

**Readington Township
Environmental Commission Regular Meeting Minutes
April 6, 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
Mario Orlandi

Members Absent

Todd Terricone
Jeff Charney

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

- 1 LOI – 3557 Route 22 East – Block 39, Lot 3
Noted

AOC (Areas of Concern)

None

Correspondence

- 1 The Reynolds Group: TWA Submission for Ryland Subdivision
Noted
- 2 Concrete Washout Systems Information Postcard
Noted

New Business

1. Recycling – New Contract Input

Some members read the RFP specifications from 2018 which prompted some questions including if Republic Services has ever reimbursed the Township, if there have been complaints issued against them, why some developments are excluded, etc. It was stated that the HOAs of some developments negotiate their own agreements for garbage/recycling. The members discussed the number of bidders from 2018 (there was only 1). There was discussion on the potential of joining with surrounding municipalities to maybe get a better rate. It was mentioned that the County is not looking to upgrade the facility at Petticoat Lane.

2. Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI)

The current ERI is from 2002 with updates to some figures as well as new maps from 2009. Mr. Becker will look into the impact of the work on the meadows project on the ERI. The EC sill also look into when the ERI should be updated from a legal aspect.

3. Periodical Cicada (Brood X)

The Township website has been updated with current information on the imminent cicada emergence.

4. Potential Grant Opportunity - Recycling

There is a tonnage grant that the Township gets every year. The DPW director is current on everything needed for this and does report the tonnage.

5. Impact of New Forest Management Bills on Municipalities

The members discussed the bills that are up for passage in the state legislature. These bills will take away local control for anything over 25-acres and allow the state to do what they feel is needed for woodlands management. The members agreed to send a letter stating their opposition to these bills.

Other Business

Plastics Ban

A sample flyer was sent to the members for feedback. It was suggested that a sentence be added with a short explanation as to why this is important. Additionally, it was suggested that the word 'Please' be added to the line of 'Bring your own Reusable Bag'. The chair will explore these suggestions and implement if deemed beneficial.

Subcommittee Updates

Tree Subcommittee

Nothing to report.

Wildlife Advisory Subcommittee

Deer Management

Notes from Rutgers's Zoom meeting held in March 2021 regarding deer management were provided to the members. On a Township level, the individual numbers were up significantly. The members are still waiting to hear final numbers from the clubs and private properties. One of the members reported that the Farm Bureau is aggressively addressing the deer problem with their main push being toward large tract landowners to allow hunting on their properties.

Grants Update

Mr. Becker stated he would like to see the Township document potential grant opportunities in addition to the grants applied for/awarded. Mr. Becker also reported that the Meadows Interim report was submitted. Mr. Heller stated that the electric vehicle is now registered and will start being used soon. The charging station will be installed soon. Mr. Becker mentioned that there should be a ribbon cutting ceremony with news coverage for the electric vehicle and charging station.

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

A memo will be sent to the Planning Board stating that the commission trusts the professionals and that there are no environmental concerns.

2. Chubb Ina Holdings & Rosedale & Rosehill Cemetery Association

Appl# ZB21-003 -Block 12 Lots 16 & 16.01 – 378 Route 22 West
Preliminary & Final Site Plan

Ms. Masinda gave an overview of several items of concerns including, but not limited to, the 80% set aside rule, groundwater vulnerability to decaying corpses, coffins, etc., disturbance of wildlife due to expected cemetery activity, and proximity to a Category 1 watercourse. The members discussed all points brought up. Ms. Masinda will refine her list of items and provided to the Chair. This list will be provided to the Planning Board in order to express the Environmental Commissions concerns regarding this application.

Public Comment

The Chair reminded everyone of the upcoming seedling giveaway and asked for volunteers in bundling the seedlings as well as working the day of the giveaway.

The Chair will be attending Raritan Township’s Environmental Commission to gather information about their Adopt-A-Road program. He will present his findings at an upcoming meeting to see if the commission would like to pursue a similar program.

Mr. Leshik, a resident, commented on the possibility of mobilizing the residents to help combat items such as the cemetery and the forestry bills that are not environmentally friendly.

The members discussed the possibility of having a Facebook page specifically for the Environmental Commission as well as potentially partnering with the Water Watchers Committee. It was mentioned that ANJEC is holding a seminar on Social Media on April 8th. Along these lines, it was suggested that the commission explore ideas to push information to the community and not rely on residents to seek the information from websites.

The members discussed the state of Ash Trees in the community. Additional discussion occurred regarding a couple of instances of trees being cut down without permits. The Chair reported that he continues to work with the Zoning Officer as well as identifying potential updates to the Tree Ordinance.

Adjournment

It was the consensus of the committee members to adjourn the meeting at 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Radziewicz

Secretary to the Environmental Commission