

Minutes, Meeting of the Metuchen Environmental Commission
April 18, 2012

2012	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	SEP	OCT	NOV
M. Herzberg, Chair	P	P	P	P						
D. Rasmussen, Liaison	P	P	P	P						
A. Dohl	A	P	P	P						
S. Toth, Alt.	A	A	A	A						
J. Schaffer	P		P	P						
D. Hirsch, Planning Bd.	P	P	P	P						
T. Rudel		P	P	P						
A. Sardone	A	P	A	A						
B. Weeks	P	P								

Key: P=Present, A=Absent, Gray Box= Minutes Assigned/Taken

Meeting started at 7PM, Second Floor Conference Room in Borough Hall

Minutes of previous meeting: Approved.

Correspondence: a) Chair read letter from long-time member Ann Sardone resigning her positions on Environmental Commission and on Dismal Swamp Commission. Discussion of how much Ann contributed and will be missed. b) Announcement that JFK Medical Center will sponsor the annual Metuchen/Edison bike tour, this year on Sunday May 20. c) Two editions of NJDEP Bulletin received, but they contained no issues pertaining to Metuchen.

High School Environmental Initiative: The high school tree planting project near its garden has made significant progress, involving active participants including Dr. Kamin's Environment Club, Mr. Gallagher's Garden Club, the High School drafting class and George Fromm from the Shade Tree Commission. Discussion of tree species that are hardy, native, the correct size and free. Mr. Fromm recommended two species, but without any budget someone must solicit donated trees. Dan Hirsch has kindly secured a generous donation of four trees from his neighbor, who owns a landscaping business. Those trees, two dogwoods and two lindens, will be delivered to the high school for planting by the school Garden Club during the week of April 23. (There will not be a public tree-planting ceremony on Arbor Day, April 27.)

Energy Audits: Dan will try to determine whether reviewing Borough files provided by the Borough Administrator reveal any projects the Borough may have implemented pursuant to the energy audits.

Sustainable New Jersey: See discussion of Energy Audits above.

Tommy's Pond: Discussion of presentation by Joe to the Borough Council of his proposed plan to address algae using a traditional method of permaculture bioremediation. Dorothy will discuss with Council.

Dismal Swamp: Discussion of opening a water trail in the Dismal Brook, as a possible enhancement adjacent to the Middlesex Greenway Extension.

Middlesex Greenway and Middlesex Greenway Extension: Discussion of several issues. a) A resident asked the Council about access for persons with disabilities to the Greenway segment under construction, as well as planned signage. Suggestion that the Council contact the County's construction manager about planned access ramps and signage. Contact information set forth in Greenway article in Spring edition of Metuchen Messenger. b) The Middlesex Greenway Coalition asked whether the Borough would revisit its bicycle routes map to incorporate, and adjust as needed, for the Greenway segment under construction. c) Advocacy for the Middlesex Greenway Extension: The Chair will draft an advocacy letter to send with petition to Freeholders. Efforts underway to arrange a second meeting with the County Open Space Committee, as a followup to last summer's meeting with the County Transportation Committee. Increase public participation in the Greenway official opening event, which the County may hold in June.

Recycling: Single Stream recycling, which began during the first week of April, has reportedly been well received by residents. DPW is monitoring curb placement of bins, to allow sufficient room for new truck arm to properly handle them. Discussion of whether DPW could also spot-check whether recyclables are being placed in recycling bins or discarded with solid waste.

Open Space: Environmental Commission report, on its March 3 inspection of Centennial Park, Woodwild Park, Myrtle Park and the Edgar School / Pool parking lot, submitted to the Mayor and Council, DPW and the Recreation Commission. They are reviewing issues identified to determine responsive measures, especially the need for storm damage cleanup. Discussion of including some recommended improvements for voluntary action by residents during this year's Earth Day on Sat. April 28.

Earth Day: Planned for Sat. April 28; flyer publicly circulated. Discussion for activities included storm damage cleanup. DPW will provide support before the event, possibly hauling wood chips and/or clearing large fallen trees. Target areas narrowed to Centennial Park and woods south of Myrtle Park. Actions to include removing trash, relocating benches and small bridges, and maintaining trails (clear brush and fallen limbs, place wood chips).

Edgar School / Pool Parking Lot: No report. Discussion that trees throughout the Borough will need watering if we don't receive rain soon.

Global Warming: No report.

Planning Board: No report.

New Business: The Mayor is considering potential new members for Environmental Commission, to replace Ann Sardone (resigned) and Steve Toth (to alternate status).

Next meeting: Wednesday May 16 at 7 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM – Respectfully Submitted by Brian Weeks