

BOROUGH of METUCHEN
Environmental Commission
Minutes of the January 19, 2011 Regular Meeting

A meeting of the Metuchen Environmental Commission was held on Wednesday, January 19, 2011 at 7:00 PM at Borough Hall. Present were: Council Liaison Dorothy Rasmussen, Chair Mark Herzberg, and members Tom Rudel, Steve Toth, Brian Weeks, Ann Sardone, and Pat Donahue, and alternate member Joe Schaffer. Absent were: none. Guests: Bill Prichason.

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

The minutes of the November 17, 2010 meeting were approved and accepted.

REORGANIZATION OF THE COMMISSION

- Mark Herzberg was nominated and re-elected unanimously as Chair for the Commission.
- In 2011, the Commission will meet the third Wednesday of every month except for August and December.
- A Secretarial Schedule for 2011 meetings was established.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Four editions of the DEP bulletin were received with no items of interest to Metuchen.
- Received Public Notice of 0.23 acres of parkland to greenway related to Reconstruction of Route 27 Lake Avenue Bridge. Public Hearings to be held on January 5th and 20th; Ann Sardone to attend and report back.
- Letter from County Freeholder Chair to Mayor Vahalla commenting on the start of Middlesex Greenway construction.
- Received a General Permit Application for PSE&G for work along their ROW. Brian Weeks to review for items of interest to the Commission.
- Received a copy of the Resolution adopting a temporary budget for the Borough.
- Received a copy of Board and Commission lists for the Borough.
- Received notice from ANJEC Land Use Planning Grant available, deadline March 31st, 2011.
- Received a letter from Steve Fields outlining a proposal for a hotel resort and walking path across Metuchen.

OLD BUSINESS

Climate Change

No Report

Dismal Swamp

Discussed the acquisition of property behind St. Joseph's as a greenway extension to Dismal Swamp. Approximately \$30K in back taxes are owed on the lots, one of which is landlocked.

Dog Park

A potential site exists off Whitman and will require coordination with Twp of Edison. This parcel is now on the recreational and open space inventory (ROSI). Once the site is "Green Acres" need to allow public access. Edison currently in violation of this; potential remedy is fencing the entire parcel and open to public as an off-leash dog park.

Edgar School and Pool Parking Lot

No Report

Energy Audits

Steve Gable (consultant) report on solar retrofits ruled out all Borough buildings but the DPW garage as infeasible or not economically viable. Several Board of Education buildings would be feasible but Board of Ed may not pursue; Commission to reach out one last time to present this again.

Tristate has been in contact with Borough Administrator with regards to direct install options for the Library, DPW Furnace, and electronic controls; State benefits are available for these improvements.

Greenway

Greening Grant to be finalized; a strategy for approaching the County is needed. Discussed organizing a ribbon cutting event in the Spring; an article will be submitted to the Metuchen Messenger to publicize. A tour will be organized to coincide with Earth Day events. Commission will ask the Mayor to formally add the Greenway plan to the Borough's Master Plan.

A hearing will be held on the 20th regarding the Greenway. In exchange for use of Green Acres land the State needs a replacement parcel; a potential parcel is the old lot across from TD Bank and opposite railroad from Memorial Park a potential candidate. These lots are about the same size, need to convey lot to swap and quid-pro-quo improvements. There was a discussion of replacing the bridge over the Greenway with an arch vs. a culvert.

Open Space

No report (see Greenway)

Planning Board

Need a liaison from the Planning Board for the Environmental Commission. Renaissance being held up by intersection reconfiguration eminent domain issues, utility upgrade permit and execution.

Recycling

Defer discussion for February meeting.

Thomas Park Pond

Water level appears to be dropping raising questions about if the well and pump are working. An alternate used in the past was to use a fire truck to replenish the pond. Consider another cleanup with barley hay.

NEW BUSINESS

- Sustainable New Jersey: need to prioritize and address, can lead to grant approval. League of Municipalities mechanism for rating towns and encouraging green awareness. Ultimate goal for Metuchen to be certified, leads to increased recognition. Action Items: develop a dialog with the Borough Council, increase recycling rate and enforce rules, continue with energy audit program.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM. The next meeting of the Metuchen Environmental Commission will take place on February 16, 2011 at 7:00 PM at Borough Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Schaffer
Acting Secretary

AGENDA

Metuchen Environmental Commission

February 16, 2011

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

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