. He shared that in previous years, EC showed a movie “Kilowatt” at the Sparta Movie Theater which was well received. Perhaps we could partner with the school to do something similar. Michelle indicated that we might be able to do with Mohawk House as well.

A discussion ensued about the possibility of partnering with other agencies as well to increase awareness. Scott mentioned that Waterloo holds a number of events and asked Secretary to contact Andrea to see if we could partner with them during some events – perhaps have an EC table at these events.

Other ideas were discussed including contacting Hudson Farms to inquire if EC could set up a table during their annual Charity Hike, sponsoring a walk and having an arborist speak about the trees on the trail and even researching what other townships might be doing.

Membership – EC does not see the benefit to renewing membership to the NJ Highlands Coalition and will not join.

**Planning Board Applications:**

Byram Car Wash - preliminary and final site plan approval, variance relief for a rear yard setback for an accessory structure, conditional use variance relief for a minimum lot size, the addition of five employee parking stalls, three automatic pay station canopy islands with queuing lane expansion, façade improvements, new lighting and signage.

EC reviewed the application and associated documents and plans and had the following comments which were submitted to the Planning Board Secretary:

- We do not feel the Drainage Plan comments are adequate. Cory Stoner, in his memo dated January 12<sup>th</sup>, Checklist Comments #3e, item #31 indicated that this item was not submitted “Drainage plan including: runoff calculations and map showing drainage areas: Drainage area calculations and maps have not been included. Even though the project is not a “Major Project” and does not require stormwater management according to NJDEP regulations the applicant should still address the added runoff from the proposed additional impervious surface.”
  - EC noted on the Grading and Soil Erosion & Sediment Control Plan, checklist item #31, stating the stormwater runoff flows during a 25 year storm event will result in approximately 0.70 +/-1 cfs increase. From EC’s calculation, this would amount to 315 gallons per minute or 18,850 gallons per hour! We do not believe this is negligible and feel the existing drainage is not adequate for this additional projected stormwater runoff.
- We feel the need for landscaping on the route 206 side of the property and recommend the addition of natural stormwater retention strategies in the area of the water runoff such as adding a raingarden, planting trees and/or native vegetation that minimizes the use of lawns, fertilizers and pesticides.
- We suggest measures be included to address stormwater retention on the site to reduce the impacts of the impervious cover at the site.

Bouquet Application from January - Lisa reported that due to the comments made by EC at last month's meeting, engineers are revisiting the site. The comments were well received and valuable.

**Training:**

The committee reviewed the list of free webinars offered by the US Department of Agriculture / Forest Service. Secretary asked that members notify her if they do any of the webinars so training can be tracked.

Secretary confirmed that Eric was registered to attend ANJEC's workshop "Fundamentals for Effective Environmental Commissions" to be held on March 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Trails:**

Trail Map "Apps" Status – Katie advised that work on this is on hold until the weather improves.

**Expenditures and Budget:**

Temporary budget balance is \$180. The full budget is expected to be approved and released after the April 3<sup>rd</sup> Council meeting.

**Membership:**

EC regrettably accepted the resignation of Donna Koenig, which leaves the Alternate II position vacant. EC now has 3 vacancies – 1 full time member and 2 alternate positions.

**Committee Reports:**

Musconetcong Watershed Association – Michelle reported that MWA expects to release a short film (~10 minutes) about the Musconetcong Watershed on March 21<sup>st</sup>. They hope to release this at a film festival at Centenary College in Hackettstown.

It is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Wild & Scenic and the members of each town will receive promotional materials which they ask to be posted or mailed to residents. Perhaps we could consider adding this to the annual tax letter mailing?

A study on the effects of Hopatcong flow releases at Stanhope and Riverside Park continues as the results from the first test was inconclusive.

A new improved app for Highlands Grants for stormwater will be available. Scott reported that the Township DPW was involved with initial mapping years ago. They provided GIS data and other information on the water flowing into lakes, rivers and streams.

Michelle distributed flyers on upcoming MWA events. These will be posted in Township and include:

- April 14<sup>th</sup> – River Clean-up (locations along Musconetcong River)
- April 28<sup>th</sup> – Native Plant Sale (MWA River Resource Center in Asbury)
- May 6<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> annual Run for the River (Asbury Fire Co. in Asbury)

Open Space:

Eric and Scott reported that Open Space is focusing on maintaining existing acreage rather than obtaining new acreage. They are looking at several grants including:

- NJ Green Acres – Although the deadline for this year was missed, it is being considered for next year. This is a long-term program for \$100K grant for invasive species removal, benches, bridges, etc. NJ will award three grants, one for North, one for South and one for Central.
- Sussex County Open Space Committee – This grant is a trail maintenance grant with a maximum value of \$3500 which can be used for new trailhead signs, kiosks, etc.

Planning Board:

The Planning Board welcomed new member, Marie Raffay.

Other:

Michelle and Scott reported that the amphibians were spotted crossing already due to unseasonably warm weather and rain!

Scott reported that American Chestnut trees were spotted on a Township trail. The forester has been contacted and will attempt to preserve them.

Jim commented that he saw a “Trucks Entering Roadway” sign by Lake Mohawk near the Briar Ridge Trails. Scott said that there are tree removals being done as part of the Forestry Management Plan.

Secretary reported that Salt Shakers had contacted her to get suggestions on where they could hold their annual Clean Communities clean-up event. EC brainstormed potential ideas including Mansfield Trail clean-ups or Lockwood Cemetery. Secretary will research these ideas and contact DPW for their recommendations and coordination.

Secretary advised that the state confirmed the presence of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) in Byram after evaluation of the voluntary EAB trap survey which occurred at Town Hall. Township is awaiting response from NJ regarding next steps.

Next meeting will be held on March 22, 2018.

Motion to adjourn was made by James, seconded by Katie at 9:25pm.