

Environmental Commission  
March 25, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Call to Order/Role Call - The Zoom meeting was called to order at 7:45pm. Members present were Eric Duch, James Myers, Katie Baron, Dana Flynn, Katie Parrish, and Donna Fett (Secretary). Lisa Shimamoto (Planning Board Liaison) joined at 8:30pm.

Open Public Meeting Statement - Adequate notice of this meeting has been published specifying the time and access information in compliance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of this meeting has also been electronically sent to the newspapers and uploaded to Byram's website, at not less than 48 hours in advance of the meeting. In addition, a copy of this notice is on file in the office of the Environmental Commission Secretary.

Public Participation – there were no members of the public on the call.

Review of January 28, 2021 Meeting Minutes – motion to accept the meeting minutes was made by James, seconded by Dana. All members were in favor.

Committee Reports:

- MRMC – Katie P. reported that they had a meeting on February 16<sup>th</sup> and the next meeting is in May. A guest speaker from local Indian tribe attended the meeting and shared possible upcoming collaborations with water conservation and cultural/historical education. The group discussed monitoring HAB bacteria for the upcoming summer months and the recent recognition of Musconetcong River as a national water trail.  
Katie was pleased to report that fracking has been banned in the Delaware River Basin. Alan Hunt, Director of Policies and Grants from Musconetcong Water Association, Katie and two other members participated in a meeting with members of Congresswoman Mickey Sherill's staff and there be another meeting in the future to discuss environmental issues along the river.
- Recreation – the last meeting was held on March 15<sup>th</sup>, with nothing to report for EC; the next meeting scheduled for April 19<sup>th</sup>
- Open Space – the last meeting was held on February 8<sup>th</sup>; next meeting scheduled for April 12<sup>th</sup>. Eric reported that the timber harvest for ash trees at Tamarack Park has been completed. The committee is supporting the creation of dog park and several trails for the proposed CO Johnson Park improvements. It was noted that there was an article in the Township Journal with additional information, as well as the Township website has been updated
- Council – although the liaison was not present, Secretary read his report as follows:
  - Council will be meeting 3/30 to discuss the budget. The agenda will be posted on the website Friday afternoon
  - At the last meeting, Council discussed the Landscape Architect's overview for CO Johnson Park. These documents are posted on the Township website. EC will review these further next month
  - The architect's site plan work for Byram's municipal building site is expected late April/early May

- An “owner’s rep” has been hired to assist Byram with the municipal building project. There is discussion about adding a grant writer for the municipal building project

Members requested an update on the egress/exit strategy for East Brookwood.

#### New Business:

- NJ Watershed Project to Monitor Road Salt Runoff – NJ Watershed is seeking volunteers to test bodies of water to monitor road salt runoff between December through March. The group feels this might be of interest in order to monitor water quality at Lubber’s Run. Secretary was asked to join their email list to remain informed. This will be discussed at November’s meeting.
- Bill A-1979 – will require paint producers, distributors and retailers to set up collection programs for disposal of metal cans. The program exists in 10 other states and will be brought up to both houses. Previous versions of the bill were not signed by both former governors Christie and Murphy. Members will monitor status of the bill.

#### Old Business:

- Arbor Day Event Update – 500 seedlings were ordered. Township Management does not support the event being held at the McDonald’s parking lot. Secretary was advised that softball/baseball opening day will occur on the same day as our event; therefore, EC will hold this event at CO Johnson Park.
  - Volunteer work schedule is below. Secretary will contact members who were not present at the meeting to see if they are able to participate
    - 9am – Donna, Dana, James
    - 10am – Katie P., Eric
    - 11am – Lisa
- ANJEC Grant – The Township Forester is creating a removal plan for the invasives on Tamarack Park Trail and she suggested to focus on emerging invasives like garlic mustard, stiltgrass, mugwort and barberry. Her plan will include the recommended removal method (pull out, cut back, etc.). If any plants have visible seeds, she recommends bagging them to avoid reseeding. She suggested doing this on Saturday, May 8<sup>th</sup>. EC members agree to this date and Secretary will inform Forester accordingly.
- Community Wildlife Habitat Program – this will be tabled till May
- Comments to Invasive Species Report – this will be tabled till a future meeting
- Impervious Coverage Ordinance Change – the Zoning Officer expects to provide Secretary with comments prior to April meeting
- TRENCH Plastic Bag Challenge – one retailer is accepting bags; we will continue to monitor the situation

#### Planning Board Applications:

- McDonald, Karen – 4 Roger Drive – Block 223, Lot 3 – this request is for a porch with a variance required for front yard setback. EC reviewed the request and had the following comment:
  - Please advise how run-off from the roof will be handled and where run-off will be directed

- 198 Route 206 (“Mountainside”) - Mountainside Country Store and Garden Center - Block 226, Lot 3 – this request is to convert restaurant to store, landscape business and garden center with parking lot. EC reviewed the request and had the following comment:

- Please use native, non-invasive plant species and those that are suitable for use in steep slope areas

- Schuffenhauer, Eric – 271 Lackawanna Drive – Block 344, Lot 2.03 – proposed attached garage, front porch, deck and pole barn. Noted there are steep slopes and critical lot disturbance in area of pole barn and there have been multiple zoning related violations. EC reviewed this application and had the following comments:

The EC finds these drawings to be incomplete. There is not enough information for us to comment on. That being said, please consider our initial comments:

- The EC was very concerned about the disturbance of the steep slope areas. If this project is not approved, the EC recommends it to be restored to its natural condition and utilize non-invasive, native species landscaping plants and those that are appropriate for use in steep slope areas. We suggest that the restoration plans should be provided to the Township professionals for review and approval.
- The property is in an environmentally sensitive area. It is deemed a critical wildlife habitat, is in the Highlands area and the front of the property is in a riparian area (Lubbers Run, which is a C-1 designated stream). As such, great care should be undertaken to ensure soil erosion control measures are taken and any disturbed areas are returned to their natural condition.
- Regarding the pole barn,
  - Please provide your stormwater run-off handling plans. How is run-off being handled and where is the run-off being directed towards?
  - It appears that retaining walls may be needed in the areas behind the pole barn. Please provide details if this is required.
- Provided approval is obtained, when construction is completed, EC recommends the removal of the existing construction driveway. The area should be restored as close as possible to its original condition, or to the satisfaction of the Township Engineer. If there are areas that need to be refilled, please ensure clean soil is used and provide the analytical soil data of the soil used as referenced in your letter to Mr. Dixon.
- The EC has no issues with the garage and porch requests
- DJA Byram (Anty Trucking) – DJA of Byram (“Anty Trucking”) – 9 Lackawanna Drive – Block 226, Lot 16 – this request was for amended use was discussed at the end of our meeting after Lisa was recused. Amended use was for:
  - Installation of two pole barns in lieu of two previously approved fabric outdoor structures
  - Installation of a permanent office trailer in lieu of previously approved office addition to the existing principal building
  - Relocation and reconfiguration of previously approved trailer parking and outdoor storage areas

EC reviewed this request and had the following comments, which will NOT be submitted at this time as there were no EIS or Stormwater plans provided. Secretary will follow-up with Planning Board Secretary

and if the missing materials can be obtained prior to our next meeting, EC will hold a special meeting to review this application. Initial comments included:

- Are there any hazardous materials stored on-site and what are the special precautions that will be undertaken to ensure safe handling and disposal of these materials?
- How do you plan to manage stormwater run-off, especially by the buildings?
- What will be stored in the outside storage areas? Does the storage differ from the original proposal?
- Please explain how run-off from the proposed pole barns will be controlled and where the run-off will be directed

Training – Two NJUCF CEU’s have been obtained to date and awaiting certificates on a few more. These CEU’s were obtained by Mike and Donna. Members were asked to help and reminded that the Township needs 8 CEU’s each year. Secretary will send link to members

Membership – due to work commitments, Gerry submitted his resignation; therefore, EC needed a new chair. A motion was made by James, seconded by Katie B. for Katie P. to be chair. All members were in favor. Eric will remain as co-chair. Katie P.’s vacated spot will be added to the Volunteer Opening page on the Township website.

Budget - \$310 balance of temporary budget remains. The full budget is expected in April, pending approval by Council

#### Other

- Katie P. shared a link for Musconetcong River Water Water Trail Map and Secretary was asked to add this to our website ([arcg.is/1zHfrHO](http://arcg.is/1zHfrHO))
- Eric advised that he will be walking the Cranberry Overlook Trail with the Township Forester on Friday, April 16<sup>th</sup>. If any members are interested in joining them, they should contact him.

#### Upcoming Dates:

Township Leaf/Brush Area Re-opening – March 27<sup>th</sup>

Township Rabies Clinic – April 17<sup>th</sup>

Arbor Day Event – April 24<sup>th</sup>

Spring Trail Clean-up/Invasive Removal – May 8<sup>th</sup>

Secretary was asked to advertise Arbor and Spring Clean Up Days on Township website

Next Meeting – April 22, 2021

Motion to Adjourn was made at 10:20pm by James, seconded by Eric and all members were in favor.