

**Borough of Metuchen  
Environmental Commission  
Regular Meeting: March 19, 2008**

**Present:** Mark Herzberg, John Leazer, Ann Sardone, Arline Zatz, Pat Donahue, Tom Rudel, Steve Toth, Brian Weeks, Mike Vissichelli; **Guests:** Sondra Flite; **Absent:** Will Waldron

The meeting began at 7:38 PM.

The minutes of the February 20, 2008 meeting were approved with minor modifications.

**Correspondence**

- DEP Bulletin regarding changes to the proposed rebuilding of the Lake Avenue bridge.
- ANJEC brochure on a municipal energy training course scheduled for April 28. Members agreed that a town official should go to this with a Commission member. Pat commented that there is a mechanism to have 75% of a municipal energy audit paid for.
- ANJEC brochure on leadership development and training.
- Greenway Coalition Newsletter.
- Wetlands Determination letter on the Borough Motors property.

**Thomas Pond**

Mike had a meeting with the Metuchen High School Environmental Club. Twelve students attended, along with the science teacher. They will monitor the pH, temperature, dissolved oxygen, orthophosphates, nitrates, and chlorine in the pond. They were shown how to sample the water from the edge of the pond. Three different sampling locations were selected. The students will take measurements on a monthly basis. This information will be reported at the town fair later this year.

The Tommy's Pond Brochure is ready for public distribution, preferably on Earth Day, Saturday, April 26. Conversation ensued on asking the pond volunteers to help hand out the brochures. Some discussion of goose control occurred.

**Metuchen High School**

There will be an open house on April 6 for a tour of the school renovations. This item will be taken off our subsequent agenda.

**Greenway**

There is a DOT proposal to fill in the bridge over Lake Avenue and to create a tunnel passageway, culvert, for the Greenway. The Essex Greenway Coalition does not think this is a good idea. According to the Coalition, these culverts are viewed as a place for people to loiter. The north wall of the Greenway leaks. As such, there is potential for seepage through a potential culvert. Safety is also a major issue for this long, narrow, and dark culvert. There is anticipation that there will be horseback riding through the

tunnel, which may also be a safety concern. The Greenway Coalition has asked the Metuchen Environmental Commission to write a letter to the DOT to voice our concerns. Brian will draft the letter.

There is a second issue dealing with the trailhead. The Greenway Coalition is waiting for the Borough to memorialize the site, while it appears that the Borough may be waiting for the county to do the same. The feeling of the Greenway Coalition is that there needs to be some type of movement on the part of Metuchen. The Greenway Coalitions feels that the county wants a “buy in” from the Borough prior to further development being done. Tom will talk to Bonnie regarding this issue.

### **Dismal Swamp**

Steve spoke to the Borough Administrator regarding, periodic maintenance at Dismal Swamp by the DPW, twice a year.

### **Dog Park**

Edison received money to retrofit their animal shelter. They are turning it into a green building. The town planner reports that Edison is in the process of buying the CIC site for open space purposes. One of the ideas for the property is to include a dog park.

### **Tree Farm**

Conversation ensued on involving the Shade Tree Commission and developing a tree plan as part of the overall town plan.

### **Edgar School/Pool Parking Lot**

The Commission will be planting trees at the Edgar parking lot on Friday, April 25 at 4 PM in commemoration of Arbor Day. There will be a variety of organizations involved (*e.g.* scouts, Shade Tree Commission, *etc.*) Brian will ensure that the DPW is aware of this for potential assistance.

### **Planning Board**

There was no meeting of the Planning Board since the last Commission meeting.

### **Recycling**

Sondra Flite of NJDEP who was a guest at the meeting recommended that Commission members investigate the trash bins behind the High School to ensure that the school is recycling in accordance with all rules. There should be separate bins for trash, cardboard, and cans/bottles. A suggestion was made to go to the school on the day of a sports event to monitor recycling activity.

Other suggestions included: asking the DPW to take a baseline measurement this year so that they can tell if progress is made next year; large signs for recycling so that people know where to put recyclables; inform those who rent the field that they are expected to recycle properly; and, to make the latter part of the field lease agreement. After a year of these efforts, the savings should be calculated and publicized. For example, East Orange

determined that it saves \$10K/yr by recycling. Our program could be fine-tuned every subsequent year.

### **County Fair**

Mark talked to Bonnie regarding paying for a booth for the Commission. Bonnie reported that the town could request a free table.

### **Global Warming**

Pat contacted the Chamber of Commerce regarding a bike rack. The suggested location is beside the bank on New St. beside the large planter. The Chamber wants to know if there is clearance from the Borough and if there is enough clearance for pedestrians.

### **Open Space**

The mayor was asked to take a walk on the Wood Brook property on two occasions. He has not yet responded.

### **New Business**

The Commission would like DPW to do a onetime curbside electronics pickup on Monday, April 13, which is the day after the garage sale. Brian will contact the DPW regarding this. Pat will contact the Chamber to see if they will publicize the pickup. *As a note, DPW will now accept electronics waste if it is brought to the recycling center.*

### **Other Business**

Mark will give Rutgers our Environmental Resources Inventory to archive. The Dismal Swamp Brochure will also be archived.

There being no further business before the Commission, the meeting concluded at 9:52 PM.