

**Readington Township
Environmental Commission Regular Meeting Minutes
March 2, 2021**

OPEN MEETING

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hendrickson at 7:08 p.m. stating that the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act have been met and that this meeting had been duly advertised.

Members in Attendance

Neil Hendrickson, Chair
Robert Becker
Jerry Cook
Steve Foster
Jonathan Heller
Susan Masinda
Todd Terricone
Jeff Charney – Joined 7:34 pm

Members Absent

Mario Orlandi

Minutes

Mr. Cook moved, and Mr. Foster seconded, a motion to approve the minutes for February 2, 2021. The motion carried unanimously.

LOI/Freshwater Wetlands

None

AOC (Areas of Concern)

None

Correspondence

None

New Business

1. Republic Services Presentation

This presentation will have to be rescheduled as the presenter is unable to make the evening meeting. A subcommittee may be formed to meet with the presenter to hear the presentation and ask questions who will then report back at a future meeting. It was suggested that members talk to neighboring communities, i.e. Branchburg, to see how/who handles their recycling. Mr. Heller mentioned that Readington Township will be meeting with the Branchburg mayor and deputy mayor and can inquire at that point as to what Branchburg does with regard to recycling. A memo from the EC will be sent to Rich that outlines what the EC would like to see in a new recycling contract.

2. Tree Seedling Giveaway

Noted.

3. Food Waste Recycling

Some members of the EC attended a presentation from Trenton Renewables regarding food waste management. Snippets of the presentation were provided to all EC members. Chair Hendrickson inquired if they could take on a municipality and they responded in the affirmative. This may be an idea to pursue in the future.

4. Littering Concerns

Chair Hendrickson asked the members if they liked the idea of an Adopt-a-Road program to help combat littering on township roads. Most members replied they did. It was reported that the Water Watch committee is also looking into a similar idea for school aged kids. Chair Hendrickson will bring this idea up at the next Green Committee meeting.

5. OSAB – Dam Removal Project

The Water Watch committee will probably take the lead on this project. Mr. Huelsebusch wrote a letter to the Fish and Wildlife Services field office supporting this initiative. The EC will submit their own letter of support.

Other Business

Plastics Ban

Some research was done by searching other municipalities in New Jersey and finding flyers used to communicate plastic ban ordinances to residents and businesses. These can be used as a template to create one for Readington Township. Chair Hendrickson mocked-up a couple of ideas and provided them to the members. It was noted that the example that had less verbiage was preferred. A list of businesses in the Township will be used to identify where to send the selected flyer.

NJ Climate Change Bill signed by Governor

Noted.

Subcommittee Updates

Tree Subcommittee

There was an observation from a Township Committee member regarding the cutting of trees on a property. Chair Hendrickson went to the site and noted the company doing the work. He researched the company and discovered they were not registered with Readington Township, which is required. He reported them to the Tree Expert Board.

Urban Wood concept – Mr. Becker and Mr. Spooner talked about this concept of getting value out of trees that have to be cut down, i.e. mulch, firewood, etc. An idea was raised about talking with DPW to see if there is a place where this wood could be staged. The economics of this concept need to be identified. Another idea was to network with local tree companies. Additionally, it is possible that the NJ Forestry will be providing grants and the Township may want to propose a Pilot program on Urban Wood concept.

Wildlife Advisory Subcommittee

Deer Management

Mr. Mueller will be working on compiling the data received from this year's deer management program. The members were not aware of any major problems stemming from this year's program.

Grants Update

American Water Grant – There was one idea mentioned, a water garden, and there is still a decision as to proposing to have it at the municipal building or Whitehouse School.

Mr. Foster mentioned there is a second project that is being looked into with getting school kids to adopt a neighborhood to pick up plastic and trash in order to preserve water quality, although this project does not yet seem to have much traction.

Another suggestion that was floated was to include the recreation department and see if something similar can be incorporated into their plans for programs at Whitehouse School.

Site Plan Review and Comment

1. Whitehouse Auto

Appl# ZB20-003 -Block 18 Lots 12 – 378 Route 22 West

Preliminary & Final Site Plan with "D" Variance - Canopy & Sign

There was some discussion on this application, however nothing particularly applied to what comes under the EC purview. The application is still being revised and will be carried over to the April meeting.

Public Comment

A member of the public introduced herself as someone who grew up in the area and was looking to purchase a home in the township. She joined the meeting to get an idea as to what some of the issues that exist in the area are. She did ask a question regarding zoning around the Round Valley Reservoirs and if it was possible for additional development to occur, i.e. a subdivision. While none of the members are on the zoning board, they did express their opinion that it wasn't likely.

Adjournment

It was the consensus of the committee members to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Radziewicz

Secretary to the Environmental Commission