

Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes
October 24, 2019

Role Call / Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm and the following members were present: James Myers, Michelle Rehse, Helene Jaros, Gerald Murphy, Lisa Shimamoto (Planning Board Liaison) and Donna Fett (Secretary). Also participating were Ron Farr (Township Forester) and Levi Hann (member of public).

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

Review of August 22, 2019 Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by Lisa, seconded by Helene to accept the meeting minutes.

Review of September 26, 2019 Informal Notes: Although quorum was not met during this scheduled meeting, several time sensitive issues needed to be discussed. A motion was made by Lisa, seconded by James to accept the informal notes.

Committee Reports:

- MRMC – Michelle indicated that the next meeting is Tuesday. She reported that Alan Hunt (Executive Director) will be leaving. She believed the Scenic Film Festival event was successful.
- Recreation – The committee is obtaining feedback from the recent Byram Fest and is seeking volunteers to help with next year's event.
- Open Space – No report available.
- Council – Although Harvey was not present at the meeting, he provided his report. The LED Sign Ordinance was introduced and the second reading will be Nov. 18th. He also advised that the next two Town Council meetings will be held on Monday nights. Although he will be travelling for the next Council meeting, if EC has anything they wish to be brought up to Council, please inform Donna.

New Business:

- 2020 Meeting Dates – the following dates were proposed for EC meetings in 2020: Jan. 23, Feb. 27, March 26, April 23, May 28, June 25, July 23, Aug 27, Sept 24, Oct 22, Nov 16 and Dec 14. The November and December meetings will be on Mondays and were changed due to the holidays. A motion was made to accept the proposed 2020 dates by Michelle, seconded by Lisa.
- EC Contact List – the EC contact list, revised to include our newest two members, was distributed among the members.
- Community Forestry Management Plan (CFMP) Update – Ron Farr reviewed the proposed CFMP goals for the new plan. Many of the plan tasks are typically accomplished by EC throughout the year with our usual activities, but there were several new ones presented. Members agreed to the

proposal with a few minor modifications. Ron will update the plan and expects to complete it in two weeks.

A discussion on invasive species occurred and Ron shared information on the emerging spotted lanternfly problem. The spotted lanternfly feeds on more than 70 plant species including the Tree of Heaven which is abundant in NJ. They also feed on black and red walnut, grapes, hops, apples and peaches. The insects feed from the trunk and limbs of plants and extract fluids from the plant/wood tissues.

At this time, there are no reported sightings in Sussex County. However, they are very destructive and if they are spotted, they should be quickly destroyed to minimize further damage. NJ has established a hotline to report sightings.

Ron also discussed the problems with deer and their effect on our forests. The Township has five areas designated for bow hunting: Tamarack Park, Cranberry Ledge, Briar Ridge Trails (North and South) and Glenside Woods.

- Planning for 2020 –
 - Byram Day – members were asked to determine topics of interest for next year’s event. Ideas included distributing free well water testing kits, creating displays on invasive species and distributing decals/car magnets with recycling based messages.
 - Clean Water Presentation – Katie is working on a presentation and task for EC to consider on clean water.
 - Invasive Species –
 - Invite Mike Van Clef (NJ Invasive Species Strike Team) to return to do another presentation on invasive species and invite local nurseries to attend to learn how to help residents select non-invasive plants for their gardens. Members liked the “Plant This, Not That” guide that Union County developed with the help of a girl scout. Unfortunately, the guide is no longer available, but perhaps we would consider doing something similar. It was suggested that we post the “Do Not Plant List” provided by NJ Invasive Species Strike Team.
 - Participate in Invasive Species Workshop to be held by Stanhope EC. It is likely to be held in May at Waterloo Village.
 - Lot Coverage Research – finalize EC recommendations on potential lot coverage ordinance

Old Business:

- Invasive Species Event Update – The presentation by Mike Van Clef was very well received. He did a fantastic job and there were a lot of questions and answers provided. Scott Olson attended and provided valuable Byram Township related information. The presentation lasted longer than anticipated and as a result, barberry removal work on Tamarack Park Trail was limited.

Mike participated in the trail work and recommended EC to focus more on newly emerging invasives rather than on existing barberry removal. As mature barberry is extremely difficult to remove, he

suggested removing only the barberry that encroaches the trails. He did notice that we have a lot of emerging plants and felt the forests would benefit by removing those plants. For example, he pointed out the presence of a lot of stilt grass and knotweed. It would be important to do schedule the trail clean-ups at particular times during the year to maximize the removal of the plants. Stilt grass removal is better done early in the year (March?) before the plant produces seeds. He recommended that 3" of wood chips be placed in those areas. Cutting knotweed is best done in June and again around Sept. when a certain height of the plant has been reached. To make next year's event more meaningful, members will coordinate the best dates to remove particular invasives.

- Community Wildlife Habitat – As Katie was not present, this has been tabled until next month.
- Lot Coverage Research – Lisa's research was briefly discussed. Members were asked to familiarize themselves with other towns' material and this will be on December's agenda. Lisa advised that Highlands has established definitions, but does not have an ordinance. Members felt we should start with defining impervious and pervious coverages. We would present our recommendations to the Planning Board and it is likely a subcommittee would be established to address this, including the Town Planner.
- Plastic Bag Ban Update – There is no update available on the bill. Paramus approved their ordinance to ban plastics effective Jan. 1, 2020. Currently 22 municipalities and 1 county have plastic bag bans in effect and 12 have passed ordinances that are waiting to go into effect.

Planning Board Applications:

Norberg – 3 Troutbrook Road – Block 54, Lot 26 – EC reviewed this application for a new garage with loft and had the following comments:

- Please advise how you are treating run-off from the proposed garage structure. Please consider a raingarden.
- Please consider the use of non-invasive plants if you are doing landscaping.
- What is the distance to Lubber's Run?

Training:

- October 8th – HAB Forum @ 7:30pm at Mountain Lakes High School – Donna and Scott attended and forwarded the presentation materials. It was an informative program.
- October 26th (Sat.) - ANJEC Workshop "Fundamentals of Effective Environmental Commissions" to be held in Holmdel from 9am-1:30pm. There is no fee for ANJEC members.
- November 13th (Wed.) – ANJEC Information Session and Regional Roundtable "Single Use Plastic" to be held in Plainsboro at 6pm. There is no fee for ANJEC members. Helene expressed interest in participating.

Membership:

A few positions will be expiring 12/31/19. Donna advised that those members would be contacted to inquire if they wish to renew their positions.

Expenditures and Budget:

Balance of \$2,100 remains, with \$200 invoice expected from NJ Invasive Species Taskforce next month.

Other:

- Town-wide curbside leaf pick-up will occur on Nov. 11th and Dec. 9th
- Township leaf & brush area will be closed (weather dependent) from Dec. 14th through March 29th for the winter season
- Household Hazardous Waste Fee Free Day at @ SCMUA will occur on November 2nd
- Annual Recycling Postcard – will focus on e-waste and disposal events at Township
- Go Green Logo/Poster Contest – have been in contact with Go Green Club advisor who is interested in having the students partner with us. In addition to inviting Go Green to our events, it was suggested having the students design a recycling themed logo or poster.
- Decal/Magnets – a Township employee saw a magnet on a car with the message “Don’t be trashy, recycle” and the magnet included the Town’s logo. We will consider adapting a recycling based slogan and perhaps do a decal/magnet as a giveaway for Byram Day next year. Sample slogans will be reviewed at our next meeting.
- Adopt-A-Trail – Gerry inquired if the Township would consider inviting local businesses to “adopt-a-trail”, as this could perhaps help better maintain our trails.
- Nicole Member (Stanhope EC) scheduled an informal meeting to discuss how trail systems can be linked. Neighboring towns’ EC committees were invited to attend. The meeting will be held on Tues., Nov. 5th at 6:30pm at Bell’s Mansion. This email will be forwarded to all EC members.
- It was suggested that Ron Farr possibly be asked to accompany EC members help us identify new invasives on the trails.

Next Meeting: Will be held on **Tuesday**, November 19, 2019

Adjourn – a motion to adjourn at 9:10pm was made by James, seconded by Lisa.