

Metuchen Environmental Commission Minutes of the October 15, 2008 Regular Meeting

- **Regular Meeting of the Metuchen Environmental Commission was held on Wednesday October 15, 2008.**
- **Review and approval of September 17, 2008 Minutes.**
- **Present were: Mark Herzberg, Chair, Will Waldron, Council Liaison, Patricia Donahue, Ann Sardone, Arline Zatz, Steve Toth, Thomas Rudel and Brian Weeks.**
- **Absent were: Mike Vissichelli and Kathy Bush (new member).**
- **Changes in membership: John Leazer, our former Liaison to the Planning Board, is now no longer a member of the Environmental Commission but has been appointed a full member of the Planning Board. The Mayor has appointed Kathy Bush as a new member of the Environmental Commission and Planning Board liaison.**
- **Correspondence: DEP Bulletins (9/17 & 10/1): Nothing pertaining to Metuchen.**
Correspondence from the Middlesex County Mosquito Commission regarding its plan to restore water flow through ditches and channels in the Dismal Swamp. Referred to Steve Toth for followup, especially about potential adverse effects upon wildlife.
Correspondence from Edison Township with its proposed tree ordinance.
A member of the Edison Township Council reached out to the Metuchen Council about Edison's plan to reconstitute its Environmental Commission. Discussion followed of how we can assist. Pat and Ann volunteered to reach out to the Edison Council and attend a preliminary meeting. We can follow with further joint meetings, offers of organizational ideas and perhaps joint projects.

Old Business

Thomas Pond: Report that Mike is considering launching in the spring the proposed algae mitigation project using bales of barley straw.

Planning Board: No report.

Dismal Swamp: Discussion of continued litter problem adjacent to trucking company warehouse at Liberty Street entrance to the Swamp. Borough Council Members and the Mayor reportedly are considering appropriate enforcement measures.

Edison Wetlands Association proposed a fundraising event, perhaps a softball game, for the spring. They would use the funds to open a trail network starting in the Edison portion of the Swamp. Perhaps Metuchen could do so as well.

Dog Park: Pat reported that Edison Township now owns the former CIC Superfund site. Mark and Brian reported that, according to the press, Edison plans to open a dog park on it.

Tree Farm: Pat discussed with Fred Hall of DPW. Discussion followed of the labor-intensive maintenance needed to water, weed, replace dead seedlings and remove litter. Further discussion was tabled, no decision having been reached.

Edgar School Trees: Pat reported that Ms. Glutz, principal of Edgar School, had asked the custodian to water the trees in the bus turning circle behind the school.

Discussion followed of possibly planting more trees in the large area of the parking lot where all the trees died and have been cut down.

Recycling: Discussion of possible enforcement measures by the Borough. Concern expressed that the new automated trash container removal trucks do not detect the disposal of recyclables with trash. The Borough's recycling tonnage figures have fallen over the past few years. Restoration of the 1990s recycling rates could save the Borough over \$300,000 in disposal fees.

Country Fair: Discussion of the Environmental Commission presentation at our booth during the Oct. 4 Country Fair.

The Environmental Commission presented four issues at the Fair, prepared by: Mike, on Thomas Pond; Pat, on recycling; Brian, on the Edgar School trees; and Tom, on Woodbrook Pond. All were well received by the public.

Consensus that we should request a booth area near the other environmentally oriented groups, and consideration of measures to attract members of the public who are not yet interested in environmental issues.

Global Warming: Discussion of the bike rack proposed for adjacent to the bench on the New Street side of Metuchen Savings Bank. Tom has reached out to the Bank, but has not yet received their consent to install the rack at that location.

Open Space: No report.

Greenway: No report.

New Business: The Borough and the Board of Education will each apply to the State for a grant to conduct an energy audit on existing Borough buildings. Grants of up to \$100,000 are available. The Borough Administrator Bill Boerth will prepare the Borough's application, which eh will circulate to the Environmental Commission to review before its submission.

- There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.