

Environmental Commission
Meeting Minutes – January 23, 2020

Role Call / Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:35pm and the following members were present: James Myers, Michelle Rehse, Katie Baron, Eric Duch, Dana Flynn, Helene Jaros, Gerry Murphy, Lisa Shimamoto (Planning Board Liaison arrived after Planning Board meeting ended) and Donna Fett. In addition, Katie Parrish attended.

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

Review of December 16, 2019 Meeting Minutes: A motion to accept the meeting minutes was made by James, seconded by Katie. All members were in favor.

Committee Reports:

- MRMC – Michelle reported that she was not able to attend the last meeting. She indicated that the focus of the meeting was town's septic ordinances and they reviewed samples from Bethlehem, Lebanon, Mansfield and Mount Olive. She will provide Donna with the these links to send to EC members.
- Recreation – No report available, although Byram Fest is tentatively scheduled for Friday, June 5th.
- Open Space – Greener by Design continues to work on their project. Ray Bonker is the new the Council liaison. Scott Olson has joined Open Space as a member. There are two vacancies. Eric believes our Forester will be working on invasives removal and will follow-up with him at the next meeting.
- Council – No report available as Harvey was travelling. Harvey will continue his role as EC Council Liaison.

New Business:

- Membership Dues – Request for membership renewal was received for ANJEC @ \$375. EC members typically participate in their environmentally related training as well as apply for grants. A motion to renew ANJEC membership was made by Eric, seconded by Katie and all members were in favor. No other renewal requests were received but NJ Shade Tree and Arbor Day Foundation requests are expected.
- MRMC Representation – A replacement for the alternate position (previously held by Jim Reinhold) is needed. In addition, Michelle reported that she is expecting to move and suggested replacing her role as primary as well. Meetings are held at 7pm every other month and alternate between Allamuchy and Asbury. MRMC supports activities such as river clean-ups, river restoration projects, recreational assess, cultural and historic resource protection and agricultural and open space land protection. Members agreed to continue to support MRMC and a motion was made by Lisa and seconded by Katie B. for Dana Flynn to be the primary and Kathleen Parrish to be the alternate representative. All members were in favor.

- Vice Chair Position – Members were asked to nominate a member for the Vice Chair role recently vacated by Jim Reinhold. A motion was made by Lisa, seconded by Dana for Gerry Murphy to be the Vice Chair. All members were in favor.
- NJ Tree Seedling Offering – NJ is offering a seedling program consisting of:
 - shrub, pine, oak and hardwood seedlings,
 - in lots of 25 seedlings per species,
 - with a min. of 50 seedlings per order,
 - at a cost of 72-90 cents per seedling

The seedlings would need to be picked up at the NJ Forest Service in Andover on Fri., May 1st between 9am-3pm. As EC is planning to distribute seedlings at Arbor Day, members did not wish to purchase additional seedlings at this time. Eric will, however, bring this up for discussion at the next Open Space meeting; perhaps there is a need to replace ash trees that may be removed by the Forester.

Old Business:

- Lot Disturbance/Coverage Research – James prepared a draft document for members to review. He reviewed Lisa’s sample ordinances and felt there was a wide range of definitions. Some definitions were very restrictive and others seemed very lenient. Discussion occurred and members felt that we should focus on changing behaviors and taking a less restrictive stance. For example, we would encourage residents to utilize gravel driveways vs. impervious asphalt driveway. As more progress is made, we would need to coordinate with Zoning. This topic will be added to the next agenda and Donna will re-issue the draft document.
- Community Wildlife Habitat Update – Katie B. reached out to the Byram Schools to see if there is interest in participating in this program and is awaiting a response.
- Climate Change Project Update – Katie P. advised that a NJ Energy Master Plan is being introduced next week and she will monitor this. The new Electric Vehicle Bill has stalled and this, too, continues to be monitored. The Plastic Bag Ban Bill has not yet been passed. She will draft a letter for members to consider sending out to Township businesses to encourage the use of re-useable bags as opposed to single use plastics.
- Arbor Day Event Update – The event will occur on Sat. April 25th at CO Johnson. Lenape Valley’s Go Green Club was invited to participate. Our order for the free seedlings was placed and the mayoral Proclamation for Arbor Day is on the next Council meeting agenda.

Planning Board Applications:

Fabian Olivera – 58 Mt Heights Drive – Block 342.03, Lot 49 – variance requested for a ground mounted solar accessory structure. Members reviewed the request and had the following comments:

- How are you handling additional runoff created by the proposed solar panels?
- Please ensure proper drainage is provided and consider adding a drainage swale to the wooded areas if needed or provide low-maintenance landscaping that encourages retention and planting of native vegetation if possible near the water runoff created by the new solar panels as well as the other accessory structures.

Training:

- NJUCF Webinars – are held the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 1-2:15pm. The next few months' topics have not yet been disclosed, but the dates are Feb. 12 and March 11. Donna will notify members when topics have been released. Members were reminded to request certificate of participation if they participate in a webinar. Also, the Township is required to obtain 8 NJUCF CEU's each year.
- NJ Forestry Association Training @ Frelinghuysen Arboretum Thursdays from 7-8:30pm:
 - Jan. 16th – Prescribed Burning 101
 - Feb. 20th – Managing Wildlife (Deer!) for Forests
 - March 19th – Managing Forests for Wildlife
- March 7 – ANJEC “Fundamentals of Effective Environmental Commissions” @ Turtle Back Zoo in West Orange. Newer EC members were encouraged to participate in this worthwhile session. Donna will notify members when registration is open.

Membership:

Jim Reinhold's position is currently vacant. Katie Parrish expressed interest in joining. EC members reviewed her letter of intent and resume and would welcome her joining EC.

James Myers announced he will be stepping down as EC Chair. He will continue as an EC member, but can no longer be the Chair. He explained his role and responsibilities and members were encouraged to think about this. Next month we will nominate a new Chair.

Expenditures and Budget:

- Temporary Budget of \$700 is available
- \$1,000 of 2019 budget was allocated to purchase re-useable tote bags. A motion was made by James, seconded by Lisa to order the bags. All members were in favor. Members discussed utilizing the bags to hold/distribute the Arbor Day seedlings and the remainder will be used at Byram Day.

Other:

- Oath of Office forms were signed by James, Dana and Lisa.
- Applications for ANJEC Open Space Grant for Environmental Commissions is now open. Members would like to apply for this grant. The Township Manager and Community Relations Manager were contacted to see if there were any Township projects they wished EC to pursue. Eric will bring this up at the next Open Space meeting. He suggested that we consider applying for the removal of invasive species similar to what we submitted last year. This will be discussed further at our next meeting.
- The Recycling Tonnage letters were issued to Township businesses and vendors. The Township recently received the recycling award for 2017 which was in the amount of \$13,047.34. Recycling pays!
- 3rd Grade Free Seedling Program – this state program is available for 3rd graders. Registering the students is a 2020 Township CFMP goal. Byram School was contacted and they are interested in

participating. Upon further research, the “free” seedlings are not free. Byram School has not yet provided a count of the number of students who would qualify for this program. However, seedlings are bundled in lots of 25 each with a cost of less than \$1 per seedling. Assuming there are approximately 50 total students, the estimated cost is \$50 for this. If the school is not able to fund this event, members agreed to pay for the seedlings. A motion was made by Lisa, seconded by Michelle for EC to spend up to \$50 on seedlings for the 3rd grade students. All members were in favor. The seedlings would need to be picked up at the Forest Service in Andover on Friday, May 1st between 9am-3pm. A volunteer might be needed to do this (if the school cannot do so).

- The NJ Strike Team is holding their annual conference on Wednesday, April 1st at Duke Farms from 9am-3:30pm. CEU’s will be available. The focus this year is on prescribed burns to control invasives. Typically they have 130+ participants. The cost is between \$90-\$150.
- Members were advised that there are a few more radon test kits available at Municipal Building if they were interested.

Next Meeting - Will be held February 27, 2020

Adjourn – A motion to adjourn at 9pm was made by James, seconded by Katie B. All members were in favor.