

BYRAM TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

February 23, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Meeting was called to order at 7:35pm. Those present included Michelle Rehse, Nora Amato, Eric Duch, Jim Reinhold, Lisa Shimamoto, Cathy Varian and Donna Fett. Also present were Katie Baron and guest George Stafford, Outreach Director from NJ Highlands Coalition.

Approval of the January meeting minutes was postponed till next month, so that the EC members who were present at the meeting be present to approve the minutes.

Mr. Stafford was seeking EC support in passing along two resolutions to Town Council. He is working with ANJEC and Keep It Green. The two resolutions are:

Statewide Water Plan - In 2011 NJ did a water study but hasn't released the data. The resolution requests the state to release this data.

Keep It Green - This resolution is to request funds for open space which ultimately affects drinking water supply.

Mr. Stafford distributed a few paper copies and was requested to send EC secretary electronic versions to be distributed to the EC members. EC members requested an organizational chart of the Highlands organization. He offered to arrange for a Highlands representative to come to do a presentation in the future if we were interested.

New Business:

- Arbor Day 2017 Planning - EC members discussed several options, including educating public on how to preserve dying hemlock trees, controlled burns to maintain the health of existing forests, obtaining non-invasive milkweed that would protect existing plants against disease, general plantings, etc. For next year, EC will discuss forestry related plans with Ron Farr. Donna F. offered two suggestions for distributing tree seedlings to residents.
 - Option 1 was to obtain free seedlings from NJ that was designed to help reforest after Superstorm Sandy. This option, although free, would require some resources to pick up the seedlings, water and store them prior to distribution. In addition it would require resources to bring the seedlings to the actual location for distribution.
 - Option 2 was to purchase 98 seedlings for \$35. The seedlings would be received on Wed. April 26th and require misting and delivery to C.O. Johnson on Sat. April 29th for distribution. In addition, the seedling, tag and planting instructions need to be placed in bags prior to distribution.

A motion was made by Cathy and seconded by Michelle to purchase 98 seedlings for \$35 (option 2 above). The seedlings will be distributed to residents at C.O. Johnson field on Sat. April 29th.

- ANJEC 2017 Open Space Grant - ANJEC is offering a new grant, pertaining to Open Space, for up to \$1500. Suggested ideas for a project included updating and laminated the Open Space and Trail Maps in the meeting room and updating the printed Trails Map as minor corrections have been

identified recently. The Trails Map was printed in 2014. A motion was made by Cathy and seconded by Eric for EC to apply for this grant to update and laminate the Open Space Map and obtain an electronic version. Donna F. advised that the 2016 Grant must be closed prior to applying for this new grant and a resolution to apply for this new grant needs to be completed prior to March 21st.

Ongoing Business:

- Amphibian Tunnel Project - volunteer training has been provided by Kelly and the migration is expected to begin in March this year.
- ANJEC 2016 Grant - Tamarack Park Trail is "live" on the Township website. Other trails are expected to be "live" next week.
- Trex Plastics Challenge - the scout troop has completed its challenge and collected over 500 lbs. of plastics! The bench earned as a result has been ordered; DPW will assemble it and place it near the trailhead at Tamarack Park Trail. The scout troop is continuing to collect plastics and are donating them to Byram School for their challenge. The troop is considering starting another challenge later in the year.
- Tilcon Quarry Application Renewal - Cory Stoner agreed with the EC's comments, including the recommendation to increase the amount of the bond.

Planning Board Applications:

Kuechenmeister (16 Union Street) - EC members had some concerns about the water management/collection, noted the calculation of 63% "existing variance" on the application is incorrect and needs to be recalculated, and noted it was referenced to be in Morris County and it should be Sussex County.

Trails:

- EC reviewed and finalized the remaining ten trails documents that will be added to the Trails Website.
- Spring Trail Clean-Up Day - based on the open slots in the Township calendar, EC will hold its spring trail clean-up/maintenance day on Saturday, April 15th, with a rain date of Saturday, May 6th. Joe Sabitini suggested to focus on trails that are not highly utilized. EC discussed possibility of cleaning up Briar Ridge and/or Glenside Trails and will decide at the next meeting. EC Secretary will issue an email to the Trails Maintenance Distribution Group once the details are finalized. Jim will research purchasing leather gloves, perhaps from Harbor Freight. Donna F. reported that a resolution was obtained for trail clean-ups for 2017.
- Blazes are needed on several trails and should be visible for hikers in both directions of the trail. The blazes on Brookwood Trail are improperly marked in some sections.
- Eric reported that there was vandalism to the wooden bridge on Sussex Branch Trail north of Jefferson Lake. This will be reported to Hopatcong State Park.
- Tamarack Park Grand Opening - a press release is being finalized. Michelle/James provided a quote from EC.

Expenditures and Budget:

No changes since last month. Budget is \$2,600. EC has spent \$470 on memberships with a balance remaining of \$2,130.

Committee Reports:

Open Space - Michelle advised that the Musconetcong River Management Council will hold an river clean-up around April 15th. They are using Instagram to monitor what's being caught in the rivers. They discussed various ways to better deal with spills and might request a mapping of storm drains.

Additional:

- Membership - Katie Baron expressed interest in joining the EC.
- The Township website has been optimized for mobile devices such as phones and tablets and is now live.

Next Meeting - April 27, 2017

Motion to adjourn at 10:30pm was made by Cathy and seconded by Eric.