

**BOROUGH of METUCHEN  
Environmental Commission  
Minutes of the February 16, 2011 Regular Meeting**

A meeting of the Metuchen Environmental Commission was held on Wednesday, February 16<sup>th</sup> 2011 at 7:00 PM at Borough Hall. Present were:, Ann Sardone, Mark Herzberg, Chair, Tom Rudel, Steve Toth, Brian Weeks, Joe Schaffer, Pat Donahue, and Dorothy Rasmussen.

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM.

The minutes of the January 2011 meeting were approved with three small corrections.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Correspondence from the State Department of Transportation about the Greenway work that is currently under way was reviewed.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Thomas Pond Park - Is the pump at the pond working? The question is asked because the pump may not have been maintained and could be inoperative.**

**Dog Park – Could a green acres parcel be used as a Dog Park? Some discussion ensued about how to get together with interested parties in Edison to discuss a joint dog park. The Edison environmental commission is once again up and running. They are doing an environmental inventory of the town. The commission may be the place to begin this collaborative effort.**

**Dismal Swamp – Open Space – Greenway: the Dismal Commission has not been meeting. A question came up about the private owners of the forested portions of the swamp. Some questions have arisen about trying to get the town to extend the Greenway and purchase the two properties that are in arrears on their taxes. Liability questions have held up any actions by the town attorney. We talked about creating an overlay of the properties in this zone to present to the council. In this manner we could hopefully dramatize the issues that pertain to these properties. A discussion with the county open space division asked for an update on Conrail's deliberations about abandoning the greenway extension up to the Dismal Swamp. The discussion of political pressures turned to the possibility of involving Frank Pallone. We could invite people, including Pallone, to a ribbon cutting event and use it to press the case for the extension. It would be a way of keeping up the pressure for action on the extension of the greenway to the Dismal swamp.**

**Earth day:** There was some thought given to scheduling a Greenway extension event for Earth day. What day would it be? The 30<sup>th</sup> might be the best day, piggybacking on the town's schedule of events for the day. How would transportation for the day be organized? Could we do a bird watching event? We could go down the recently contracted segment of the greenway. The greenway is not yet asphalted, but the gravel basis has been laid, so a walk down this portion of the Greenway would be feasible. This activity is contingent on the scheduling of the ribbon cutting for the current work on the Greenway. Brian Weeks was thanked for the article that he wrote about recent greenway events.

**Recycling:** The commission discussed recent data on recycling in different neighborhoods. The new regulations for recycling electronic items need to be republicized, so people know the rules. The big declines in recycling in recent years have occurred with leaves and with mixed papers. People are perhaps using lawn companies more, and newspapers are declining in circulation. We decided to continue with the neighborhood surveys to be sure that our numbers are reliable.

**Energy - Global Warming:** We need to follow up with the Board of Education about the results of the energy audits for the schools. The board does have an interest in tooling up for solar. The board's agent was worried that there would not be any responses to the R.F.P. They may want to talk to other towns that have installed solar panels. Energy transitions are not one of the council's priorities. We will get a list of towns that have already gone ahead with solar planning. The borough has decided to go ahead with 70% of the energy efficiency projects, but contractors have not yet had a chance to bid on the projects.

**Planning Board:** we are still waiting for the appointment of a liaison to keep us informed about their activities.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

The sustainable New Jersey – the West Windsor experience suggests that we need to follow the form, but in addition we need to do more things. We decide to meet on Wednesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 7:30PM

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM. The next meeting of the Metuchen Environmental Commission will take place on March 16th, 2011 at 7:00 PM at Borough Hall.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Tom Rudel**

# **AGENDA**

## **Metuchen Environmental Commission**

**March 2011**

**Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**Correspondence**

**Old Business**

**Earth Day**

**Thomas Park Pond**

**Dog Park**

**Open Space**

**Greenway**

**Dismal Swamp**

**Recycling**

**Energy - Global Warming**

**New Business**